

Chapter 7

Cognitive Virtue, Divine Hiddenness, and Reasonable Belief or Nonbelief

I. Introduction

Suppose a good and loving God exists in world alpha. Now consider the evidence in alpha that could be used to ground or support belief in God. Is that evidence extant in the actual world? The question aims to highlight our intuitions about what we would expect from a good and loving God *vis-à-vis* manifesting His existence, or making it known to His creation that He exists. Some think that when we compare the evidence in world alpha with what we are given in the actual world, the actual world falls short. This is the basic idea behind the argument from divine hiddenness. The conclusion of the argument is that God (hereafter I shall assume a good and loving God) does not exist. The premises include at least two claims, namely, the evidence for God is too paucious to support rational belief, and we would expect a more transparent display of God's existence if He did exist. In this chapter I outline some tempting solutions to this argument, and argue that they categorically fail. I then offer my own criticisms of the argument. I admit, however, certain limitations of my criticisms, but such limitations are a happy result in that they pinpoint certain limitations of the inquiry itself. I conclude by outlining the boundaries of good inquiry which if instantiated, dissolve the impasse regarding the hiddenness argument and religious knowledge in general.

The chapter's outline is as follows: I begin with a recapitulation of the hiddenness argument endorsed by J. L. Schellenberg. I then survey some of the more prominent responses to the argument. My aim is to highlight which ones fail and which ones hold promise with more detail filled in. In the last section I show the limitations of even the more promising responses and chart out reasons for dissolving the impasse.

II. The argument from divine hiddenness

The argument from hiddenness begins with the observation that there are those who do not believe in God, and yet these same persons desire to know

God. Additionally, an important subset of these persons conducts their inquiry in virtuous ways. John Schellenberg refers to these persons as possessing reasonable nonbelief. There are those who have conducted their inquiry concerning God's existence in a meritorious manner, but the evidence amassed is insufficient to support belief in God. More technically, Schellenberg defines reasonable nonbelief with reference to inculpable doubt.

S is inculpably in doubt about the truth of G [God's existence] if (1) S believes that epistemic parity obtains between G and not-G,¹ and (2) S has not knowingly (self-deceptively or non-self-deceptively) neglected to submit this belief to adequate investigation.²

We may assume that (1) is satisfied since we typically take it that most people accurately report their state of mind to us. Knowing whether (2) is satisfied is more difficult. Nevertheless, Schellenberg indicates that in some circumstances we could judge that (2) is satisfied, for clearly there are some who exemplify meritorious investigative procedures, intellectual honesty, considerable time and energy, and a desire to have resolution to the issue. Schellenberg comments that such persons "will arrive at a parity belief only *reluctantly* and, therefore, only if careful attention to the matter seems to him to leave him with no other option."³

Pointing out that there are those who have inculpable nonbelief is not enough to generate an argument against God's existence, however. Schellenberg inserts a second and key premise according to which if a personal loving God exists, then such a being would make His existence known to His creatures. Belief in His existence is a logically necessary condition for them to enter into an "explicit and positively meaningful"⁴ relationship. The intuition Schellenberg is capitalizing on is that in order to enter into a personal relationship with person P, I must at least believe in P's existence. And a personal, loving God would want to enter into such a relationship; thus, belief is a logically necessary condition. The argument can be presented more succinctly as follows:

- (A) Reasonable nonbelief occurs.
- (B) If a good and loving God exists, then reasonable nonbelief would not occur.
- (C) Therefore, there is no good and loving God.

III. Weak responses and clarifications

Some theists have been tempted to respond to the argument in ways typical of responses to the argument from evil. After all, a similar claim is being made, namely, there is some fact about the world that is inconsistent with the existence of a good and loving God. One of these responses appeals to the value of

free will. In order to preserve the good of a personal relationship, God must arrange things such that persons enter into the relationship *freely*. But in order to enter into a relationship freely, the agent cannot be coerced. If God were to ostend Himself clearly enough so as to make inculpable doubt impossible, then, the claim is, persons would not enter into relationship with Him freely. Michael Murray, for instance says,

My claim is that the hiddenness of God is required in order for free beings to be able to exercise their freedom in a morally significant manner. . . . If God revealed His existence in a more perspicuous fashion we would be in a situation very much like the one in the standard robbery case. . . .⁵

The response here is aimed to impugn premise (B). The idea is that God would not arrange things to make His existence clearly ostensible since making Himself known in such a way would compromise freedom.

Others take issue with premise (A). Though this is not a popular attack, it is an intriguing one since many take (A) to be an undeniable empirical claim. Douglas Henry, however, aims to draw out the implications of the definition of inculpable doubt to show that (A) is implausible.

In the definition of inculpable doubt, reference is made to the notion of adequate investigation. And adequate investigation is partially characterized as including exemplary investigative procedures. Henry observes, however, that,

Reflective persons whose investigative procedures are exemplary do not usually assume that all the evidence is at hand. . . . They search for additional evidence, its quantity and quality depending upon the importance of the issue for which the evidence is being sought.⁶

Henry further observes that the very traits which ground our judgments of an adequate investigation (passion for truth, anxiety when in doubt, etc.) are incompatible with one who rests content with evidential parity. Henry concludes that Schellenberg is caught in a dilemma. Either, Schellenberg shows that there are persons who exude a high degree of intellectual virtue, thus making deception or self-deception unlikely. Or, Schellenberg accepts a lower standard of intellectual virtue. If the former, then the likelihood that such persons would accept evidential parity would be low for the passion for truth will lead one on past evidential impasses. If the latter, then the probability of deception or self-deception increases, or our intuitions suggest that their inquiry is not adequate. In either case, the claim that anyone satisfies inculpable doubt is unlikely.

The response to both Murray's and Henry's arguments is to point out that theists themselves are counterexamples to their claims. Murray suggests that an ostensible display of God's existence would curtail freedom. But theists themselves would claim that they *know* God exists, and this is so on basis of ample

evidence (either in the form of reflection on the natural order, or via religious experience). And yet, these very same theists would not say that their freedom is truncated because of their entrenched belief in God. Regarding Henry's response, Schellenberg could say that not even theists exude the virtues associated with exemplary investigative procedures. God's self-disclosure, he may say, is not apportioned to the intellectual virtues of the potential believer for if such virtues are not exuded by theists, nor should they be required for atheists. To remain consistent, Henry must say that the intellectual virtues are necessary not for everyone, but only when epistemic parity occurs for a specific agent. Schellenberg could respond, however, and say that if God exists, then epistemic parity would not occur in the first place.

IV. Stronger responses

The God-human relationship and participation in goodness

I have just surveyed one response to (B) and one to (A). Numerous objections to the argument abound, however. In this section I shall delineate two which highlight the key weaknesses in the hiddenness argument.

The first weakness that stands out is that Schellenberg is assuming a particular conception of how God relates with created beings. In his argument for (B), Schellenberg offers a fairly detailed reflection on the nature of love and personal relationships. A representative quotation is the following:

If I love you and so seek your well-being, I wish to make available to you all the resources at my disposal for the overcoming of difficulties in your life. But then I must also make it possible for you to draw on me *personally*—to let you benefit from my listening to your problems, from my encouragement, from my spending time together with you, and so on.⁷

On this view, if God is perfectly loving, He would make Himself available in a similar fashion. But making Himself available in order to make personal relationship possible, entails making belief in His existence clear enough so as to remove the possibility of inculpable doubt. If intellectually virtuous persons do not acquire belief in His existence, and belief is logically necessary for a meaningful relationship, then there is no good and loving God. I should note here that Schellenberg is only claiming that belief is a logically necessary condition to enter into a meaningful relationship. God is not, in Schellenberg's view, forcing a relationship on someone, but rather is making His existence known so the believer may choose to enter into a more meaningful relationship. The free will of the believer is not violated in as much as the theist's free will is not violated.

The weakness occurs in that many theists do not believe that explicit belief in God is a necessary condition to enter into meaningful relationship with God. This should not be surprising in that Christian theology⁸ indicates that the *summum bonum* of the Christian life is participation in the divine nature. Participating in the divine nature means that the more the “believer” grows in holiness (understood as growth in the virtues, primarily the virtue of charity) the more she participates in an aspect of God, namely goodness. Belief is not as important as the person being transformed into the likeness of God—however this end is reached. Whether this moral transformation and growth is mediated by belief matters little. Schellenberg considers such an objection endorsed by William Wainwright. To appreciate Schellenberg’s response, consider Wainwright’s own articulation of the view considered here,

As Schellenberg says, “A personal relationship with God” appears to entail “belief in Divine existence. . . . For I cannot love God, be grateful to God, or contemplate God’s goodness unless I believe there *is* a God.” . . . But Schellenberg is mistaken. If I don’t believe that God exists, I can’t respond to God *under that description*. It doesn’t follow that I can’t respond *to God*.⁹

Schellenberg is unmoved by such a view of the divine-human relationship. The core of Schellenberg’s response is that, “Wainwright has substituted his own notion of relationship between God and human beings for mine here.”¹⁰ This is an important response to take note of since it highlights the point at which theist and atheist diverge. Specifically, they diverge on intuitions of how a good and loving God would interact with His creation. I will return to this point below.

For present purposes, further explication of Wainwright’s response is warranted. If I understand him correctly, there are alternative construals of the God-human relationship some of which entail that hiddenness is compatible with God’s existence. But saying there are alternative construals is not enough. Some argument is needed for why Wainwright’s alternative is more plausible than Schellenberg’s.

One argument is that Schellenberg’s picture seems to entail that God is passible. Recall that for Schellenberg, love and meaningful relationship requires *reciprocity*, and thus requires explicit belief. Understood as such, it seems that God is passible in Schellenberg’s view. But traditional theology is unanimous in that God is impassible. Since atheism is parasitic on the conception of God being denied, the traditional theist can thank Schellenberg for showing us that a passible God does not exist.

Even if Schellenberg can cash out his picture of the God-human relationship consistent with traditional theology, there is still the core point, according to which we have little *intuitive* support for the idea that God would desire explicit belief in order to relate to Him. The reason is that, to repeat, insofar as God is

goodness itself, anyone who exudes holiness (goodness) is participating in the nature of God. One can certainly expect that a good and loving God would desire that persons grow in holiness and charity, but to expect that God desires explicit belief is unsupported. Whether growth in charity is accomplished with or without explicit belief would seem to matter little to a good and loving God Who took participation in His nature to be the chief good.

Schellenberg may respond by saying that this notion of the God-human relationship is not a *personal* relationship, and there *is* intuitive support that God being good and loving would desire a personal relationship. In response, the notion of a personal relationship for Schellenberg is tied closely to a human-to-human model with emotive and psychological elements built into it. That is, being conscious of or having certain feelings (e.g., love) *toward* some person requires that there is some person there. Such a model suggests that there is someone who is the *object* of my affection and interaction. Traditionally understood, however, God is not an *object* that is located anywhere. True, Christians typically claim that they love God, but for an omnipresent being, this must be understood in radically different ways than love of a fellow human is understood.

The evidential force of testimony

Another core weakness in Schellenberg's argument is its commitment to an ego-centric notion of epistemic justification. Whereas the weaknesses highlighted in section A appealed to specific theological claims, the weaknesses outlined in this section are primarily epistemological and do not rest on assumptions buried in traditional theology.

If the hiddenness argument is correct, then what is the epistemic status of theistic belief? How can the hiddenness argument avoid the conclusion that there is *no reasonable belief*, i.e., that theists have not based their belief on adequate investigation? I do not think Schellenberg can offer easy answers to these questions. Suppose S arrives at nonbelief after acquiring objective justification that epistemic parity obtains between G (God exists) and \sim G. That is, the totality of evidence relevant to adjudicate the question of God's existence indicates evidential parity. Since this is not what one would expect from God, God does not exist. If we assume that the notion of being reasonable involves this objective level of justification, then the argument from divine hiddenness would entail that there is no reasonable belief. If 'reasonable' is cashed out as objective justification, and the totality of evidence is as the proponent of the argument claims, then no theistic belief is reasonable. This seems patently false.

I should say Schellenberg does not endorse delineating reasonable in terms of objective justification. I suspect he is unconcerned about the entailment I just outlined, but is sensitive to the heavy epistemic burden such a notion places

on any proponent of the hiddenness argument. To keep the intuitive plausibility of premise (A), Schellenberg must opt for a weaker notion of justification. A more plausible approach is to argue that *for a specific subject*, her epistemic picture indicates that evidential parity obtains between G and \sim G. But the more subjective Schellenberg makes his notion of being reasonable, the more reason we have for thinking that S's epistemic picture does not reflect the totality of evidence, and therefore, we have little grounds for thinking that S satisfies intuitive criteria for adequate investigation. We can state the argument here in the form of a dilemma. If reasonable nonbelief is characterized subjectively, then Schellenberg owes us a reason for thinking that his notion of adequate investigation is satisfied. If reasonable nonbelief is characterized more objectively, that is, given the totality of evidence, God does not exist is more probable than not, then the theist suffers from unreasonable belief.

More importantly, there are weaknesses with Schellenberg's implicit egocentric notion of justification. Consider an intellectually virtuous theist. Being intellectually virtuous, the theist has submitted her belief to adequate investigation, and epistemic parity has not been obtained. Suppose now that our intellectually virtuous theist (call her Jane) reports to S that God exists. S knows Jane fairly well, and knows her to be very thorough in her cognitive endeavors, and very careful about the conclusions she draws from whatever evidence is presented to her. We may suppose further that Jane is psychologically well adjusted and we may even suppose that she grew up in a nonreligious home—thus circumventing any genetic or historical explanation for her theistic belief. How should S weigh or judge the importance of Jane's testimony that God exists?

There are three options for S (i) S could discount the testimony altogether, (ii) she could consider Jane's testimony as a reason to suspend nonbelief and continue with her investigation, or finally, (iii) S could accept Jane's report on trust. I suggest that Schellenberg is committed to holding (i) alone, since (ii) and (iii) are incompatible with the premise that reasonable non*belief* occurs, for in (ii) there is no *belief* and in (iii) there is no *nonbelief*. Additionally, I shall argue that (i) is incompatible with Schellenberg's notion of adequate investigation.

Suppose that S rejects Jane's testimony. On what grounds could S reject it? Recall, we are assuming that Jane is an intellectually virtuous inquirer, and she evinces similar levels of intellectual care, fair-mindedness, and thoroughness on the issue of God's existence as she does for other fields of inquiry. S has little reason to think that her epistemic standards in other areas are put aside when Jane directs her inquiry to investigate whether God exists. S is confronted with a reliable witness who has conducted her inquiry in virtuous ways. S has, as I see it, two grounds upon which to reject Jane's testimony. First, S could argue that testimony on religious matters is inapposite. Second, S could generate

defeaters for the key grounds on which Jane bases her belief. More succinctly, S could reject the testimony head-on, or reject the character of the inquiry which generated the belief in the first place.

Suppose S rejects the testimony head-on. I suspect that this strategy is most effective if the evidence upon which Jane bases her belief is not publicly available, such as religious experience. S could reject the testimony head-on even if Jane bases her belief on publicly available evidence, but the reason for rejecting it would likely generate defeaters to Jane's key grounds, and this is the second strategy. So, suppose for purposes of clarity, that Jane bases her belief on religious experience (or a series of such) and provides testimony to S that God exists on the basis of these experiences. To comport with our intuitive grasp of adequate investigation, S would have to generate *reasons* to reject the veridicality of Jane's experience. But notice, any argument or defeater to the veridicality of Jane's experience would apply equally to S's own if God were to manifest Himself in similarly ostensible ways. So, either S rejects the testimony with or without reason. If without reason, then S does not evince adequate investigation. If S rejects the testimony with reason, then those reasons must attack the veridicality of Jane's religious experience. But any reason generated to discount Jane's experience could be applied equally to one's own. Given such epistemic commitments, God may not only be hidden to S, but *must* be so. The conclusion here is that preempting both (a) an entire class of testimonial reports and (b) an entire class of experiences (i.e., one's own putative religious experiences) from carrying any evidential weight, does not comport with Schellenberg's own notion of adequate investigation.

Suppose S challenges the character of the inquiry itself. For example, assume that Jane bases her belief in God on the basis of the overall evidence of the natural world available to her. She has conducted her inquiry in virtuous ways, taking into account the seemingly intractable problem of evil. The point to make here is that S needs to ground her rejection of Jane's testimony. But to do so, S needs to take issue with how Jane has conducted her inquiry, the inferences she drew from the evidence or some other such aspect of her inquiry. But on the assumption, we are assuming Jane has conducted her inquiry in virtuous ways. If the inquiry is genuinely virtuous, there is little room for S to challenge it. At least, the points at which a challenge can be generated would likely be points on which virtuous persons disagree. But if two virtuous agents who know each other find opposing sets of propositions likely (or unlikely), the proper epistemic course to take is (ii), not (i).

The response to this line of reasoning may be that testimony from virtuous atheists should count as well. S may receive testimony from multiple sources, and we may suppose the testifiers conducted inquiry in virtuous ways. What should S do with conflicting reports from intellectually virtuous witnesses? Intuitions may differ, but I don't see how (i) is an appropriate response to such conflicting testimony for it does not comport with Schellenberg's own notion of

adequate investigation. In the setting of conflicting reports from virtuous agents, the proper course is, again, to accept (ii).

Another response may be that I have substituted my own view for Schellenberg's view concerning what God would do epistemically for persons who seek Him out. Taking the same strategy as he takes in response to Wainwright above, Schellenberg can do the same here. Some reason should be given as to why God would desire some of us to believe through testimony. Laura Garcia comments approvingly of this approach saying,

This method [believing through testimony] preserves the relationality of human beings better than the more direct, individualistic methods . . . and it is perhaps a better introduction into the realm of personal relationships that comprises our final destiny and that characterizes the inner life of God himself (according to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity). . . . A further benefit of this mode of transmission of the gospel message, for example, is that we must trust in the testimony of others in order to come to faith, and we are deeply indebted to those who brought us the message. . . .¹¹

The idea here is that by 'forcing' us to rely on our fellow human beings and to trust their word, we are thereby linked with each other at a much deeper level than if God were to take an individualistic approach. The more trusting we are with others and the deeper ties we have to them—especially in order to trust them for such important issues—serves to cement the moral fabric God may be intending for the human community. Anecdotal evidence confirms this in that numerous persons convert due to a person or persons with whom she is familiar who displays incredible virtue and integrity. Trusting and becoming closer to such examples of holiness may likely be just what God intends.

Is it unjust that God would disclose himself to a few, while letting others rely on those *humans* to bear virtuous testimony? Responding to this very objection Garcia notes, "There doesn't seem to be a violation of justice involved, since as long as persons are not punished for involuntary unbelief, it's hard to see that God wrongs anyone by failing to provide every person with the same evidential situation."¹² I would only add that in some cases, the evidential situation favors the one who must rely on testimony. Recall my use of Tony Coady's¹³ example of the ornithologists each giving an independent report of a bird sighting in a geographical region alien to the bird in question. They each make a report to the editor of a popular bird magazine. Because the sightings are so rare, the ornithologists in the field hold their perceptions in doubt. But the editor's epistemic situation is different. He has access to numerous independent reports of the bird being in a specific geographical region previously known to be foreign for that bird. The same epistemic situation may confront the atheist who receives reports from intellectually virtuous witnesses that God exists. Such reports we may stipulate (to maintain the analogy) are based on some sort of

religious experience. The witnesses each may hold their interpretations with more reservation than the atheist who receives numerous reports with similar content and describing the object of the experience (i.e., God) in similar ways.¹⁴

V. Justification for agnosticism

There is a significant limitation of the argument from testimony just given. As mentioned, there is testimony from those intellectually virtuous persons who do *not* believe in God. There are competing testimonies from equally virtuous persons. One may think that the testimonies cancel each other out in terms of supplying any epistemic direction. So, the epistemic situation of S would revert to what it was before considering the testimonies of others. Recall, however, that S's original epistemic state was one of atheism. Therefore, in the setting of competing testimonies, S would remain justified in his atheism.

In the previous section I argued that the appropriate response to testimony that God exists is (ii)—at least. Here we are presented with a reason for S to revert to atheism. I suggest that this is not the appropriate stance to take. Competing testimonies would justify taking a stance of further investigation while suspending belief. To see this consider the following example. Suppose Jane grows up in an academic family in which the parents are both intellectually sophisticated theists. They teach Jane the cosmological and ontological arguments for God's existence. Jane happens to have solid reasons for believing in God. She understands the weaknesses of the arguments but also understands various replies to the objections and refinements to the arguments. Jane goes off to college and is introduced to the evidential argument from evil. Jane's epistemic position is now radically challenged. Jane has at least two general options for her epistemic state: accept the force of the evidential argument and abandon her original beliefs, or pursue further inquiry while her religious beliefs are somewhat suspended. Let's stipulate that the latter option involves familiarization with theistic responses and further refinements of the argument from evil, and the first option does not. It seems clear that Jane's inquiry should take the course of the latter option. The example illustrates that in the setting of competing justification, the cognitively virtuous agent would pursue further inquiry. So it is with competing testimonies from virtuous persons.

VI. Justification for an impasse

I have spent some time analyzing the hiddenness argument and motivating a position in which the virtuous agent for whom God is hidden should adopt an agnostic position, not atheism as argued by Schellenberg. Theists may be

unmoved by the argument for many theists believe, as do I, that being good and loving does not entail being ostensibly manifest to the object of love. Love involves willing the other's good, and the nature of the good is fulfillment of one's nature and growth in virtue. Willing that either of these take place does not entail that the creature believes in God, or that God becomes ostensibly manifest to the potential believer.

These reflections raise a problem for the virtue theorist. If both theist and agnostic are intellectually virtuous, then by the definition offered in the introduction, it seems they should both have knowledge. But they cannot both have knowledge for they believe in contrary propositions. Therefore, both cannot be intellectually virtuous contrary to the original assumption. One route by which one may stymie this *reductio* is to deny that they both perform intellectually virtuous acts in forming their respective beliefs. They certainly embody intellectually virtuous dispositions and traits of character. So our intuitions can be preserved and responsibility remains unscathed. But there is another more interesting route by which to respond to the objection. What generates the *reductio* is the implicit assumption that certain religious claims are the proper object of human knowledge. Why is this assumption questionable? The hiddenness argument rests on the premise that a good and loving God would not allow reasonable nonbelief. Properly understood this proposition is a counterfactual of divine freedom. Assuming God is free, William Rowe's objections aside,¹⁵ knowing what a free agent would do in a specified set of circumstances is not the proper object of knowledge. The intellectually virtuous agent would consider the domain of knowledge and measure the complexity of the domain with her epistemic position. That is, the intellectually virtuous agent would not only *further* her inquiry but also *confine* her claims to know relative to the inscrutable nature of the domain. In forming a belief that the domain is outside of one's cognitive ken *that* belief itself may be a function of a virtuous act. If it is the result of one's motivation to know (in this case, to know the *limits* of one's inquiry) and the belief is true, then the agent performs a virtuous act in confining her inquiry.

To clarify, by confining one's inquiry I do not mean that the agent cut short her investigation within the domain. What is meant is that the virtuous agent will recognize the threshold point at which further inquiry exceeds the capacities of human cognition to deliver knowledge. Thus understood, the response to the *reductio* is that the counterfactuals of God's freedom are not the proper objects of human knowledge. It is inapposite to say, then, that the theist and agnostic perform virtuous acts in forming the contrary beliefs they do. Properly understood, the concept of a virtuous act applies to objects that are within the domain of human knowledge. It seems clear that counterfactuals of God's freedom are not within this domain. I am not saying that the counterfactuals of God's freedom do not have any truth value. I am saying, rather, that there are true beliefs concerning the limitations of human cognition and these limitations themselves are the proper objects of human knowledge. If one exceeds

these limitations she is no longer performing virtuous acts, since the concept of a virtuous act defines human knowledge strictly. By definition, exceeding the limitations exceeds the proper domain of human knowledge.

Is the response just given ad hoc? I think not, for in discovering the borders of human knowledge this judgment itself is arrived at by virtuous acts. Intellectual humility, care, and thoroughness contribute to one's assessment of her cognitive position vis-à-vis the inscrutable nature of the domain. There is nothing ad hoc or arbitrary in stipulating one's limits, but rather are themselves determined by intellectually virtuous acts.

Is it intellectually virtuous to continue one's inquiry past a point at which human knowledge is exceeded? The answer here is yes, since the boundaries of human knowledge are not fixed. They expand or are more clearly defined through further inquiry. As one furthers inquiry in a domain beyond human capacities (at the time of inquiry) one can still exude certain intellectual virtues. These virtues of inquiry would not be virtuous acts which serve as a definition for knowledge. Rather these virtues would serve as accounts for other epistemic states such as understanding or wisdom.

The justification for the impasse concerning the hiddenness argument is that each side is conducting inquiry that is intuitively outside the boundaries of human insight. The claim to know, one way or the other, is inapposite. The virtue account offered here gives a reason for limiting claims to human knowledge because such an account governs one's inquiry.

How do other theories fare in this regard? To the extent that other epistemological theories make reference to cognitive processes (i.e., reliabilism and proper function accounts) or to justified beliefs (i.e., evidentialism) such theories are handicapped in defining the *scope* of one's inquiry. Process-based theories do not have the resources to mark out the scope of human inquiry, for it is unclear what "basic psychological process" or faculty may recognize the limits of one's inquiry in a potentially inscrutable domain. Recognition of one's limitations is mediated by one's intellectual virtues such as intellectual humility, thoroughness, and care. Since responsibilism includes reference to both intellectually virtuous traits, and virtuous acts, she is able to ground claims to limit inquiry.