

The Reasonableness and Advantage of Being Known

A 6-point argument against epistemological theories of knowledge acquisition that dismiss religious/supernatural claims out of hand and/or reject the notion of epistemic certainty

1. Our world can have only one accurate explanation.

2. The accurate explanation for our world is objective and moves beyond mere facts.

Our universe *is* the mystery, so the explanation for our universe must clearly involve elements beyond the universe. The facts—pieces of information that are *directly* verifiable via the senses—should serve as the *basis* for judging the reliability and explanatory power of truth claims, testimonial evidence, and scientific theories. Some examples of facts: Celestial bodies move. Humans congregate. Living organisms reproduce and eventually die. Humans experience pain and pleasure.

Inferences, interpretations, claims, theories, and testimonies are fallible and easily incorporate error. All conclusions that are reached inductively, such as those reached via the scientific method, are falsifiable. Proof is not a currency of science (only of logic and math).

3. Any true grand narrative/story about our world will be internally consistent, coherent, and will account for the full scope of human experience and what has been observed throughout history.

The breadth of evidence encompasses more than tangible evidence. General facets of life such as pain, pleasure, instincts, communication, aging, death, intelligence, sleep, humor, emotions, philosophy, aesthetics, war, morality, ethics, self-consciousness also need to be accounted for. Additionally, reports of religious and psychic phenomenon are forms of evidence, regardless what such evidence ultimately points to.

4. Logic, rather than science, should be used to define the parameters of what can possibly and reasonably account for the evidence. There are only two basic possibilities: that personal forces are ultimately responsible or that impersonal forces are.

In any investigation into the origins of the universe, scientists are eventually going to hit bedrock: the existence of some set of components that cannot be reduced any further and that cannot account for their own existence. The scope of science is, therefore, superseded by any explanation for the bedrock itself.

There are only two basic possibilities: that personal forces are ultimately responsible or that impersonal forces are. These possibilities are mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive. Each person comes down on one side or the other, with no room for middle ground and no room for indecision. Before we can interact socially and form moral or political values, we must first decide *why* we are here and, in light of that answer, *how* we should live. An absence of belief in personal forces amounts to a *positive* claim that impersonal forces are responsible for our universe.

Whether personal or impersonal are responsible, neither explanation can be borne out scientifically. Those who seek to rule out personal causes out-of-hand do so illogically. The evidence will point in one direction or the other, which is a matter for debate. If an individual *insists* that impersonal forces are responsible because methodological naturalism restricts him from exploring personal causes, then he is engaging in circular reasoning.

5. A Creator God's knowledge of the cosmos will trump scientific insight into the natural world. Furthermore, a Creator God who engineered human language and mental faculties will possess total command of these elements.

If any religious claims to divine revelation are true, then they carry the potential to reveal far more than empirical evidence alone. If a Creator God engineered human language and mental faculties and desired to communicate with us, then it can be taken as granted that this God would have the upper hand in such an exchange and would be capable of communicating in a way that is adequate for our comprehension. Authentic revelation will exhibit the trademarks discussed in point #3: logical consistency, coherency, external correspondence, explanatory power, and an insider's (and therefore accurate) view, thereby safeguarding us from counterfeits.

6. Therefore, if a Creator God has chosen to reveal certain truths to humanity, then it is possible for us to know them. The scope of science is superseded by the logical possibilities. Science is, therefore, not qualified to make any determinations about the fundamental nature of reality. (This point does not presume the supernatural but rather underscores the sensibleness of weighing religious claims).