RUNNING HEAD: Intellectual Humility

Intellectual Humility

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Abstract

We critique two popular philosophical definitions of intellectual humility: the "low concern for status" and the "limitations-owning." accounts. Based upon our analysis, we offer an alternative working definition of intellectual humility: *the virtue of accurately tracking what one could non-culpably take to be the positive epistemic status of one's own beliefs*. We regard this view of intellectual humility both as a virtuous mean between intellectual arrogance and diffidence and as having advantages over other recent conceptions of intellectual humility. After defending this view, we sketch remaining questions and issues that may bear upon the psychological treatment of intellectual humility such as whether evidence will help determine how this construct relates to general social humility on the one hand, and intellectual traits such as open-mindedness, curiosity, and honesty on the other.

Keywords: belief, epistemology, intellectual humility, humility, virtues

Intellectual Humility

All too often, when faced with difficult questions, people ignore, dismiss, and marginalize dissent. The speed at which political disagreement is recast in terms of the intellectual failings of opponents is astounding, and religious dialogue, from the orthodox to the militant, remains tinted by a terrifying and dehumanizing arrogance and dogma. Even scientists and other scholars often find ourselves stubbornly defending "our" ideas rather than pursuing truth, wilfully blind to evidence challenging our positions and uncharitable toward the views of rivals. The world, it appears, needs more intellectual humility. But the significance of intellectual humility is not merely practical—it also has important theoretic and scientific implications and is central to various projects in both philosophy and psychology.

The problem, however, is that a robust conceptual, theoretical, and empirical understanding of intellectual humility is surprisingly difficult to come by. Intellectual humility has sometimes been explicitly delineated as a subset of concepts such as humility and wisdom. For example, research into folk conceptions of wisdom reveals components such as open-mindedness, not being afraid to admit and correct a mistake, and listening to all sides of an issue (what Sternberg [1985] calls "sagacity") that resonate with intellectual humility, but what of intellectual humility itself? If we do not understand precisely what intellectual humility *is*, we will be unable to explore the full significance of intellectual humility (both practical and academic) with much precision.

Prima facie, humility is the virtuous mean between something like arrogance, on the one hand, and self-deprecation or diffidence, on the other. Humble people do not value themselves too much (arrogance) nor do they value themselves too little (diffidence or self-deprecation). Instead, they think of themselves—their value, their status amongst their peers, and their

abilities—as they should. We might imagine, then, that *intellectual* humility, in it's simplest form, is the virtuous mean between *intellectual* arrogance and *intellectual* diffidence. The intellectually humble person, to put it roughly, does not overly value his or her beliefs (intellectual arrogance) nor does he or she under-value them (intellectual diffidence). Instead, intellectually humble people value their beliefs and their intellectual abilities as they ought. Given its focus on beliefs, this rough approximation of intellectual humility is what we will be calling *the doxastic (i.e. relating to beliefs) account of intellectual humility.*

In this chapter, we will try to unpack and defend this simple, intuitive account of intellectual humility. While recent empirical research suggests that intellectual humility might be a multifaceted and multi-layered virtue—with moral dimensions, interpersonal dimensions, intrapersonal dimensions, etc.—we will be defending a fundamentally *doxastic* account of intellectual humility (Samuelson, et al., 2014). Whatever social or moral dimensions the virtue of intellectual humility might have, we will suggest that it needs to be built upon or understood within this basic, doxastic account.

Problems with the Current, Seminal Accounts of Intellectual Humility

Robert Roberts and Jay Wood (2003, 2007) developed the current preeminent account of intellectual humility in the scholarly literature. In developing their account, Roberts and Wood define humility by contrasting it with vices like arrogance and vanity. As they explain:

Like many other epistemic virtues, humility has a wider than merely intellectual sphere. So our strategy will be first to explore it in its broader moral application, and then to carry what we have learned into a discussion of the intellectual life…. Often, virtues are best described in connection with their vice-counterparts, and this is especially important with humility…. Humility is opposite a number of vices, including arrogance, vanity,

conceit, egotism, grandiosity, pretentiousness, snobbishness, impertinence (presumption), haughtiness, self-righteousness, domination, selfish ambition, and self-complacency. (2003, pp. 257-258)

And so, Roberts and Wood explicate intellectual humility by working from an understanding of humility in general, generated by contrasting it with vices approximately summarized as "improper pride" (p. 258). In this way, Roberts and Wood go on to define intellectual humility as:

> …an unusually low dispositional concern for the kind of status that accrues to persons who are viewed by their intellectual communities as intellectually talented, accomplished, and skilled, especially where such concern is muted or sidelined by intrinsic intellectual concerns – in particular, the concern for knowledge with its various attributes of truth, justification, warrant, coherence, precision, and significance. (2003, p. 271)

According to Roberts and Wood, intellectual humility is a virtue that can be negatively defined by its opposition to intellectual variants of vices such as arrogance, vanity, snobbishness, and domination. One way of understanding many of these kinds of vices is that they are often focused on the social wellbeing of the possessor. Thus, according to Roberts and Wood (2007), intellectual humility must be something quite the opposite: as they put it more recently, "a striking or unusual unconcern for social importance, and thus a kind of emotional *insensitivity* to the issues of status" (p. 239). The important nuance here being that the possessor of intellectual humility is not *unaware* of his or her status, excellence, or importance, but that he or she is largely *unconcerned* with the issue and is motivated to pursue epistemic goods by something beyond social status.

The first concern for such an account is that it is not at all clear that intellectual humility is just the opposite of intellectual arrogance. We can easily imagine a person who is *too humble*—a person who is so intellectually diffident that he or she fails to appropriately recognize and appreciate his or her own intellectual achievements. Consider the case of Emma, a brilliant, expert zoologist who cares little for her (high) social status relative to Bruce, an ignorant pretender. Emma and Bruce are at an aquarium when they have a disagreement about the scientific name of a certain species of whelk. Caring nothing for her intellectual status and accolades (or Bruce's negative status), Emma takes Bruce's dissent seriously and treats him as an intellectual peer. According to the Roberts and Wood account, Emma exhibits intellectual humility; she is not at all concerned about her intellectual social importance or her academic status. Our intuition in this case is that she is not being virtuous. For a highly acclaimed and accomplished zoologist like Emma to take the dissent of a zoological dunce like Bruce seriously seems intellectually *vicious*. That someone could care too little about their relative intellectual status is a dimension missing from the Roberts and Wood account.

Second, because it is built from concerns around social status, the Roberts and Woods account of intellectual humility seems to lead to strange asymmetries when it comes to non-social scenarios—those where intellectual status within a community is simply not possible. Consider the following case:

> SHIPWRECKED: Tragedy has befallen Bruce—the ignorant, yet arrogant wannabe zoologist—and he has been shipwrecked on a small deserted island. He is entirely alone, except for the marine animals that he in fact knows so little about. And with no social status to care about, Bruce can no longer be obsessed with his status amongst his peers and how much they think of him.

In this case, with no social status to be gained or lost, Bruce cannot help but be intellectually humble. He can have no concern for his social status because there is no social status to be concerned about. And even though he might sit on the island, endlessly telling himself that all of his zoological judgments are right and true, he simply cannot be intellectually arrogant—at least not according to the Roberts and Wood account. As Bruce endlessly tells himself that all of his zoological judgments are right and true, it sure seems like he is being intellectually arrogant.

A more recent account of intellectual humility comes from Whitcomb, Battaly, Baehr, and Howard-Snyder (2015), who define intellectual humility as "proper attentiveness to, and owning of, one's intellectual limitations" (p. 12). Perhaps the most striking feature of this limitations-owning account of intellectual humility is that in order to be intellectually humble one need be *only* attentive to and own one's intellectual *limitations*; being attentive to and owning one's intellectual *strengths,* according to Whitcomb et al., is a different virtue altogether, namely *proper pride*. With such a distinction, intellectual humility *qua* intellectual humility is blind to intellectual strengths. As Whitcomb et al. admit, their account of intellectual humility "says nothing about one's orientation or stance toward one's intellectual strengths" (2015, p. 20).

As Whitcomb et al. noted, this approach may lead to some bizarre conclusions. Imagine someone who is duly attentive to and owning of their intellectual *limitations* but radically overestimates and brags about their intellectual *strengths*. Insofar as someone is intellectually arrogant if they radically overestimate and brag about their intellectual strengths, then it looks like the limitations-owning account leads to this odd conclusion: it is possible for someone to "be at once intellectually humble and intellectually arrogant" (Whitcomb et al. 2015,p. 20). And that seems like a reason to reject the view outright. The inability to rule out the possibility of

someone being at once intellectually arrogant and intellectually humble is a limitation that we do not want to own in accounts of intellectual humility.

In response, Whitcomb et al. argue that such a result is metaphysically impossible for an agent who is *fully internally rational*. Of course, for anyone who is not fully internally rational—which, sadly, is most everyone—it is still possible to be at once both intellectually humble and intellectually arrogant on the limitations-owning view, but that is a limitation Whitcomb et al. are willing to own. To soften the blow, they note that "perhaps [such a result] should not be all that surprising. When irrationality is on the scene—as it can be in the human mind—seemingly incompatible mental states can coexist" (2015, p. 25). We still regard this coexistence as a serious limitation of the view. Imagine someone said to you, "You need to meet Richard! He's such a kind and humble guy. Watch out, though, he's an arrogant jerk." You would think you just heard a contradiction, not, "Well, I guess Richard must be less than fully internally rational."

Even if it is right that the limitations-owning view of intellectual humility can avoid cases where someone is at once intellectually humble and intellectually arrogant just so long as that person is fully internally rational, the view still allows for cases where even a fully rational someone can be at once intellectually humble and, to use Whitcomb et al.'s term, "intellectually servile." By their reckoning, if someone does not appropriately recognize their own intellectual strengths enough, and, hence, doubts their good judgments unnecessarily or is gullible and easily duped, then they are intellectually servile. Here again, since Whitcomb et al. insist on limiting the scope of intellectual humility to intellectual *limitations* (excluding strengths), we get another odd result: someone can be at once intellectually humble and intellectually servile. And here, it does not look like appeals to fully-internally rational agents can soften the blow.

Perhaps objectionable to psychologists, Whitcomb et al.'s position clearly leaves open a state-like understanding of intellectual humility. One could thoroughly own his or her limitations of knowledge or intellectual capacity in one domain but not others, or at some moments but not others. Bruce, the arrogant yet ignorant wannabe zoologist, could contentedly own his limitations in a domain that he cares little about such as early 19th century British literature, but should such owning earn him privilege of being counted among the intellectually humble? We suspect that most people who would surely merit the label of "intellectually arrogant git" have at least some domain in which they freely admit their ignorance or incompetence. Indeed, it is possible to be prideful about what one does not know, regarding it as beneath one's attention. Along with the concerns raised above in regard to the Whitcomb et al. account, this conclusion might further dampen our enthusiasm for their view of intellectual humility.

The Doxastic Account of Intellectual Humility

Whatever worries one might have about Roberts and Wood's "low concern for status" account of intellectual humility or Whitcomb et al.'s "limitations-owning" account, they are two of the seminal, focused accounts of intellectual humility in the literature. As we've seen, however, both accounts face serious worries. And in both cases, these are worries we should try to avoid, thus they motivate us to look for alternative accounts of intellectual humility.

The alternative account that we want to explore is what we're calling *the doxastic account of intellectual humility*. Again, intellectual humility intuitively seems to be the virtuous mean between intellectual arrogance and intellectual diffidence. The intellectually humble person, as we have said before, doesn't overly value their beliefs nor do they under value them. Instead, they regard their beliefs, their epistemic status, and their intellectual abilities as they ought. Or, as a rough first approximation:

DA (Doxastic Account)**:** Intellectual humility is the virtue of valuing one's own beliefs as he or she ought.

It is tempting to equate this *valuing* of beliefs with how firmly someone holds a given belief, to how resilient a given belief is to revision or relinquishment. After all, it seems right to think that an intellectually arrogant person would be someone who is completely unwilling to change his or her belief in the face disagreement, threat, or counter-evidence. Likewise, it seems right to think that intellectually diffident people would be those who hold their beliefs loosely and revise or change them with the changing wind. Intellectual humility, then, would amount to holding beliefs as firmly as you ought.

Psychological dynamics, however, suggest that belief firmness, or a belief's resilience to revision or relinquishment, are not the only or best relevant metrics for intellectual humility. Consider a case in which a doting mother finds it impossible to believe that her adult son is a violent criminal even though she can admit the overwhelming evidence of his guilt. Similarly, consider a heroic young woman who commits her life to ending human trafficking in a country in which experts tell her that the situation is utterly hopeless, but she refuses to believe them. Are the women in these examples exhibiting intellectual vice? It seems to us that the psychological dynamics surrounding why beliefs are revised or not in the face of disagreement or contradicting evidence bear upon whether one is intellectually humble versus arrogant or diffident. Intellectual humility does not collapse to simply being open-minded to the right degree.

What cases like these seem to suggest, however, is that "value" in DA should actually track the numerous factors that lead to forming and holding appropriate beliefs, something like what philosophers call *justification* or *warrant* or, to be entirely nonpartisan, *positive epistemic status*. Roughly, take positive epistemic status to be whatever, in sufficient amount, bridges the

gap between (mere) true belief and knowledge. No doubt, how much positive epistemic status one attributes to their beliefs will often go hand in hand with how firmly they believe it. It seems natural to think that the intellectually arrogant person attributes far more positive epistemic status to their beliefs than they should, just as the intellectually diffident person attributes far less positive epistemic status than they should. However, cases like the doting mother show that attributions of positive epistemic status and belief firmness can and do occasionally come apart; and when they do, it seems like what really matters when it comes to intellectual humility is the former.

With this in mind, perhaps we can now think of DA in terms of the following:

DA′: Intellectual humility is the virtue of attributing positive epistemic status to one's own beliefs as he or she ought.

Imagine two amateur space enthusiasts, Luke and Thomas. Upon hearing the news that traces of water might have been found on Mars, Luke comes to believe very strongly that there is life on Mars. Thomas is also excited about the recent news regarding water on Mars; however, after reading unhinged speculations on a prominent flat-Earth conspiracy theory website, Thomas begins to doubt whether Mars is really even a planet. Given that the possibility of water on Mars is, at best, weak evidence for thinking that there is life on Mars, then DA′ would predict that Luke is intellectually *arrogant* in holding his belief as strongly as he does; and given that flat-Earth conspiracy theory websites should not in any way upset established scientific research, DA′ would predict that Thomas is being intellectually diffident in holding his belief as weakly as he does. Neither Luke nor Thomas are being intellectually humble; neither one seems to be accurately tracking the positive epistemic status of their respective beliefs.

But there are still a couple of problems (at least) facing DA′. First of all, it would be nice if we could say a bit more about the normative component—about what determines the positive epistemic status that a given belief *ought* to be attributed with. And relatedly, it's not entirely clear that the *attribution* of positive epistemic status is really what is at issue; it's not clear that *attribution* is really what we *ought* to be concerned about when it comes to intellectual humility. After all, *attributing positive epistemic status to a belief* seems like a highly reflective activity requiring explicit, controlled (system 2) cognitive processing, and it's not obvious that intellectual humility should only be relegated to that domain.

First of all, it seems like the positive epistemic status someone *ought* to attribute to their own beliefs is the positive epistemic status such beliefs *actually have*. So, minimally, perhaps a doxastic account of intellectual humility should be most concerned with whether or not someone is accurately tracking—be it consciously or subconsciously—the positive epistemic status that their beliefs actually enjoy. And what is more, *accurately tracking* positive epistemic status, perhaps unlike *attributing* positive epistemic status, does not seem to require highly reflective activity; *accurately tracking* positive epistemic status, perhaps unlike *attributing* positive epistemic status, seems like the sort of thing that can be done implicitly and subconsciously. All that said, we can modify our doxastic account of intellectual humility accordingly:

DA″**:** Intellectual humility is the virtue of accurately tracking the positive epistemic
   status of one's own beliefs.

Helpfully, like DA′, DA″ allows us to rightly attribute intellectual arrogance to Luke in his belief about life on Mars, and it allows us to rightly attribute intellectual diffidence to Thomas in his weak belief about Mars being a planet. And it does all this without being completely normatively under-described or inadvertently demanding highly reflective cognition. For even if one is

attracted to a strong reflective component in developing intellectual humility at the outset, we would expect some expertise to develop over time in this regard, such as becoming more reflexive in seeking disconfirmatory evidence. What was system 2 activity may become system 1 activity, or, habitual in a sense that would satisfy Aristotelian views of virtue.

Even so, we might need to make some sort of caveat with DA″ in order to account for situations where someone has been non-culpably deceived. Consider the following case:

LIE: Mary has known Martha for many years and has always found her to be extremely trustworthy. One day, Martha is feeling a bit cheeky and decides to tell Mary a lie. Feigning a panic, Martha runs up to Mary and tells her that Mary's house is on fire. Naturally enough, since Mary has never known Martha to be anything but entirely honest, Mary non-culpably, yet falsely believes that her house is on fire and takes such a belief to have a lot of positive epistemic status (via Martha's testimony). And as such, Mary heads home in a hurry.

In order for DA″ to rightly handle cases like LIE, we need Mary's belief, taken to have a lot of positive epistemic status, to not count as intellectual arrogance simply because she was deceived in a manner that she could not be reasonably expected to have caught. Thus, we make a final adjustment to our doxastic account of intellectual humility:

DA‴: Intellectual humility is the virtue of accurately tracking what one could non-culpably take to be the positive epistemic status of one's own beliefs.

Since Mary is non-culpable in believing Martha's testimony, DA‴ helps guarantee that Mary won't be wrongfully ascribed with intellectual arrogance.

Intellectual humility, according to DA‴, is assessed along two axes: how much positive epistemic status a given belief enjoys, and how much positive epistemic status a given agent *thinks* it enjoys. Consider the following figure (Insert Figure 1 about here).

If a belief enjoys only a very marginal amount of positive epistemic status (perhaps the belief that an ideal tropical beach includes no fewer than 20 but no more than 40 palm trees per 100 meters of coastline), then intellectual humility requires that a given agent track that modest positive epistemic status accordingly. In contrast, if a given belief enjoys a tremendous amount of positive epistemic status (as in the belief that the external world actually exists), then the intellectually humble agent will value such a belief accordingly, tracking its positive epistemic status. Ascribing too much positive epistemic status to a given belief would be vicious (intellectually arrogant, upper left-hand corner of Figure 1), as would ascribing too little (intellectual diffidence, lower right-hand corner of Figure 1).

Addressing Some Objections, Further Questions, and Future Directions

Now, while we would humbly suggest that the doxastic account is the best way to think about intellectual humility, experience tells us that everyone may not be convinced. In closing, we briefly discuss six common questions that may spawn additional research in the philosophical and psychological treatments of intellectual humility.

Is Intellectual Humility Really a Virtuous Mean?

Some philosophers (like Roberts and Wood) might object to the idea that intellectual humility (or humility) is really best conceived of as a virtuous mean, an issue with major implications for psychological measurement. The principle reason one might think intellectual humility *isn't* a virtuous mean is because it seems like we would have to encourage someone

who is extremely self-deprecating or intellectually diffident that they need to be more humble, and that seems counterintuitive. So it might seem as though we have conflicting intuitions here.

We suggest that we can explain away this apparent conflict as an unfortunate consequence of common language use that does not reflect a deeper problem. Consider the virtue of courage. We take it that most people would agree that courage is the virtuous mean between cowardice and foolhardiness (or rashness). But even so, like humility and intellectual humility, it might feel odd to encourage someone who is recklessly foolhardy to be more courageous. Why is this? Common encouragement to "take courage" is generally aimed at people who are cowardly, not foolhardy, and so encouraging a rash person to not be rash but courageous is uncommon. It does not follow that courage is a one-dimensional virtue. Analogously, in discussions concerning humility, arrogance is the most commonly targeted vice and so our language does not readily accommodate the idea of diffidence as lacking humility. Dichotomous thought and speech seem to come easier to human psychology than thinking in terms of virtuous middles.

Are We Really Talking about Intellectual Humility?

Perhaps we are not really talking about intellectual humility at all but about another virtue and just calling it intellectual humility. Perhaps our account highlights a feature of intellectual virtues in general but we are not picking out intellectual humility in particular. Or, if we are picking out something specific, perhaps we are really just talking about intellectual honesty, accuracy, or firmness, and not intellectual humility (e.g., see. Wood, 2012).

The philosophy of intellectual humility is currently something like a wild frontier. As Roberts (2012) noted in his discussion summary for the Big Questions Online piece, "What is it to be Intellectually Humble?", "One of the most striking things to emerge from our discussion of intellectual humility is the lack of consensus on what 'humility' and 'intellectual humility'

mean." As the conversation develops, it has become manifestly clear that there is no shared or even entirely dominate view of intellectual humility in the literature; the Roberts and Wood view is different from Whitcomb et al.'s view, which is different from our view, etc. So it seems like the state of play right now is to try to stake a claim and defend it as best you can (but without attributing it with inappropriate positive epistemic status)! And that's what we're doing. Of course, if there were consensus regarding that *with which* we are confusing intellectual humility, then perhaps we should still back off from our account, but there is no such consensus.

Is Intellectual Humility a Virtuous Trait or Context Dependent?

We have assumed that intellectual humility is best conceptualized as a general tendency or trait that characterizes a virtuous knower. The empirical question for psychologists is whether exhibiting intellectual humility, as conceptualized here, really generalizes across situations and domains of thought. We suspect that intellectual humility differs from courage in this regard. Compare the fire fighter who places fear aside on a daily basis to save others with a timid child who runs from fear except when her younger sister is threatened and then she rushes into harms way courageously. The child exhibits courage in a particular moment, and the fire fighter does so with enough frequency that we regard the virtue as trait-like; both show courage. Accurately tracking the positive epistemic of a large number of their beliefs, however, is something that a great many people probably do with a large proportion of their beliefs. Unlike courage, however, most of us would not be terribly impressed if someone "rose to the occasion" and accurately tracked the epistemic status of just one belief or belief in only one domain. Imagine the sophomore in college who, in the face of her philosophy professor arguing that the student is only a brain in a vat and everything she thinks is the external world is only in her mind still maintains that there is a real world. Such a student may be accurately tracking the positive

epistemic status of her belief that the external world is real but we would probably not award her a medal for intellectual virtue. Why? Probably most of us already do a reasonably strong job of tracking the positive epistemic status of beliefs that fall at both extremes of the horizontal line in Figure 1, and we are even bound to accurately track the positive epistemic status for beliefs closer to the middle at least occasionally. Much more interesting for both psychologists and philosophers would be to examine whether intellectual humility as presented here is more likely across some domains of beliefs or environmental contexts in individuals who are not broadly intellectually humble.

How Accurate—and in What Way—Does One Need to Be in Tracking One's Beliefs?

The trait-state distinction raises another potential concern relevant to measuring intellectual humility. One may be concerned that our definition of intellectual humility fails to specify just how accurate one must be in tracking the positive epistemic status of one's own beliefs to be intellectually humble versus arrogant or diffident. Must one accurately track the positive epistemic status of all of one's own beliefs with an extremely high degree of fidelity, or only most of them with a moderately high degree of fidelity, or somewhere in between? Whereas we are content to allow intellectual humility to fall somewhere on a continuum (again, like courage), some comment is required regarding which counts more: the *breadth* or *depth* of accurate tracking in gauging or measuring intellectual humility.

The question is analogous to measuring intelligence: is a genius someone who is exceptionally strong in a particular domain or generally strong in an exceptional number of domains? Both the depth and the breadth positions have merit. We confess to having no strong commitment to whether "accuracy" in our definition should be construed in terms of high degree of accuracy tracking fidelity on any given belief versus high proportion of accuracy tracking

across beliefs. Whereas we are inclined toward the latter "breadth" view – akin to seeing intelligence as strength across an exceptional number of domains – we wish to withhold commitment until more data are available. Psychological research may demonstrate that intellectual humility is more like general intelligence with very fluid domain and situational boundaries or more like special intelligences with sharp strengths in only some areas.

What about a Social Dimension?

Recent empirical research (including some of our own; see Samuelson, Jarvinen, Paulus, Church, Hardy, & Barrett, 2014) seems to strongly suggest that folk conceptions of intellectual humility contain not only a doxastic/epistemic dimension but also a clear social dimension. Intellectual humility, in the folk mind, often seems to be connected with how we engage with and treat other people, and this seems right to us. It is a worry for our account that it seems so very focused on the doxastic or epistemic dimensions of intellectual humility.

There are, we think, three ways to respond to this worry. First, we could back off on giving a 'full blown' account of intellectual humility and just satisfy ourselves with the claim that the doxastic account of intellectual humility is merely a necessary condition on intellectual humility, and maybe something else—another condition—needs to be added to it in order to account for the social dimension.

Second, it is not obvious that the doxastic account of intellectual humility is not already suited to incorporate interpersonal or intrapersonal elements within it. After all, *positive epistemic status* is an extremely open-ended concept. If intellectual character virtues or social, epistemic virtues are included as at least a part of the positive epistemic status at issue (which we think they should be), and if interpersonal and intrapersonal considerations can be incorporated within such virtues (which they often are), then there is a straightforward way for the doxastic

account of intellectual humility to account for such dimensions. For instance, part of raising or lowering the degree to which one holds a belief's positive epistemic status may include whether a person that one ought to humble themselves before holds an opposing view.

Third, contrary to initial appearances, perhaps intellectual humility really does not have to have a social dimension. Think of someone who is completely socially oblivious because of a developmental disorder or a cross-cultural setting. In the US, *not* tipping a waiter or waitress is the sort of thing you only do when you are looking to signify your distaste for the service you received. In China, however, tipping a waiter or waitress is the sort of thing you do only when you are looking to insult someone. If we did not know about this social norm and we visited a restaurant and tipped handsomely for what we thought was excellent service, we would be considered raging jerks—but would we really be? We do not think so. Our hearts were in the right place, we just did not know the social norms. To be sure, our actions often go hand-in-hand with our intentions and that might explain why we tend to think intellectual humility has a social component. Usually, if someone is acting like a total, arrogant prig, it is because he or she is a total, arrogant prig. But we wonder if the so-called "social dimensions" of intellectual humility are not actually necessary for a useful conception of intellectual humility.

Does the Doxastic View Split Intellectual Humility from Humility?

Because the doxastic view focuses on how one holds beliefs rather than on social status or treatment of others, it may appear that this view distances intellectual humility from general humility. Isn't intellectual humility a sub-class of humility? Alternatively, it could be the case that humility is a subset of intellectual humility: perhaps humility is just being intellectually humble about how one conceives of him or herself. If this is correct, then perhaps the most parsimonious way to understand humility is by way of intellectual humility. Indeed, in a seminal

theoretical piece in the psychology literature, Tangney (2000) grounds the definition of humility in two realms: a proper *understanding* of the self (accurate assessment, keeping one's abilities/accomplishments in proper perspective, low self-focus) and a certain intellectual disposition (acknowledging mistakes, intellectual openness). Various measures of humility have also reflected these dimensions (Davis et al., 2011; Landrum, 2011; Rowatt et al., 2006). Perhaps some of the challenges that have been encountered in the measurement of humility could find resolution if humility was seen as a component of intellectual humility.

Conclusion

Based upon our analysis, our working definition of intellectual humility is *the virtue of accurately tracking what one could non-culpably take to be the positive epistemic status of one's own beliefs*. We regard this definition as both a virtuous mean between intellectual arrogance and diffidence and as having advantages over other recent conceptions of intellectual humility. Further philosophical work and psychological evidence will help determine how this construct relates to general social humility on the one hand, and intellectual traits such as open-mindedness, curiosity, and honestly on the other. Our hope is that this model of intellectual humility will be helpful for psychological and social scientists in developing useful measures of this intellectual virtue as well as curricula and interventions that may encourage its development.

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Figure 1

Figure caption