Abstract accepted for Hypatia 2015 Conference

Emily Bingeman

Although feminist epistemology has been around for close to 30 years now, there is still confusion about what it is and how it fits into the larger landscape of epistemology. A common misconception is that feminist epistemologists are working on problems that are peripheral to those of mainstream epistemology. This seems to be evidenced by the fact that the work of feminist epistemologists is often ignored by mainstream epistemologists. The recent trend of ‘value-driven’ epistemology provides an example of this tendency. Most of its prominent proponents, such as Duncan Prichard, Wayne Riggs and John Greco, seem to ignore the feminist literature almost entirely. In this paper I argue that the conceptual tools developed by feminist epistemologists would be particularly relevant to this new value-driven approach. I use Jon Greco’s knowledge as achievement account as a case study in order to show exactly how the value-drive approach would be benefitted by paying attention to insights from feminist epistemology. In particular, I will explore how insights from Miranda Fricker’s work on epistemic injustice, Jennifer Saul’s work on implicit bias and Nancy Tuana’s work on epistemologies of ignorance can be used to supplement and expand Greco’s account.

I begin by giving a brief outline of what I take feminist epistemology to be and why it is important for mainstream epistemologists to pay closer attention to it. Next, I explain why the value-driven approach in particular would benefit from insights from feminist epistemology. I then briefly outline Freco’s knowledge as achievement account and provide an analysis of how it is impoverished with additional conceptual tools provided by Fricker, Saul and Tuana. In particular, I discuss how Greco’s lack of attention to how power relations affect knowledge practices provides an inadequate view of knowledge related in justices as the epistemic marginalization of Indigenous peoples knowledge in Canada. My aim is to build constructively on what I take to be a persuasive and powerful account of knowledge, while at the same time providing support for the general claim that mainstream epistemologists need to pay more attention to feminist epistemology.