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FACTS AND VALUES IN EPISTEMOLOGY

*Abstract*

In the present paper I argue that epistemology considers or must consider both facts and epistemic values. It must consider facts when it studies the sources of knowledge. It surely considers epistemic values because one of the main epistemic concepts is that of justification which is a normative concept. Two different strategies claim that things are otherwise. One is that of Quine who wants to eliminate the concept of justification from epistemology. The second is that of Chisholm who defines epistemic values in terms of other epistemic values. Both strategies are judged to be deficient. It is maintained that the solution is to say that epistemic values supervene on facts. This solution is adopted (for example) by Goldman, but its appeal to the concept of truth renders it not fully convincing. In closing I ask if epistemology is neutral with respect to values that are not epistemic values. To this end I analyze and criticize two different trends which deny it to be so: one is the feminist trend, and the other is the pragmatistic trend.