

- Agenda** | 1. Today's readings in context
Feminist | 2. Haraway on objectivity
epistemologies | 3. Reading discussion

Three perspectives on epistemology:

(i.e. "is knowledge social?")

Oct 5

Bloor (1976)

- ‡ Strong programme
- ‡ Staunchly constructivist

Oct 12

Haraway (1988)

- ‡ Standpoint theory
- ‡ Reclaiming objectivity

Martin (1991)

- ‡ Application of feminist empiricism

Oct 17

Hacking (1983)

- ‡ Scientific realism
- ‡ Incorporating ideas from constructivism

A brief note on the term *feminist*

- ⋮ Contemporary feminist epistemology is concerned with much more than just gender
- ⋮ Describes a critical approach to epistemology that focuses on power and structures of oppression
- ⋮ Includes, e.g., critical race theory, postcolonial theory, critical disability theory, ...

Haraway on objectivity

Haraway (1988) is a response to feminist (and other critical) critiques of “objectivity”

- ‡ Historically, the sheen of objectivity has consistently been used to justify exploitation and oppression
- ‡ Modern ideal of objectivity as impartial and 'perspectiveless' (*god trick*) is *inherently* oppressive
- ‡ ***Haraway addresses two opposing feminist/critical responses to the problems of objectivity:***



Radical constructivism

- ‡ Scientific knowledge is *nothing more than* rhetoric, power, and jockeying over control of the dominant narrative
- ‡ *Complete rejection of objectivity*

Feminist empiricism

- ‡ Marginalized voices are necessary in science to counteract the cultural contingency of experience (e.g. Martin 1991)
- ‡ *Fundamentally subscribes to the modern ideal of objectivity*

Standpoint theory (à la Haraway)

A third choice

- ∴ Don't reject objectivity entirely, reject the *impartiality* of objectivity
- ∴ There is no such thing as knowledge without a perspective
- ∴ For Haraway, feminist standpoint theory offers the groundedness of objectivity while acknowledging the inherent contingency of knowledge

"Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see." (583)



Scientific Realism

| ∴ **Hacking (1983)**

| *What is scientific realism?*

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([1999](#)).



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[Guide to Cinema](#) ([2006](#)).