



Real Knowing: New Versions of the Coherence Theory

Linda Martin Alcoff

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"Real" knowing always involves a political dimension, Linda Martín Alcoff suggests. But this does not mean we need to give up realism or the possibility of truth. Recent work in continental philosophy insists on the influence that power and desire exert on knowing, whereas contemporary analytic philosophy largely ignores these political concerns in its accounts of justification and truth. Alcoff engages these traditionally conflicting approaches in a constructive dialogue, effectively spanning the analytic/continental divide. In provocative readings of major figures in the continental tradition, Alcoff shows that the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Michel Foucault can help rectify key problems in coherence epistemology, such as the link between coherence and truth. She also argues that discussions about knowledge among continental philosophers can benefit from the work of analytic philosophers Donald Davidson and Hilary Putnam on meaning and ontology. Alcoff makes a compelling case for the need to address truth as a metaphysical issue, in contrast to minimalist tendencies in Anglo-American philosophy and deconstructionism on the continent. Her work persuasively argues for coherentist epistemology as a more realistic reconfiguration of the ontology of truth.



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