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A Moral Epistemic Practice (Handout)

For Basu (2019a), non-epistemic facts are relevant to justification.
- o Basu thinks we should "take seriously" the idea that "epistemic standards governing belief are not independent of moral considerations" (9–10)
- o Morality "isn't really encroaching in epistemology, it has been there all along" (21)
- o The "socio-historical context" raises or lowers the stakes for justification (15)
- o We should develop a "moral sensitivity" that "amounts to not only a recognition of an unjust environment, but also an adjustment of one's threshold for justification to meet the moral stakes of that environment" (15)

For Gardiner (2018), the wrong of racist beliefs can be understood without non-epistemic factors.
- o "If a belief is epistemically well supported it cannot be racist since no true claim is genuinely racist" (192)
- o "There is no tension between epistemic and moral norms because tracking the truth accurately cannot be morally wrong" (184)

Locating the error of racist beliefs
- o Basu (2019c)
  - ▪ downstream: harmful *results* of a belief (e.g. behaviour)
  - ▪ upstream: something *prior*, such as "the many processes that contribute to the agent forming the belief"; "problematic beliefs are merely symptoms of a defect in the cognitive system" (2505, 2506)
  - ▪ whole stream: "the wrong lies in the evidence that sparks the belief and how that belief interacts with upstream features of an agent's cognitive framework" (2508)
- o Gardiner (2018)
  - ▪ background "understanding" (similar to Basu's "upstream")
  - ▪ morally, "it depends on what else [the person] believes and how [they] integrat[e] [their] judgement with existing beliefs" (189)
  - ▪ "it is the understanding the belief is embedded in—or that we take the belief to be embedded in—that explains much of the perceived wrong in the beliefs described" (190)

- o Basu's (2019b) hermit example
  - ▪ "*relational* harm: the hermit fails to relate as he ought" (919)
- o Iris Murdoch's (1999) M&D example
  - ▪ M, upon becoming aware of her prejudice, "reflects deliberately about D," and her perspective of D slowly changes (313)

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