ABSTRACTS

C4.6 Philosophy of the Cognitive and Behavioural Sciences

Can Non-Cognitive Values Have a Beneficial Role in the Assessment of Scientific Theories? A case Study of Evolutionary Psychology
Silvia Ivani, Department of Philosophy, Tilburg University, Tilburg, NETHERLANDS

Philosophers traditionally deny a role for non-cognitive values in the assessment of scientific theories. These non-cognitive values go beyond the range of internal scientific values and include moral, social, religious, aesthetic, economic, and political values. On this view, to exclude the influence of non-cognitive values on the appraisal of theories makes it possible to produce objective knowledge. My aim is to show that some non-cognitive values can have a legitimate and beneficial role in the assessment of scientific theories. I argue that non-cognitive values don’t necessarily compromise the objectivity of a scientific theory. In order to develop my analysis, I examine the influence of feminist values on the assessment of the theories of evolutionary psychology. In particular, I analyze the influence of feminist values on the assessment of Sexual Strategies Theory. Intemann (2005) claims that non-cognitive values can play a legitimate role in the assessment of scientific theories if they are connected to the scientific aims of a research context. I suggest considering the aims of research contexts as cognitive values, such as empirical fit and internal coherence. I claim that non-cognitive values can have a useful role in the assessment of a theory if they are connected to the fulfillment of cognitive values. In other words, certain non-cognitive values may help to promote theories that possess relevant cognitive values. In my talk, I claim that feminist critique pinpoint the problematic aspects of Sexual Strategies Theory with the fulfillment of empirical fit. Therefore, I argue that feminist values help evolutionary psychologists to accept adequate theories and to reject the inappropriate ones. Reference: Intemann K. (2005), “Feminism, Underdetermination, and Values in Science”, in Philosophy of Science, 72, 5, pp. 1001- 1012.

Methodological and philosophical problems of using thought experiments in moral psychology and behavioural sciences
Robin Kopecký, Department of philosophy and history of science, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Prague, CZECH REPUBLIC

The usage of moral dilemmas and thought experiments has been proved useful in finding factors influencing our willingness for altruistic behaviour and partly determining our moral judgments however theoretical background still contains various problems. The aim of the paper is to discuss various issues linked with comparing and matching folk intuitions with well thought and reasoned philosophical standpoint. The methodological question preceding usage of thought experiments is whether human mind uses one consistent module for moral reasoning, i.e. utilitarian or deontological, or folk intuitions in moral dilemmas are closer to “moral toolbox” with more than one consistent module. The philosophical question of terminology in so-called “utilitarian” judgments in moral dilemmas like “trolley problem” and “ticking bomb dilemma” is the relation between “utilitarian” judgments and genuine utilitarian concern for the greater good which is currently quite unclear.