



Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance (SUNY series, Philosophy and Race)

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Leading scholars explore how different forms of ignorance are produced and sustained, and the role they play in knowledge practices.

Offering a wide variety of philosophical approaches to the neglected philosophical problem of ignorance, this groundbreaking collection builds on Charles Mills's claim that racism involves an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance. Contributors explore how different forms of ignorance linked to race are produced and sustained and what role they play in promoting racism and white privilege. They argue that the ignorance that underpins racism is not a simple gap in knowledge, the accidental result of an epistemological oversight. In the case of racial oppression, ignorance often is actively produced for purposes of domination and exploitation. But as these essays demonstrate, ignorance is not simply a tool of oppression wielded by the powerful. It can also be a strategy for survival, an important tool for people of color to wield against white privilege and white supremacy. The book concludes that understanding ignorance and the politics of such ignorance should be a key element of epistemological and social/political analyses, for it has the potential to reveal the role of power in the construction of what is known and provide a lens for the political values at work in knowledge practices.

“This anthology brings together some very prominent philosophers to address one of the most embarrassing and blatantly ignored elephants in philosophy: ignorance. While philosophers claim to be children of Socrates, who alone was virtuous and courageous enough to recognize the fecundity of ignorance, few have really addressed it with the verve and originality displayed in the contributions to this volume. I consider it a must-have for libraries, faculty, and graduate students.” — Eduardo Mendieta, editor of *The Frankfurt School on Religion: Key Writings by the Major Thinkers*

At Penn State at University Park, Shannon Sullivan is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies, and Nancy Tuana is DuPont/Class of 1949 Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies. Sullivan is the author of *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*, and Tuana is coeditor (with Sandra Morgen) of *Engendering Rationalities*, also published by SUNY Press.

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