



Relational Autonomy and Epistemic Injustice

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Philosophy is a striking outlier among the humanities for its gender disparities and for the resistance in some quarters of the discipline to feminist concerns. This paper examines two feminist innovations that challenge the methodological individualism that is the default paradigm within the discipline. Relational theories of autonomy challenge the individualism of mainstream philosophical approaches to agency and autonomy: first, by explicating the complex social scaffolding required to develop and exercise autonomy; and second, by explicating how the internalization of gender and other forms of social oppression and injustice can threaten the autonomy of persons who are subject to such oppression.

The notion of epistemic injustice challenges the individualism of mainstream epistemology by drawing attention to the effects of social identity prejudice on knowledge practices. Examples include testimonial injustice, or discounting the credibility of a person's testimony due to identity prejudice; and hermeneutic injustice, whereby aspects of social experience (e.g. the experience of sexual harassment) are rendered invisible due to deficits in collective understanding. Although both relational autonomy theory and theories of epistemic injustice are gaining increasing traction, within and outside Philosophy, much philosophical work remains recalcitrantly individualistic and blind to the effects of social positionality on our agential and epistemic capacities.

Catriona Mackenzie is Professor of Philosophy, Director of the Research Centre for Agency, Values and Ethics, and Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University, Sydney. She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities. Mackenzie is co-editor of several volumes, including *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self* (Oxford University Press, 2000), and, most recently, *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

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