

Emancipatory Methodology in Feminist Metaphysics

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Abstract. Philosophy is often political - this is not new. But within some strands of contemporary feminist and social philosophy, there is a growing trend toward viewing the political ramifications of a philosophical theory as part of the success conditions for that theory. Katharine Jenkins, in her recent book *Ontology and Oppression*, outlines and defends this approach to doing philosophy, which she calls ‘emancipatory theorizing’. On this approach, which we will call ‘emancipatory methodology’, the success of our theories—and on a plausible reading, the *truth* of the claims made by those theories—is at least partly dependent upon the extent to which those theories serve our political aims. In this paper, we first argue that emancipatory methodology is a much stronger - and more distinctive - claim about the relationship between philosophy and political aims than other, more familiar approaches. We then argue that the resulting framework proposed by emancipatory methodology faces serious problems: it is very hard to clarify what the approach recommends, and attempts to actually apply it seem to obscure important options in the theoretical landscape. We contrast Jenkins’ (2023) project to another recent book on gender - R. Brigg’s and B. George’s *What Even is Gender?* - to highlight that the key problems arise specifically from the combination of emancipatory methodology with the aims of analytic philosophy.