

The methodological is political

What's the matter with 'analytic feminism'?

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A core insight of some important second wave feminist writings is that, in order to qualify as truly 'feminist', a movement has to be politically radical. For example, there is a powerful articulation of this theme, to mention one noteworthy site, in the work of bell hooks. A guiding preoccupation of hooks' thought, as far back as the early eighties, is to underline the pernicious and intellectually flawed character of the supposedly 'feminist' postures of 'bourgeois white women' in the U.S. whose efforts are directed toward the politically superficial goal of claiming the social privileges of bourgeois white men.¹ hooks shows that there is no way to 'overcome barriers that separate women from one another' without 'confronting the reality of racism'.² She describes how the forms of gender-based subordination experienced by privileged white women are inextricable from racist and classist social mechanisms that elevate these women above women who are non-white and poor, and how the sexist obstacles that poor and non-white women encounter are in turn permeated by racism and classism.³ hooks concludes that if 'feminism' is to be dedicated to identifying and resisting sexist oppression, it needs to – in her words – 'direct our attention to systems of domination and the interrelatedness of sex, race and class oppression.'⁴

This is how hooks defends the view that any true feminism must be politically radical. She invites us to see that in the U.S. sexism is interwoven with racism and classism in society-wide systems of belief and practice, and she argues that any feminism worthy of the name must therefore take the form of a politically subversive attack on the relevant forms of bias.⁵ Although hooks is in the first instance concerned

with the contemporaneous U.S., her reflections are a model, too, for thinking about feminist aspirations at other times and places.

In order to qualify as truly 'feminist', a movement also has to be methodologically radical. This – the thesis of the following article – is a notable suggestion made by central contributions to second and post-second wave feminist thought. The idea is that respect for what hooks and many others see as feminism's political radicalism requires a radicalism of method. Many feminist thinkers contend that the intersecting patterns of behaviour constitutive of gender-based abuses are recognisable as the abuses they are only when approached through an appreciation of the significance of types of social exposure that structural gender-bias occasions. These feminists suggest that, if we are to combat sexist and racist social formations, we therefore need to complement our political radicalism with a methodological radicalism that involves making use of the practical power of ethically non-neutral resources, conceived as in themselves cognitively authoritative.

Despite its apparent widespread acceptance within overlapping strands of radical feminist thought, including Marxist feminism and black and postcolonial feminisms, this methodological precept goes missing in an emerging body of feminist theory loosely associated with analytic philosophy. The following article takes Miranda Fricker's celebrated 2007 book *Epistemic Injustice* as representative of this developing feminist corpus, bringing out how Fricker unquestioningly – and incorrectly – takes for granted that ethical neutrality is a regulative ideal for all world-directed thought. The goal is to revive more

venerable calls for ethically non-neutral modes of feminist social criticism by showing that the methodological conservatism to which Fricker and others are committed is fatal to feminist politics.

Methodological radicalism

Feminist calls for radical methodology are, at the most basic level, grounded in the observation that the interlinked systems of sexism, racism, classism and other forms of bias that feminism combats (e.g., ableist, heterosexist, anti-trans and ageist bias) are not merely intellectual affairs, and that these systems are both structured by and structure the world. The idea is that, although the biased perspectives of elites fail to do justice to how things really are, there is nevertheless a sense in which the world they seem to reveal is all too real. For instance, women in deeply sexist societies find that life is – as Marilyn Frye once put it – ‘confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional’, and we thus find ourselves tending not only to demonstrate but to experience as natural and appropriate the niche virtues, peculiarities of manner and limitations of achievement that seem to confirm sexist beliefs.⁶ Suppose that we take an *ideology* to be a set of political ideas that, while lacking the kind of rational warrant that would justify their de facto prevalence, organise social life and experience in a manner that gives them an aura of truth. Then, following up on the political radicalism of hooks and others, we can say that sexism is an ideology that is inextricably interwoven with ideologies of race, class, sexuality, ability and age. Speaking in these terms – in terms of ideologies with essentially material dimensions – is helpful for illuminating why it can seem hard to understand how emancipation from gender-based bias is even possible, and why many feminists have thought that radical methods are required to combat it.⁷

Part of what is methodologically radical about the strategies championed by many feminists is that they make use of the practical power of ethically non-neutral resources with an eye to addressing the material weight of sexist ideology. This reliance on ethically-loaded tools is *not* generally conceived by feminists as a merely instrumental measure. There

are, admittedly, advocates of ideology critique who adopt the following position. They recognise the practical need for ethically non-neutral methods. At the same time, they claim that these methods are as such non-rational and should therefore only be used – as crucial but also intrinsically problematic and therefore merely temporary instruments – for clearing away obstacles to the creation of a space for debate that is maximally neutral and, as the thinkers in question see it, hence rationally and politically sound. This is the stance that Jason Stanley, for instance, defends in his recent, widely discussed book on propaganda.⁸ Despite regarding all propaganda as non-neutral and hence as non-rational and politically problematic, Stanley allows for indispensable or, in his terms, ‘non-demagogic’ types of propaganda that are at times ‘necessary’ for dismantling ideological formations that distort what he sees as the neutral space for democratic discourse.⁹ But a Stanley-like approach to ideology critique is foreign to central strands of feminist theory and feminist thought. It is more common for feminists, not only to reject as confused the idea that ethical and other evaluative perspectives inevitably tend to distort our view of reality, but also to suggest that this idea itself does ideological work, delegitimising cultural perspectives that contribute internally to shedding light on women’s lives. A core theme of feminist thinking over the last half century is that the practices and patterns of behaviour constitutive of gender-based abuses such as, say, sexual harassment and sexual objectification only show up as the abuses they are when looked at in a manner illuminated by a sense of the import of forms of social vulnerability that systematic gender-based bias creates.¹⁰ Against this backdrop, the suggestion that the only responsible posture for considering social phenomena is an ethically neutral one – and that any non-neutral instruments we use to combat sexist ideology are inherently flawed, temporary tools for returning us to a maximally neutral space for discourse – appears to pose an existential threat to feminist politics.

Hostility to the idea that undistorted mental contact with the world is as such maximally free from any ethical perspectives is sometimes taken to be tied to skepticism about objectivity. Many poststructuralists,

including some who are committed feminists, combine the rejection of an aspiration to neutral modes of criticism with such skepticism.¹¹ But this post-structuralist strategy risks being politically enervating, depriving us of any warrant to claim objective authority for our critical conclusions.¹² Moreover, there is a sense in which the strategy falls short of the methodological radicalism that is the hallmark of an important strain of contemporary feminist thought. In connecting the embrace of ethically-loaded critical resources with the forfeiture of wholehearted objectivity, the relevant strains of poststructuralist thought effectively rehearse the logic of prominent debates within analytic philosophy about what the pursuit of objectivity requires. To see this, we can look to a set of conversations, reaching back to the 1970s and 1980s, that owe their basic structure to influential interventions by Thomas Nagel and Bernard Williams.¹³ Whereas one major theme of this analytic corpus is that our concepts are irrevocably 'ours', and accordingly there is no such thing as an ideally dispassionate and dehumanised position from which to describe the world,¹⁴ a second recurring theme is that we can nevertheless appeal to what are pre-

sumed to be wholly abstract investigative methods (say, those associated with scientific inquiry) to establish that the move toward greater neutrality is a move toward greater accuracy.¹⁵ What emerges is a view of our mental access to reality wherein neutrality – conceived as approached via the progressive shedding of ethically and culturally local perspectives or modes of understanding – serves as a regulative ideal.

Suppose we speak in this connection of a *neutral conception* of reason. It would be fair to represent this 'neutral conception' as an organising methodological tenet of mainstream analytic philosophy and hence to regard it as the mark of a kind of methodological orthodoxy or conservatism. It would also be fair to say that the type of poststructuralist feminism touched upon a moment ago participates, if in a reversed manner, in this conservatism. For, in treating the repudiation of the pursuit of neutrality as tantamount to the abandonment of an unqualified claim to objectivity, the poststructuralist position effectively appeals to a neutral conception of reason – even while at the same time depicting the ideal of neutral, undistorted mental access to the world encoded in the conception as hopelessly unattainable.



A recognisable family of projects in feminist theory adopts a more oppositional stance toward a neutral conception. To be sure, the efforts in question generally stand shoulder to shoulder with poststructuralist feminism in being driven by insights of postcolonial and black feminisms into how false claims to neutrality and universality have been, and continue to be, used in the service of sexist, racist and imperialist violence. But, starting from this politically radical stance, many feminists set out – in a manner that distinguishes them from poststructuralists – to identify weaknesses in arguments on the narrow conception’s behalf and conclude that it is incapable of leveraging an attack on the cognitive credentials of particular modes of thought simply because they are ethically non-neutral.¹⁶ Supporters of these projects insist that productive feminist thought has to reflect the recognition that, if we are to do justice to the real or objective texture of women’s lives, we need to explore and, where appropriate, take on board ethically-loaded perspectives. This is the methodologically radical posture that is the counterpart of feminism taken as a politically radical enterprise.

Such methodological radicalism is a thread running through disputes and developments in feminist theory from the 1960s to the present. Early in this period, feminists appealed to interpretations of Marx’s social theory, arguing that the experience of oppressed people in general, and of women in particular, affords an epistemically privileged perspective on real aspects of social life. This view is pivotal for feminist reflections, in the 1960s and 1970s, on the political potential of consciousness-raising,¹⁷ and it also drives the emergence of feminist standpoint theory in the 1980s.¹⁸ Some versions of feminist standpoint theory have been rightly criticised for helping themselves to the confused and politically pernicious assumption that there is some standpoint that is essentially that of women. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the idea of standpoints gradually gave way to an idea of ‘intersections’ that is reminiscent of the accent of earlier radical feminists like hooks on the ‘interrelatedness’ of different forms of oppression.¹⁹ While the distinctive emphasis of theories of intersectionality is on underlining how individual women’s experiences vary with social classifications such as race,

class, sexual orientation, age, ability and ethnicity – as well as on how, far from being additive in some simple way, there are complex interactions among the different forms of bias encountered by women who are subject to these classifications – these theories resemble feminist standpoint theories in maintaining that particular cultural perspectives that women are made to occupy may be cognitively authoritative. What stays constant in the strand of feminist intellectual history just traced out – and even makes an appearance within some very recent feminist contributions to what is called the ‘affective turn’²⁰ – is the methodologically radical conviction that investigating charged perspectives opened up by forms of bias to which women are subjected is essential to efforts to get objective aspects of women’s lives clearly into focus.

These feminist calls for radical methods might well be glossed as calls for recognition of the moral and imaginative demands of liberating and rationally sound social thought. The point is not that there is anything like an algorithm for such thought but rather that, if we are to pursue it in a rationally responsible manner, we need to manifest a sensitivity to the indefinitely complex ways in which, at concrete historical times and places, different and interweaving forms of bias expose members of particular social groups to harm. If we want exemplary illustrations of demands for the exercise of such a sensitivity, we can look to productions of some of the most outspoken and original feminist critics of our time. For instance, the legal scholar and feminist critic Kimberlé Crenshaw makes a powerful case for thinking that, if we are to get clearly into focus the harm of sexual violence against black women in the U.S., we need to work from a sense of ways in which anti-black racism is gendered. Crenshaw writes in a manner intended to position her reader to register, among other things, the significance of the fact that rape and sexual assault have been conditions of black women’s work lives for centuries; that there are still operative institutional structures that bear the imprint of associated myths about black women as ‘sexually voracious’ and ‘sexually indiscriminate’;²¹ that in the U.S. a woman’s chastity has been taken as a mark of her honesty and that, given the continued institutional

force of these myths, black women are less likely to be believed;²² and that, even in cases in which a conviction is secured for a sex crime against a black woman, the sentence is likely to be less severe than sentences imposed on men – white or black – who commit the same crime against a white woman.²³ Crenshaw uses evocative techniques to reveal, among other things, otherwise invisible aspects of the ordeal to which Anita Hill was subjected when she was subpoenaed to testify in front of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee during its 1991 hearings on Clarence Thomas' nomination to the Supreme Court.²⁴ There are analogues to Crenshaw's non-neutral, radical methods in the work of other great feminist critics. To mention but two further prominent examples, the novelist Toni Morrison and the poet and essayist Claudia Rankine likewise use expressive devices, the former in a fluid, literary style and the latter in a distinctive lyrical fashion, to shed light on neutrally unavailable aspects of the lives of black women in the U.S.²⁵

Methodological conservatism

That the kind of practically and imaginatively demanding work that these feminist critics undertake is required might seem like something of which no one, at least no feminist thinker, needs to be reminded. However, there is an emerging body of feminist theory, loosely associated with analytic philosophy, that implicitly denies feminism's need for this kind of methodological radicalism. A good example of the trend in question is furnished by Miranda Fricker's celebrated 2007 book *Epistemic Injustice*,²⁶ arguably the most influential contribution to analytic feminism in a generation. Fricker sets out to address gender-, race-, sexuality- and class-based bias, plausibly construing them as ideological in the sense of having material dimensions that render them not only partly 'self-fulfilling',²⁷ but also such that even individuals who are critics at the level of mere beliefs can wind up serving as 'host[s] to a sort of half-life' for their continuation.²⁸ Her appealing thesis is that the perniciousness of these oppressive ideologies is to a large extent a function of ways in which they hurt us as knowers.²⁹ The particular 'epistemic injustices' she singles out for attention are a type of 'testimo-

nial injustice' that, she writes, 'occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word' and a kind of 'hermeneutical injustice' that occurs when 'a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences.'³⁰ Fricker's treatment of these injustices is compact and engagingly presented, and for this reason it is not surprising that her book has generated an enormous and in large part positive response within the social thought-starved analytic tradition, spawning entire new research programmes. Yet, despite its massive analytic reception, and despite the large critical literature on it that now exists, there are a couple of fundamental features that still deserve scrutiny.

First, the ingenuity of the book's treatment of its political themes is to a large extent a function of Fricker's creativity in working within the constraints of a neutral conception of reason, and in thus effectively preserving her claim to what, in light of the above reflections, can be called 'methodological conservatism'. There is also a second, related and likewise generally unremarked, noteworthy feature of Fricker's book. Various commentators have pointed out that Fricker is mostly preoccupied with the sorts of micro- or individual-level corrections we can make to injustices in ideological settings,³¹ and it is certainly true that she offers only a few sketchy suggestions about how to combat damaging ideologies and push for liberating social change. That Fricker merely gestures in the direction of social critique need not itself be grounds for protest. No book can do everything. But what does merit attention is the fact that, when closely examined, her gestures are unsatisfactory. One very straightforward measure of their inadequacy, as will emerge, is their failure to equip us to make sense of even the few cases of social critique that she herself considers.

It is fairly easy to see that Fricker is committed to working within the logical space carved out by a neutral conception of reason.³² Consider in this connection the treatment she gives – and to which she devotes the bulk of her book – of the epistemic injustices she refers to as 'testimonial'. Fricker tells us that testimonial injustice is reflective of 'prejudice',

which, as she understands it, shows up in our ‘judgments of credibility’, that is, in the assessments we make, within discursive exchanges, of the sincerity and accuracy of speakers.³³ By her lights, our main rational resource for making such assessments are ‘stereotypes’ or empirical generalisations about the reliability of members of specific social groups,³⁴ and, significantly, she assumes that the evaluation of such stereotypes is a task, not for an irreducibly ethical study of society, but for the social sciences understood as quasi-natural sciences.³⁵ Frickerian stereotypes can turn out to be either more or less accurate, and, although Fricker takes a critical interest in some cases in which we rely on inaccurate stereotypes, she insists that reliance on stereotypes is not problematic per se, and that rationality obliges us to traffic in them in most of our discursive dealings, excepting only cases in which we have a ‘wealth of personal knowledge of [a] speaker as an individual’.³⁶ A stereotype that is prejudicial, for Fricker, is one that is both inaccurate and ‘made or maintained without proper regard to the evidence’,³⁷ and the core cases of testimonial injustice that interest her involve, not only prejudicial stereotypes that lead us to wrongly deflate our judgments of a speaker’s credibility,³⁸ but, moreover, stereotypes of this sort that encode ‘negative identity prejudice’ that follows individuals ‘through different dimensions of social activity’.³⁹ (Thus, a clear case of testimonial injustice for her is, for instance, ‘that the police don’t believe you because you are black’.⁴⁰) Fricker is aware that, in ideological contexts, evidence can seem to confirm stereotypes that are in fact distorted by negative identity prejudice. She thinks it follows that in such contexts a hearer can inflict a testimonial injustice on a speaker without culpability, and she speaks, in reference to this kind of case, of ‘epistemic innocence’.⁴¹ One commentator, Kristie Dotson, has argued powerfully that this delineation of the region of testimonial vice runs the risk of obscuring and reinforcing ‘contributory’ injustices of which individuals are guilty insofar as they preserve structurally produced forms of ignorance that cut them off from conceptual resources in fact capable of equipping them to recognise their prejudices.⁴² Dotson’s point is that Fricker effectively sanctions such injustices by suggesting that – in contexts

in which ready-to-hand conceptual resources seem to confirm pernicious stereotypes – only the hearer capable of ‘exceptional’ social reasoning, or of what might be called anti-ideological social thought, would see through prejudice.⁴³ The question of what, for Fricker, such ‘exceptional’ thought is like is pivotal for the current discussion. Setting this question aside for just a moment, notice that, insofar as she depicts us as relying in most of our discursive dealings on ‘stereotypes’, understood as empirical generalisations about behaviour whose evaluation is an ethically neutral affair – and insofar as the kind of testimonial virtue she urges is a matter of ‘*neutralising* [stereotypical] prejudice in one’s credibility judgments’⁴⁴ – she operates in the logical realm determined by a neutral conception of reason.

Theorising with the neutral conception of reason

That Fricker is committed to operating within this space becomes even clearer when we turn to her attempt to situate her stereotype-centred account of our testimonial interactions within the context of debates about the epistemology of testimony. As she presents them, these debates are largely quarrels between the following two opposed parties. On one side, there are *inferentialists*, who maintain that we gain knowledge from a speaker’s assertion by ‘in some way (perhaps very swiftly, perhaps even unconsciously) rehears[ing] an argument’ that concludes with the assertion. In depicting us as dealing in arguments, such inferentialists may seem to invite a charge of over-intellectualising our discursive interactions, which typically strike us as wholly non-reflective exchanges. Yet they can claim to be entitled to an intuitively appealing representation of our consumption of testimony as a ‘critical’ or rationally responsible affair. The main interlocutors of inferentialists are *non-inferentialists* who defend, on empirical or a priori grounds, ‘some sort of *default* of credulity of what others tell us’.⁴⁵ While non-inferentialists are thus in a position to do better with the non-reflective phenomenology of our typical testimonial behaviour, they purchase this advantage by forfeiting their claim to depict this behaviour as crit-

ical and, by this route, wind up portraying recipients of testimony as implausibly gullible.⁴⁶ Notice that, despite their evident disagreements, Frickerian inferentialists and non-inferentialists agree in making the following assumption: namely, that, if someone is justified in accepting an uttered or written proposition, the fact that she is justified is a function of the convincingness of an argument, in some sense available to her, that closes with that proposition. What Fricker describes as inferentialists' accent on argument reveals that they are working with this assumption, and, to the extent that she associates the fact that non-inferentialists do not appeal to argument with a commitment to an uncritical default of credulity – that is, to the extent that she takes the alleged lack of a role for argument here as a mark of rational deficit – she evidently takes an argumentative assumption to figure in their thinking as well.



The fact that Frickerian inferentialists and non-inferentialists thus agree in regarding argument as the mark of rationality is particularly noteworthy because, when philosophers tie rationality to argument, they are often implicitly demonstrating their commitment to a neutral conception of reason. That is, they are frequently helping themselves to a 'neutral' understanding of an *argument* as a proposition or set of propositions which licenses a further concluding proposition in a manner that does not depend on any tendency of the initial propositions to shape our routes of feeling. Since we are on good ground in

taking this widely accepted understanding of argument to be internal to Fricker's dispute about the epistemology of testimony, we are also on good ground in saying that the debate about the epistemology of testimony that she sketches in her book has as one of its organising elements a neutral conception of reason.

Fricker's goal in describing this debate is to lay the groundwork for a defense of a position that combines the virtues of her inferentialist and non-inferentialist approaches in that it treats testimonial knowledge as 'critical yet non-inferential'.⁴⁷ Her ambition here may sound philosophically radical, and it may thus seem reasonable to suppose that she plans to challenge the neutral argumentative assumption that, on her telling, is common currency between inferentialists and non-inferentialists. But, as we will see, she preserves this assumption. There is a clear contrast in this respect between Fricker's work and that of the philosopher with whom she engages most extensively in her treatment of these matters, namely, John McDowell. McDowell orients his take on the epistemology of testimony around repudiating the neutral argumentative assumption that Fricker retains. A good way to approach Fricker's view, and to underline its fidelity to a neutral conception of reason, is to consider it against the backdrop of McDowell's 'non-neutral' alternative.

Early in his most pertinent essay on the epistemology of testimony,⁴⁸ McDowell declares his hostility to the argumentative assumption that, for Fricker, is the shared term in debates between inferentialists and non-inferentialists. He announces that he wants to attack the idea that the epistemic satisfactoriness of a 'standing in the space of reasons with regard to a proposition' needs to be cashed out in terms of 'the cogency of an argument which is at its occupant's disposal, with the proposition in question as its conclusion.'⁴⁹ Implicit in this gesture of McDowell's is the suggestion that, to understand his positive take on the epistemology of testimony, we need to grasp what it might mean for an exercise of rationality to resist assimilation to an argumentative model. One place to see what he has in mind is a significantly earlier discussion of moral or 'virtuous' perception,⁵⁰ where he defends an alternative to a neutral argumentat-

ive conception of reason. Whilst arguing that this conception is in general inadequate for capturing the authority of exercises of reason, he focuses on what he sees as its inadequacy for capturing the rationality of virtuous thought and conduct. At the heart of his discussion is the idea that the virtuous person's conception of how to live is *uncodifiable* in the sense of not allowing formulation as a set of statements which could serve as major premises in a practical syllogism that, together with perceptual claims about the world in the position of minor premises, could yield practical conclusions. 'To an unprejudiced eye', McDowell writes, 'it ought to seem quite implausible that any reasonably adult moral outlook admits of any such codification.'⁵¹

Here McDowell is making not an empirical observation about what might be thought of as the quantitative complexity of a virtuous person's ethical conception, but rather a logical observation about its form. He is taking practical propensities – of sorts inculcated in the process of socialisation – to be not only partly constitutive of the virtuous person's ethical beliefs, but also internal to rational capacities she exercises in acting in the light of these beliefs. He draws on this view in suggesting that there can in principle be no question of codifying the beliefs in the envisioned manner.⁵² The virtuous person exhibits her distinctive rational capacities in picking out salient features of situations whose character and importance aren't available independently of her distinctive sensibility. That is, she demonstrates a kind of employment of rationality in which we 'appeal to an appreciation of the particular instance in inviting acceptance of our judgment'.⁵³

McDowell is not denying that, once a virtuous person has identified a particular feature of her circumstances as salient, we can bring her description of that feature under some precept to which she assents about how to behave in like situations, thereby giving some of her thinking a syllogistic form.⁵⁴ His claim is that, if we take this form to exhaust virtuous rationality, we overlook the rational significance of the manner in which the virtuous person's simultaneously practical and cognitive conception of how to live permeates her vision of things. That is how McDowell attempts to show that virtuous thought

and conduct resist codification – and how he, at the same time, mounts a challenge to the constraints of a neutral argumentative model of rationality.

When McDowell talks about the rationality of virtuous thought and conduct, he is above all interested in the character of virtuous perception. In discussing testimony, he represents understanding a speaker's words as a perceptual matter.⁵⁵ These observations are apposite, even bracketing the question of whether what might be called 'discursive perception' is part of virtuous perception, because McDowell conceives all perceptual activity on the part of language-users as drawing on rational or conceptual capacities in a manner analogous to that in which virtuous perception does. It is, he maintains, quite generally the case that an appreciative response to a particular is necessary for recognising the correctness of a veridical perception.⁵⁶ With regard to our perception of others' discursive performances, this thesis might be fleshed out as follows. In trafficking in others' discursive performances, we operate with sophisticated conceptions of the kinds of things people meaningfully do with words (e.g., inform, warn, joke, question, command, deceive, etc.). Moreover, far from being codifiable, our conceptions are partly constituted by practical propensities that were inculcated in us in learning language.⁵⁷

Part of what acting rationally in the light of such a conception amounts to is drawing on these practical propensities so as to pick out indifferently inaccessible aspects of speech situations that are revelatory of what speakers are doing with their words. This means that in dealing with speech we are from the outset exercising rational capacities that equip us to recognise considerations speaking for or against, e.g., regarding potential informants as trustworthy.⁵⁸ At the same time, it means that McDowell's account of the epistemology of testimony could supply Fricker's stated desire for an account on which the consumption of testimony – and, indeed, of speech more generally – is both non-reflective and critical.⁵⁹ To the extent that McDowell represents the understanding of utterances and inscriptions as a matter of perceptual sensitivity to particulars, he depicts such understanding as at least largely non-reflective. Further, to the extent that he represents deliverances of the relevant sensitivities as drawing on rational capacities that are

also exercised in evaluating independent considerations for or against trusting speakers, he depicts the understanding of speech as wholly critical. A good case could in this way be made for taking McDowell's 'non-neutral' account to satisfy Fricker's two main desiderata.

It may therefore seem surprising to discover that Fricker presents herself, in substantial respects, as a critic of McDowell. Although McDowell explicitly rejects the kind of default of credibility that she associates with non-inferentialism,⁶⁰ Fricker portrays him as in her sense a non-inferentialist.⁶¹ She does not arrive at this portrayal via the rejection of his non-neutral account of how rational capacities – including those we require to deal responsibly with testimony – are exercised in understanding speech. She simply doesn't register that he is offering such an account, as she makes clear when she says that she wants to remedy what she sees as his neglect of the critical dimension of our testimonial lives.⁶² She proceeds here by exploring his claim that the ethical knowledge of the virtuous person is uncodifiable because she wants to show that the testimony-related knowledge we possess as mature speakers is likewise uncodifiable.⁶³ Thus formulated, her stance seems congenial to his. Nevertheless, any appearance of substantial agreement between Fricker and McDowell is misleading. Whereas, in speaking of uncodifiability, McDowell is – as we saw – making a logical point about how some satisfactory moves in the space of reasons resist neutral argumentative formulation, Fricker is making an empirical point about what she sees as the arresting complexity of the stereotype-based information we are obliged to deal with when we traffic in speech.

This brings us to her signature proposal for the epistemology of testimony. Fricker's thesis is that we come to deal with stereotype-based information through a temporally extended developmental process that involves repeatedly being led to make discriminations about the reliability of speakers – and that over time equips us with sophisticated sensitivities that we can then rely on fluidly in making assessments of credibility.⁶⁴ There is some plausibility to the thought that, if this thesis were successfully defended, it would equip Fricker to represent our dealings in testimony as in general both critical and non-

reflective. But, in advancing her thesis, Fricker depicts consumers of testimony as engaging in exercises of reason that could in theory (except for difficulties presented by the sheer complexity of our social lives) be rendered as arguments. She winds up splitting the difference between her inferentialists and non-inferentialists, not by rejecting the neutral argumentative assumption they agree in making, but rather by incorporating this assumption in a relatively familiar form.⁶⁵ The upshot is that the account of the epistemology of testimony that is the centerpiece of her book is rightly conceived as taking for granted the logical realm carved out by a neutral conception of reason.

There are passages in Fricker's book, and in her other writings (including in *Radical Philosophy*),⁶⁶ in which she calls for rethinking traditional philosophical views of the relationship between reason and feeling. At one point in the book, for instance, she urges us to shed 'the empiricist *idée fixe* that there is cognition on the one hand and emotion on the other, where the former has intentional content and the latter does not.'⁶⁷ But however suggestive and appealing passages like this one may seem, it would be wrong to take them to count against reading Fricker as taking on board the restrictions of a neutral conception of reason. It is one thing to suggest, as Fricker does, that reason and feeling work together more closely than, say, classic empiricists would have us believe. It is quite another to suggest – as many feminist theorists do, but as Fricker does not – that our routes of feeling may as such be internal to capacities of reason.

It is the latter of these two suggestions, not the former, that is the mark of departure from the logic of a neutral conception of reason. Not that Fricker is the only analytically trained feminist to operate within the conceptual space carved out by a neutral conception. In addition to the many analytic feminists who inherit Fricker's framework and seek to address types of epistemic injustice in her terms, there are – to mention two further recognisable groups – those who appeal to themes from Kant's moral theory in offering 'neutral' analyses of gender-based abuses like sexual objectification and those who appeal to an orthodox (but arguably not Austinian) version of speech act theory in offering 'neutral' analyses of the harm of pornography.⁶⁸



The political exigency of methodological radicalism

The point of showing at length that Fricker is wedded to the neutral conception of reason is to make it possible to appreciate how the conception leads her wrongly to restrict the space of possibilities for thinking about what liberating – anti-ideological – social thought is like. When Fricker turns to the topic of such thought, she herself again draws attention to her reliance on ‘neutral’ philosophical commitments. She tells us that those of us who, living in ideologically tainted social spaces, can figure out what we have reason to do in a manner that isn’t ideologically distorted are people who are capable of ‘exceptional’ discursive moves.⁶⁹ She then elaborates on her notion of exceptional, anti-ideological reasoning in a manner that takes for granted that the right model for such reasoning will be supplied either by what Bernard Williams calls internal reasons or by what he calls external reasons.⁷⁰ Both of these Williamsian positions – the ‘internal’ and the ‘external’ – encode a neutral conception of reason insofar as both exclude the possibility that a development of affect might as

such amount to a cognitive advance.⁷¹

So, although Fricker does not take a stand on ‘the disagreements between internal and external reasons theorists’⁷² – and although she offers an idiosyncratic gloss on internal reasons that supposedly enables her to represent dealing in such reasons as rationally authoritative⁷³ – she conceives of exceptional, anti-ideological social thought as beholden to the constraints of a neutral conception of reason. For her, ‘exceptional’ social thought essentially involves clearing away affective, ideological obstacles to a more neutral and, as she sees it, therefore less warped grasp of things. Fricker is, we might say, assuming that any mobilisation of attitudes necessary to cut through ideologies is at best a temporary, non-rational maneuver for opening up a more neutral space for rational discourse. She is, that is, trafficking in a view of ideology critique that in fundamentals resembles the methodologically conservative view of Jason Stanley’s touched on earlier – a view that is not merely unwelcoming but arguably fatal to feminist politics.

The resulting view leaves us ill-equipped to make sense even of Fricker’s own main example of eman-

cupatory feminist thought. Fricker considers a couple of cases of such thought in her book's final chapter when she is describing what she calls hermeneutic injustice. Earlier in her book, she describes hermeneutic injustice as occurring when a lacuna in public conceptual resources restricts the ability of members of a particular social group to make sense of their experiences. Now she adds that she prefers to speak of such injustices exclusively when the gap in shared concepts results from ways in which the subjection of members of the group in question excludes them from practices 'by which collective social meanings are generated'.⁷⁴ Fricker's central case of hermeneutic injustice is that of women subject to unwanted sexual attention at work before the advent, in the 1970s, of the concept of 'sexual harassment'. She quotes at length from a memoir of Susan Brownmiller's that offers a description of the conversational setting in which members of a group of feminists planning a protest about what we now call 'sexual harassment' arrived at the term.⁷⁵ Fricker does not, however, discuss why we should think that 'harassment' is the right word for these women's purposes. Nor does she ask whether there is a good fit between what these feminists are doing when they conclude that it is the right word and her own preferred account of emancipatory social thought. But once we allow this question to arise, it seems clear that Fricker's account will not advance our efforts to understand what was required for feminist thinkers to recognise the appropriateness of talk of sexual harassment.

An organising theme of feminist theorising about sexual harassment is that, in order to get the patterns of behaviour constitutive of the abuse adequately into focus, we need to look upon the social world from a particular ethically-loaded perspective. Jean Grimshaw is sounding this theme when, in 1986, she writes that 'the introduction of the term "sexual harassment" constituted what can be seen as a *proposal*: namely, that certain sorts of sexual attention should be seen (like other things) as an unpleasant, intrusive and coercive imposition'.⁷⁶ Grimshaw's point is that the use of the new term performs the following 'double function'. It plays an ethical or evaluative role, assessing 'certain experiences [as] indeed intrusive and coercive', and, at the same time, it plays an inextricably

linked descriptive role, picking out 'analogies between different forms of human experience – between, for example, the experience of black young people of police harassment and the experience of a secretary in her office.'⁷⁷

Now, the question of whether there are genuine, cognitively authoritative concepts – such as the concept 'harassment' as Grimshaw here conceives it – that have meanings with inseparably connected ethical and descriptive components is a question that gets prominently taken up and debated in twentieth- and twenty-first-century analytic moral philosophy, and most who weigh in on the issue plainly reject the idea of concepts fitting this characterisation. This is unsurprising, since accepting that there are such concepts would mean allowing that some real features of the world (in particular, those picked out by the envisioned concepts) only come into view from certain ethical perspectives – and it would thus mean abandoning a neutral conception of reason.⁷⁸ But feminists, including those who are themselves analytic moral philosophers, have tended to be much more willing to free themselves from the strictures of a neutral conception and to allow that genuine concepts may trace out patterns that are not available to ethically neutral scrutiny. Within early feminist discussions of sexual harassment, the accent is typically on an analysis of the sort of ethically non-neutral stance that, as the feminists at issue see it, would indeed license an inseparably ethical and descriptive 'realignment of the concept "harassment".'⁷⁹ to include some sex-indexed forms.

A good place to turn here is Catharine MacKinnon's groundbreaking 1979 book, *The Sexual Harassment of Working Women*.⁸⁰ MacKinnon is focused, as her title indicates, on unwanted sexual attention that women receive in the workplace. Many of the behaviours she discusses are, at the time she is writing, widely regarded as mild annoyances at worst, and she approaches the task of getting us to reclassify them – so that they rise in our eyes to the level of significant abuses – by first underlining types of employment-related gender inequalities, including those that get placed under the rubrics of 'sexual segregation and stratification' and 'income inequality'.⁸¹ We must have a sense of the insidiousness of these and other

systematic gender-based forms of inequality, MacKinnon insists, if we are to recognise the harm in unwanted sexual attention that women receive at work. We have to appreciate that these inequalities create social conditions in which women (*qua* members of a subjected social group) are less likely to be believed if they complain about specific forms of treatment at work, and in which they are generally financially less secure and so less able to accept the danger of lodging an unsuccessful complaint that results in termination (or some other form of earnings-related retribution). Consider, for instance, one of the many workplace situations that MacKinnon describes, a case involving a woman whose male supervisor regularly speaks to her of his desire for sexual contact with her, touches her behind, comments on her style of dress and implies that she is 'loose'.⁸² MacKinnon suggests that it is against the backdrop of a sense of women's relative social vulnerability – a vulnerability that makes it riskier for women to protest the conditions of their employment and makes it less likely that they will be believed if they do protest – that the supervisor's sexual attention to this woman can be seen as exploitative and threatening. MacKinnon's larger aim is to show that the kinds of sexual behaviours at issue 'use and help create women's structurally inferior status',⁸³ and that they are thus rightly taken to have the menacing aspect that is the mark of different forms of harassment. But what merits emphasis here is simply that, on her telling, the harassing character of these behaviours is only recognisable given an appreciation of the kind of social exposure created by work-related and other structural gender inequalities. This is what it means to credit MacKinnon with an analysis of the sort of ethically non-neutral social perspective – gestured at by Grimshaw – that justifies us in speaking of 'sexual harassment'.

Now we have before us a sketch of the sorts of lines of thought that originally led feminists to regard the term 'sexual harassment' as saying something that needs to be said. At issue is thinking that is both essentially world-guided (i.e., guided by attention to those behaviours that count as sexual and other forms of harassment) and irreducibly ethical. It is thinking that, far from respecting the constraints of Fricker's neutral conception of reason, directly chal-

lenges these constraints. So, it should be clear that efforts of thought capable of shedding light on the phenomenon of sexual harassment, and of thereby contributing to greater hermeneutic justice, do not at bottom involve the sort of ethically neutral ideology critique that Fricker favours. More generally, it should be clear that Fricker is wrong to suggest that the type of emancipatory feminist thought capable of exposing sexist ideologies that make gender-based bias – with its complex interplay with other forms of bias – invisible will be a matter of clearing obstacles to a neutral view of social relations. On the contrary, such thought will involve refining and mobilising cultural perspectives that are essential for bringing aspects of gendered social life into focus; something we can see if we follow up on the work of those great feminist critics mentioned earlier.⁸⁴ This is what it comes to to say that feminism's political radicalism requires a radicalism of method. Or, alternately, what it comes to to say that the methodological is political.⁸⁵

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Notes

1. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 18.
2. bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1982), 122; see also hooks, *Feminist Theory*, 18.
3. hooks, *Ain't I*, 122.
4. hooks, *Feminist Theory*, 31.
5. See hooks, *Ain't I*, 120. See also Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality* (Berkeley: The Crossing Press, 1983), 125–126.
6. Frye, *Politics*, 4.
7. For a helpful discussion, see Amia Srinivasan, 'Philosophy and Ideology', *Theoria* 31 (2016), 371–380.
8. Jason Stanley, *How Propaganda Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).
9. *Ibid.*, 57. Stanley's term for necessary, non-demagogic propaganda is 'civic rhetoric'. For discussion of relevant portions of Stanley's book, see Alice Crary, 'Putnam and Propaganda', *The Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 38 (2017), 1–14.
10. For discussion of this with regard to sexual harassment, see Alice Crary, *Beyond Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), ch. 5 and also below in the text; for discussion with regard to sexual objectification, see Nancy Bauer, *How to Do Things with Pornography* (Cambridge,

MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), ch. 3.

11. For a recent example, see Amy Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonising the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

12. For an elegant treatment of this theme, see Sabina Lovibond, 'Feminism and Postmodernism', *New Left Review* 78 (1989), 5–28.

13. See Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), ch. 9; and *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), ch. 8. See also Thomas Nagel, 'Subjective and Objective', in Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

14. See, for example, Williams, *Descartes*, 244; Nagel, 'Subjective', 208.

15. See especially Williams, *Descartes*, 244; Nagel, *View*, 136–140.

16. For relevant overviews of the feminist literature, see Alice Crary, 'A Question of Silence: Feminist Theory and Women's Voices', *Philosophy* 76 (2001), 371–395; 'What Do Feminists Want in an Epistemology?', in *Re-Reading the Canon: Feminist Interpretations of Wittgenstein*, eds. Peg O'Connor and Naomi Scheman (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2002), 97–118.

17. See, for example, the commentary in Catharine MacKinnon, *A Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); see also Crary, 'A Question'.

18. See Nancy Hartsock, 'The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism', in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*, eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1983), 283–310; and Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

19. Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalising the Intersections of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989), 139–167; 'Whose Story Is It Anyway? Feminist and Anti-Racist Appropriations of Anita Hill', in *Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas and the Construction of Social Reality*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 402–440; and 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Colour', *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1993), 1241–1299.

20. See, for example, Linda Zerilli, 'The Turn to Affect and the Problem of Judgment', *New Literary History* 46 (2015), 261–286.

21. Crenshaw, 'Whose Story?' 411.

22. Crenshaw, 'Whose Story?', 412; 'Mapping', 1269, 1279–1280.

23. Crenshaw, 'Whose Story?' 413, 419; 'Mapping', 1268, 1275–1276.

24. Crenshaw, 'Whose Story?'

25. See, for example, Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970) and *Beloved* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987); and Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (New York: Graywolf Press, 2014).

26. Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

27. *Ibid.*, 56.

28. *Ibid.*, 37. The interplay among these forms of bias isn't a major topic for Fricker, but see 153 for one remark.

29. Laying claim to the age-old philosophical observation that 'our rationality is what lends our humanity its distinctive value', Fricker says it's 'no wonder ... that being insulted and undermined, or otherwise wronged in one's capacity as a giver of knowledge is something that can cut deep' (*Ibid.*, 44).

30. *Ibid.*, 1.

31. See, for example, Ishani Maitra 'The Nature of Epistemic Injustice', *Philosophical Books* 51 (2010), 195–211, esp. 208–210; Rae Langton, Review of Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Justice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, *Hypatia* 25 (2010), 459–464, esp. 461–463; Kristie Dotson, 'A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Violence', *Frontiers* 33 (2012), 24–47, esp. 35–36; Emmalon Davis, 'Typecasts, Tokens, and Spokespersons: A Case for Credibility Excess as Testimonial Injustice', *Hypatia* 31 (2016), 485–501, esp. 495.

32. It would not be unreasonable, as Amia Srinivasan suggested to me, to read Fricker as explicitly defending this commitment in 'Feminism in Epistemology: Pluralism Without Postmodernism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, eds. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

33. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 30.

34. *Ibid.*, 30–31.

35. There are certainly defenders, within contemporary analytic philosophy, of this basic understanding of the social sciences. For an influential example, see Alexander Rosenberg, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012). But we need only a passing familiarity with the history of analytic philosophy of the social sciences to see that many thinkers in this tradition, reaching back as far as Peter Winch's *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), hold that there is no question of getting into view properly social phenomena in ethically neutral terms. It would be possible to develop an interesting critique of Fricker's book starting from this thought, but that is not the task of this article.

36. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 32.

37. *Ibid.*, 33.

38. For the suggestion that Fricker should attend more closely to harms of prejudicial stereotypes that lead us to wrongly inflate our judgments of speaker's credibility, see Davis, 'Typecasts'.

39. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 27.

40. *Ibid.*, 1.

41. *Ibid.*, 32.

42. Dotson, 'A Cautionary Tale', 35–37.

43. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 33, 104–106.

44. Ibid., 121. See also 91–2, 96, 122–3, 127–128 for similar formulations. I am grateful to Joel de Lara for impressing on me the thematic relevance of this cluster of passages.
45. Ibid., 62; emphasis in the original.
46. Fricker's account of typical non-inferentialists here is not obviously accurate. It is arguably more common for self-avowed non-inferentialists to represent mature and responsible speakers as operating with reliable propensities to discriminate truth and, more specifically, with propensities whose reliability, if it were to come into question, would need to be argumentatively established. This, notably, is the sort of view that Fricker herself favours.
47. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 67.
48. John McDowell, 'Knowledge by Hearsay', in *Knowing from Words: Western and Indian Philosophical Analysis of Understanding and Testimony*, eds. Bimal Krishna Matilal and Arindam Chakrabarti (Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media, 1993), 195–224.
49. McDowell, 'Knowledge', 196.
50. John McDowell, 'Virtue and Reason', in *Mind, Value and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 50–72. This essay was originally published in 1979.
51. Ibid., 57–58.
52. See *ibid.*, 67, where McDowell writes: 'Any attempt to capture [the virtuous person's conception of how to live] in words will recapitulate the character of the [practical, charged] training whereby it is instilled'.
53. Ibid., 63–64.
54. Ibid., 68–69.
55. McDowell, 'Knowledge', 198, n. 8.
56. There is a large critical literature on McDowell's – in some respects evolving – view of how, for language-users, conceptual capacities get drawn into play in perception. This isn't the place for a detailed treatment, but see Alice Crary, *Inside Ethics: On the Demands of Moral Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), ch. 3.
57. See McDowell, 'Knowledge', 195.
58. This is the kind of thing McDowell has in mind when he says that 'if one's takings of things to be thus and so are to be case of knowledge [e.g., one's taking of a speaker to have said X], they must be sensitive to the requirements of doxastic responsibility' (*ibid.*, 206–207).
59. Starting from the roughly McDowellian view of discursive interactions at issue here, it would be possible to argue that Fricker's tendency to regard 'telling' as somehow paradigmatic of all speech – and her related tendency to neglect the open-ended diversity of speech acts – is an unfortunate consequence of her reliance on a neutral, argumentative conception of reason. But there is no room here for such an argument.
60. McDowell, 'Knowledge', esp. 199, n. 11.
61. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 62, incl. n. 3.
62. Ibid., 67–68, esp. her remark on 68 about McDowell's 'quietism'.
63. Ibid., 72 and 74.
64. Ibid., 72–80.
65. See note 46, above.
66. See Miranda Fricker, 'Reason and Emotion', *Radical Philosophy* 57 (1991), 14–19.
67. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 78. See also Fricker's description of virtuous perception on 74.
68. For insightful criticism of the 'neutral' strategies of further groups of analytic feminists, see Bauer, *Pornography*, esp. ch. 3 and 7.
69. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 101–106.
70. Bernard Williams, 'Internal and External Reasons', in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 101–113.
71. For this point, see John McDowell, 'Might there be External Reasons?', in *World, Mind and Ethics: Essays on the Philosophy of Bernard Williams*, eds. J.E.J. Altham and Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 68–85. The point shouldn't surprise us given the fact that Williams clearly embraces a neutral conception in the portions of his work touched on earlier in this article.
72. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 102.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., 152. See Dotson, 'A Cautionary Tale' for a critique of Fricker's unstated assumption of the existence of unitary sets of social meanings.
75. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 149–150.
76. Jean Grimshaw, *Philosophy and Feminist Thinking* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 87; emphasis in the original.
77. Ibid., 88.
78. There are, to be sure, some analytic moral philosophers who favour the minority position that there *are* genuine concepts that have meanings with inextricably linked ethical and descriptive components. Four of the most prominent who do so are Iris Murdoch, John McDowell, Cora Diamond and Hilary Putnam.
79. Grimshaw, *Philosophy*, 88.
80. Catharine MacKinnon, *The Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).
81. Ibid., 10.
82. Ibid., 42.
83. Ibid., 10.
84. See also Linda Martín Alcoff, 'Epistemic Identities', *Episteme* 7 (2010), 128–137, esp. 134–136 for a point on these lines in relation to Fricker.
85. This article was originally written for, and given as a lecture at, a conference on 'Feminist Philosophy and Methodology' at Humboldt University in Berlin in July 2017. I am grateful to the organisers – Hilke Hänel, Mari Mikola and Johanna Müller – for putting together a provocative event on what came to seem to me an inspired topic. I owe thanks for helpful references and conversation to Ásta, Nancy Bauer, Cayla Clinkenbeard, Ann Garry, Rahel Jaeggi, Sally Haslanger, Nathaniel Hupert and Jason Stanley, and I am indebted to Bauer, Victoria Browne, Matthew Congden, Cora Diamond, Lori Gruen, Hupert, Joel de Lara and Amia Srinivasan for reading and offering constructive comments on a couple of final drafts.