



Autonomy, Gender, Politics (Studies in Feminist Philosophy)

By Marilyn Friedman

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Women have historically been prevented from living autonomously by systematic injustice, subordination, and oppression. The lingering effects of these practices have prompted many feminists to view autonomy with suspicion. Here, Marilyn Friedman defends the ideal of feminist autonomy. In her eyes, behavior is autonomous if it accords with the wants, cares, values, or commitments that the actor has reaffirmed and is able to sustain in the face of opposition. By her account, autonomy is socially grounded yet also individualizing and sometimes socially disruptive, qualities that can be ultimately advantageous for women. Friedman applies the concept of autonomy to domains of special interest to women. She defends the importance of autonomy in romantic love, considers how social institutions should respond to women who choose to remain in abusive relationships, and argues that liberal societies should tolerate minority cultural practices that violate women's rights so long as the women in question have chosen autonomously to live according to those practices.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Friedman has written a fine, well crafted book that contributes importantly to the construction of a conception of autonomy suitable for feminist ethics and (liberal) political theory. As in her previous, highly regarded work, Friedman's writing conveys a compelling, independent feminist voice at once scholarly and accessible." --Hypatia

"Powerful... *Autonomy, Gender, Politics* makes a major contribution to the philosophical literature on autonomy and gender. Whether or not one is ultimately persuaded by her content-neutral account of autonomy, Friedman's discussion of the philosophical and social policy issues raised by a relational approach to autonomy is illuminating, challenging and insightful."--*Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*

About the Author

Marilyn Friedman is at Washington University, St. Louis.

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