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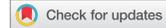
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Jane Addams as experimental philosopher

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the activist, feminist and pragmatist Jane Addams (1860–1935) was an experimental philosopher. To defend this claim, I argue for capacious notions of both philosophical pragmatism and experimental philosophy. I begin in Section 2 with a new defence of Rose and Danks' [‘In Defense of a Broad Conception of Experimental Philosophy’. *Metaphilosophy* 44, no. 4 (2013): 512–32] argument in favour of a broad conception of experimental philosophy. Koopman [‘Pragmatist Resources for Experimental Philosophy: Inquiry in Place of Intuition’. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2012): 1–24] argues that many twentieth-century American pragmatists (e.g. Peirce, James, Dewey) can make important contributions to contemporary experimental philosophy. In Section 3, I argue that while this may be true, it is also true that under the broad conception, many of the pragmatists just were experimental philosophers. In Section 4, I argue that as a pragmatist philosopher in her own right, Jane Addams also fits the bill of an experimental philosopher, broadly construed. My central argument is that working at Hull House rather than the University of Chicago is no reason to think Addams' methods any less rigorous or empirical, nor the problems she addressed any less philosophical. I conclude by responding to potential objections to my even broader conception of experimental philosophy, and I briefly consider how my arguments might inform contemporary feminist criticisms of experimental philosophy.

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1. Introduction

As experimental philosophy has continued to mature into a bona fide research programme, recent work has begun to take stock of its trajectory. For example, the first section of the (2016) *Blackwell Companion to Experimental Philosophy* is entitled ‘Experimental Philosophy: Past, Present, and Future’, and contains a number of essays examining the connections between experimental philosophy and historical figures including Plato (Stitch and Tobia,

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'Experimental Philosophy') and Nietzsche (Telech and Leiter, 'Nietzsche and Moral Psychology'), as well as historical traditions including the early moderns (Anstey and Vanzo, 'Early Modern Experimental Philosophy') and twentieth-century conceptual analysis (Knobe, 'Experimental Philosophy Is Cognitive Science').

Another feature of the maturation of experimental philosophy is a growing concern with its methodology and metaphilosophical standing. Regarding the former, Sytsma and Livengood (*The Theory and Practice*) provide detailed discussions of the experimental designs and statistical analyses relevant to experimental philosophy. With respect to the latter, Rose and Danks ('In Defense of a Broad Conception') propose a distinction between narrow and broad views to help situate experimental approaches in the larger philosophical landscape, as well as to demarcate various approaches within experimental philosophy itself.

The present article is a contribution to these historical and metaphilosophical strands of experimental philosophy research. My aim is twofold: I will attempt to fill in a gap in the historical narrative about the development of experimental philosophy, namely, the place of early twentieth-century American pragmatist philosophers therein. Once this is established, I will show how a sufficiently broad conception of pragmatism calls into question some of the metaphilosophical claims about what counts as experimental and who counts as a philosopher.

Here is the plan: I begin in Section 2 with a brief summary and new defence of Rose and Danks' ('In Defense of a Broad Conception') distinction between narrow and broad conceptions of experimental philosophy and their subsequent argument against the former conception. Drawing on Koopman ('Pragmatist Resources for Experimental Philosophy'), I then argue in Section 3 that many classical American pragmatists should fit squarely within the purview of the broad conception. Section 4 comprises the heart of the paper. Therein, I attempt to show that Koopman's argument about classical pragmatism's contribution to contemporary experimental philosophy is good as far as it goes (namely, to canonical academic philosophers), but that it ultimately relies on a narrow conception of pragmatism. With a broader conception of pragmatism in hand, I then develop the paper's eponymous claim: Jane Addams fits the bill as both an experimentalist and a philosopher. My central argument is that working at Hull House rather than the University of Chicago is no reason to think Addams' methods any less rigorous or empirical, nor the problems she addressed any less philosophical. I conclude by responding to potential objections to my even broader conception of experimental philosophy, and I briefly consider how my arguments might inform contemporary feminist criticisms of experimental philosophy.

2. Narrow and broad experimental philosophy

Rose and Danks ('In Defense of a Broad Conception') mark a distinction between narrow and broad conceptions of experimental philosophy. The former 'involves philosophers conducting psychological experiments for which the primary target is intuitions or judgments' (514), and the latter 'is simply an instantiation of the long tradition of philosophical naturalism' (515). Three premises are offered in support of the conclusion that we ought to reject the narrow conception and adopt the broad conception: (1) the narrow conception is 'based on seemingly arbitrary disciplinary chauvinism' (514), (2) the narrow conception unnecessarily restricts the practice of experimental philosophy to the study of folk intuitions and (3) such a restriction simply does not accurately represent the practice of experimental philosophy.

Ultimately, I will argue that this broad conception is still too narrow, and is itself rooted in disciplinary chauvinism. But first, I will try to show why the argument, as it stands, is nonetheless a convincing one. I will begin by unpacking the second and third premises, saving an analysis of the first for Section 4.

In thinking about what contemporary experimental philosophy is and how it ought to be situated in the broader philosophical landscape, it is worthwhile to look at what experimental philosophers actually do. Rose and Danks note that of course, 'paradigmatic instances of experimental philosophy (e.g. Machery et al., "Semantics, Cross-cultural Style") do concern the measurement, analysis, and explanation of intuitions', and that this view is probably dominant 'in the public informal debate within the philosophical community about the importance of experimental philosophy' (514). The narrow conception is not baseless. However, Rose and Danks claim that the narrow conception 'should be resisted because it does not seem to capture much of the actual practice' (514).

What does the actual practice look like? The most recent (unpublished) meta-analysis by Silver and Knobe collected all the papers in the 'experimental philosophy' category on the PhilPapers database: 379 such papers with a total of 453 studies (reported in Knobe, 'Experimental Philosophy Is Cognitive Science', 38). Just over 10% of those studies fell into the so-called positive programme of offering evidence in support of the intuitions involved in armchair conceptual analysis. Less than 2% fell into the so-called negative programme of offering evidence which undermines the reliability of intuitions driving armchair conceptual analysis. What, then, are the vast majority of experimental philosophers doing? Knobe draws the same conclusion from the quantitative meta-analysis as Rose and Danks do from their relatively informal observations: 'The majority of experimental philosophy papers are doing *cognitive science* ... They are revealing surprising new effects and then offering explanations those

effects in terms of certain underlying cognitive processes' (Knobe, 'Experimental Philosophy Is Cognitive Science', 39, emphasis in the original).¹

It appears, then, that the second and third premises in Rose and Danks' argument against the narrow conception are on an even firmer ground than they may have thought. The best reason to reject a description of experimental philosophy as primarily dealing with intuitions about concepts would be that the vast majority of experimental philosophy does not deal with intuitions in this way. And indeed, this looks to be the case. What does this evidence mean for the metaphilosophical debates about the place of experimental philosophy?

Rose and Danks' positive claim is that

we should instead adopt a broader conception: experimental philosophy is simply an instantiation of the long tradition of philosophical naturalism – the view that empirical data are relevant to certain philosophical questions – coupled with actually conducting some of the relevant experiments, as necessary.

('In Defense of a Broad Conception', 515)

Such a capacious view entails that, despite the burning armchair emblem, there is nothing radically novel about experimental philosophy. There is no sharp break from tradition by interleaving empirical and philosophical methods. While there is much that could be said about the varieties of philosophical naturalism that support (or undermine) this claim,² my focus is instead on a second entailment recognized by Rose and Danks. Namely, that there are many more researchers aptly labelled 'experimental philosophers' than we might have thought. They claim, for example, that 'Helmholtz's experiments on perception that culminated in his 1910 three-volume *Treatise on Physiological Optics* were explicitly intended to test many of Kant's claims about the nature and origin of the categories' (513). Thus, Hemholtz would count as an experimental philosopher under the broad conception. They offhandedly remark that Kohlberg, Piaget and many researchers investigating the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis would be similarly included. In these cases, the researchers sought to 'use empirical results to draw philosophical conclusions' (515). I will return to this characterization below, but for now, I simply want to highlight how this view entails both a broader historical outlook on experimental philosophy (such that it goes back at least as far as Hemholtz), as well as a broader conception of philosophy itself (such that canonical psychologists are considered experimental philosophers).

¹This is not to say that all cognitive science is philosophical or philosophically relevant, nor that all experimental philosophy is cognitive scientific, or relevant to cognitive science. The point here is rather to call attention to the ways in which experimental philosophy is primarily (and I will argue below, contingently) allied with work in psychology and cognitive science.

²See Shook ('Varieties of Twentieth Century') for a taxonomy of the varieties of twentieth-century American naturalism which is particularly relevant to this issue.

Once the broad conception is granted, experimental philosophy is seen as a research programme with fuzzy boundaries and a rich historical lineage. I take these to be desirable outcomes, as they more accurately reflect the contemporary practice while also promising new outlets for dialogue across historical and disciplinary traditions. In the following sections, I will try to cash in on the latter promise.

3. Narrow classical pragmatism and broad experimental philosophy

Pessimistically, one might claim that Rose and Danks are too quick with their historical gloss on the tradition of philosophical naturalism underwriting the broad conception of experimental philosophy. More optimistically, one could say that their account calls for further engagement with historical sources. In any case, there is a conspicuous gap in the literature which has taken up the historical trajectories of experimental philosophy. Some of the best work in this vein (e.g. Anstey and Vanzo, 'The Origins of Early Modern'; Anstey and Vanzo, 'Early Modern Experimental Philosophy') has identified antecedents of experimental philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rose and Danks make brief mention of Hemholtz's *Treatise*, but save Koopman ('Pragmatist Resources for Experimental Philosophy'), there is no substantive discussion of early twentieth-century philosophers contributing to the historical development of experimental philosophy.³ In this section, I briefly review Koopman's argument for the ongoing relevance of some twentieth-century American pragmatists to contemporary experimental philosophy, and then attempt to situate this account with respect to the narrow/broad distinction.

Koopman's central argument is that the tradition of classical American pragmatism contains underutilized resources for contemporary experimental philosophy. This claim is advanced on two fronts: (1) 'The first important contribution that pragmatism can make to experimental philosophy concerns the latter's assault on the privileged role assumed by intuitions in contemporary philosophy' (8). (2) 'A second important contribution that pragmatism can make to the experimental program concerns the widespread call for an integration of philosophy with other disciplines in exploring the questions it takes as its purview' (11). I will unpack each of these in turn, but it is worth noting at the outset how the former maps on to the narrow view, and the latter, the broad view.

³Though Wahman ('Experimenting with Ethics') does connect pragmatists like John Dewey and William James with some aspects of the experimental philosophy programme (narrowly construed), her treatment is critical of the latter for things like 'not empirically test[ing] the legitimacy of the ethical assumptions being put to use in the studies' (38) and not being 'able to take ethics in a radically new direction on its own' (38). Whatever the force of these criticisms, Wahman's treatment is largely orthogonal to the historical project undertaken here.

Koopman is less concerned with making an argument to the effect ‘the pragmatists got here first’ than with making an argument to the effect that pragmatism ‘furnishes some well-developed resources to experimentalism that the latter could profit from insofar as it remains relatively (and understandably, because so new) underdeveloped in comparison’ (8). This means that the argument’s success will hinge on its ability to productively engage with the contemporary practice of experimental philosophy. With this standard of evaluation in place, I will consider (1) and (2) in turn.

With respect to (1) Koopman glosses the distinction between the positive and negative programmes in experimental philosophy mentioned above and takes this as evidence for ‘the centrality of the critique of intuitions for the contemporary experimental philosophers’, claiming further that ‘indeed this might even be seen as the conceptual center of experimental philosophy’ (8). From this starting point, the claim is that contemporary experimental philosophers would do well to note that the assault on intuitions has an important historical antecedent in Charles Saunders Peirce.

Koopman insightfully connects Peirce’s ‘Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man’ with his more well-known ‘Fixation of Belief’ to make this case. Peirce claims in the former that an intuition is ‘a cognition not determined by a previous cognition of the same object’, which is ‘nearly the same as premise not itself a conclusion’ (11–12). Or, as Koopman puts it, intuitions for Peirce are those mental states which have no upstream origin, but do have downstream consequences. However intuitions are defined, Peirce is quite clear on the matter: ‘we have, therefore, a variety of facts, all of which are most readily explained on the supposition that we have no intuitive faculty of distinguishing intuitive from mediate cognitions’, and ‘it is not self-evident that we have such an intuitive faculty’, and ‘there is no evidence that we have this faculty, except that we seem to *feel* that we have it’ (12, emphasis in the original).

In contrast to this intuitive faculty is Peirce’s theory of *inquiry*, famously developed in his ‘Fixation of Belief’. Therein, Peirce distinguishes four methods of fixing beliefs: tenacity, authority, a priori and science. Insofar as we are interested in fixing true beliefs, Peirce says that the method of science ‘is the only one of the four methods which presents any distinction of a right and a wrong way’, and ‘the test of whether I am truly following the method is *not an immediate appeal to my feelings and purposes*, but on the contrary, itself involves the application of the method’ (121, emphasis mine).

The connection to experimental philosophy here is clear: all of our beliefs ought to be subject to inquiry because intuitions are premises, not conclusions. And apropos of the present context, Peirce contrasts the intuitive faculty with the scientific method. On these grounds, Koopman claims that ‘Peirce thus provides ample philosophical support for the experimentalist

claim that we ought to empirically test those beliefs that are put forth as intuitively obvious by certain philosophers of an implicitly rationalistic persuasion' (10). In this sense, contemporary experimental philosophy can avail itself of Peirce's arguments for scientific inquiry in the place of intuitive speculation.

There are, however, two potential problems here. First, as we saw in the previous section, there is a good reason to be sceptical of the critique of intuitions as the 'conceptual centre' of experimental philosophy. In fact, the kind of research that Koopman seems to have in mind – at least by Knobe's lights – is rather peripheral. Perhaps we could grant that Peirce's arguments still do provide ample philosophical support, albeit to a marginal sub-set of experimental philosophy. But this would seem to significantly undermine the force of the argument that classical pragmatism can make a meaningful contribution to the practice of contemporary experimental philosophy. The worry, then, is that Koopman's claims may only apply to experimental philosophy narrowly conceived.

Second, if 'providing philosophical support' was all that followed from the argument, it would not be clear that it amounted to much more than 'the pragmatists said it first' claim that Koopman wants to avoid. In my view, the strongest case with respect to (1) is that taking seriously pragmatist insights about inquiry raises a number of critical questions for experimental philosophy's methodology. Thus, Koopman writes:

It also needs to be asked how, among the many available methods, we might undertake this process of testing hunches by submitting them to the rational consideration of communities of inquiry. Experimental philosophy tends to favor quantitative research methods. *Pragmatist philosophy suggests that quantitative methods often need supplementation at times by qualitative methods ...* much experimental philosophy pursues a quantitative research track rather unselfconsciously, as if there were not long-running debates internal to social science research concerning the relative merits of quantitative versus qualitative research.

('Pragmatist Resources for Experimental Philosophy', 11, emphasis mine)

The claim that pragmatist philosophy stands to improve the methods of experimental philosophy seems exactly the right one to make in arguing for the ongoing relevance of the former to the latter. Unfortunately, this claim is underdeveloped relative to Koopman's discussion of Peirce vis-à-vis the narrow conception. Luckily, some recent work can remedy this shortcoming. Andow ('Qualitative Tools and Experimental Philosophy', 4) reports that of the fifty-seven articles indexed on the Experimental Philosophy webpage in 2014, only thirty-six presented novel empirical data, and of those, only one article could be classified as using qualitative methods. While Andow does not cite any classical American pragmatists, he does make a convincing case on independent grounds that qualitative

methods can make a much greater contribution to experimental philosophy than they have to date.

Similarly, Womack and Mulvaney-Day ('Feminist Bioethics Meets Experimental Philosophy') argue that the usual quantitative methods employed by experimental philosophers are limited in (at least) two ways: the scenarios used often underdetermine underlying psychological processes and they often constrain salient features in a way that obscures the phenomena of interest. Like Andow, Womack and Mulvaney-Day argue that 'qualitative data can reveal the processes by which moral reasoning takes place, the contextual factors that influence it, and also the content of the morally salient concepts used in that reasoning' (125).

If these kinds of criticisms are on the right track, and if pragmatist philosophy dictates the need for mixed-methods research, then Koopman is surely right to identify the pragmatist tradition as a useful resource for contemporary experimental philosophy in this respect.⁴ So much for the first dimension of the argument.

With respect to (2), Koopman claims that 'methodological and substantive issues central to other disciplines such as sociology point us toward a second way in which pragmatism furnishes resources that experimental philosophy might find useful' (11). Namely, a call for interdisciplinarity in philosophy. The best example here is William James:

If experimental philosophy is meant to encourage philosophers to become a more interdisciplinary bunch, then it would be wrong to ignore the inspiring force of James's example. James in the first place provides a useful model of how an experimental philosophy might better integrate itself with experimental work in psychology ... Not only is James still one of the most literary writers in the philosophical canon, but he practically invented the modern discipline of religious studies, and his influence on certain branches of social science and what would later come to be called cultural studies remains unmistakable.

(Koopman, 'Pragmatist Resources for Experimental Philosophy', 13–14)

On the pessimistic reading I proposed in this section's opening paragraph, Rose and Danks would be, as Koopman suggests, in the wrong to ignore James. Indeed, I think by their own lights, James' corpus is an even better example of the broad view of experimental philosophy than many of the examples cited by Rose and Danks. That point need not be settled here, however, as the real force of the argument is not that William James fits the bill for a broad view experimental philosopher, but rather, that a whole school of like-minded philosophers also fit this bill. Indeed, Koopman argues that it is actually in the work of John Dewey where pragmatism features its best resources for experimental philosophy. The point is simply

⁴For a discussion of pragmatist-inspired social science methodology in general, and Jane Addams' contribution in particular, see Rosiek and Pratt ('Jane Addams as a Resource').

this: If the ticket into the big-tent variety of experimental philosophy is, as Rose and Danks suggest, a commitment to ‘the long tradition of philosophical naturalism – the view that empirical data are relevant to certain philosophical questions – coupled with actually conducting some of the relevant experiments, as necessary’ (515), then given Peirce’s work on chemistry, cartography, logic, mathematics and semiotics, James’ work in physiology, psychology and religious studies, or Dewey’s work in psychology and the Chicago Laboratory Schools, it would indeed be a mistake to omit the classical pragmatists from any narrative about the historical development of experimental philosophy. This is, all things considered, a rather modest claim that I suspect is uncontroversial. If Hemholtz counts as an experimental philosopher, it is hard to imagine why Peirce, James and Dewey would not.

Though much of Koopman’s argument is unfortunately pitched at the narrow conception, it still offers substantial evidence in service of the claim that many pragmatists were experimental philosophers in the broad sense. From this, it follows that a historical narrative about the development of experimental philosophy, broadly construed, would be amiss to exclude the classical American pragmatists.

4. Was Jane Addams an experimental philosopher?

If the argument in the previous section has gone through, then it should be clear that the tradition of classical American pragmatism – an exemplar of twentieth-century philosophical naturalism – fits squarely in the domain of the broad view advocated by Rose and Danks. In this section, I will argue that while Koopman’s argument does an important service in establishing the place of classical American pragmatism in the development of experimental philosophy, it ultimately relies on a rather narrow conception of pragmatism. I will attempt to motivate a broader view of pragmatism in which Jane Addams is cast as an *experimentalist* and *philosopher* par excellence.

To begin, we can read Koopman’s treatment pessimistically, perhaps claiming that the enshrinement of Peirce, James and Dewey as the standard bearers of pragmatism serves to further de-legitimize marginal figures from the tradition. More optimistically (and this seems the appropriate response), one could claim that Koopman’s legitimization of the pragmatist tradition paves the way for a fuller engagement with its more peripheral figures.⁵

My claim is that not only can pragmatists like Addams contribute to contemporary experimental philosophy, but when experimental philosophy is properly understood, we can see how Addams and her colleagues at Hull House just were experimental philosophers in their own right. This claim

⁵This is Koopman’s point in claiming that ‘pragmatists including Jane Addams, W. E. B. DuBois, Randolph Bourne and George Herbert Mead will certainly prove helpful from time to time, particularly as concerns certain issues and themes over which James and Dewey sometimes stumbled’ (13).

stands to advance both experimental philosophy and feminist pragmatism. The latter because the statistical and empirical dimensions of Addams' work are underappreciated in the pragmatist literature; the former because the philosophical import of the kind of explicitly feminist work exemplified by Addams is underappreciated in the experimental philosophy literature.

First, a bit of (highly selective) background. Addams (1860–1935) was born in an upper middle-class family in Cedarville, Illinois (her father was a co-founder of the Republican Party of Illinois, and friend of Abraham Lincoln). She attended the Rockford Female Seminary, where she received her BA. After a brief stint in medical school, she took a tour of Europe. A prominent feature in both Europe and America during this time was the rise of industrial capitalism and with it, a marked disparity between rich and poor. While in Europe, Addams visited the most impoverished parts of the cities she travelled to, and in 1888 she found herself in the slums of East London. Importantly, the East End was also home to Toynbee Hall, a settlement house founded in 1884 by Canon Samuel Barnett.

According to Wade ('The Heritage from Chicago'), the settlement movement was largely made up of

well-educated middle class citizens eager to find a way of bridging the chasm between the rich and the poor ... they concluded that residence in working-class urban neighborhoods would enable them to learn about the problems of the poor and communicate this information to the more fortunate.

(412)

On Addams' telling:

Mr. Barnett, who urged the first Settlement, – Toynbee Hall, in East London, – recognized this need of outlet for the young men of Oxford and Cambridge, and hoped that the Settlement would supply the communication. It is easy to see why the Settlement movement originated in England, where the years of education are more constrained and definite than they are here, where class distinctions are more rigid. The necessity of it was greater there, but we are fast feeling the pressure of the need and meeting the necessity for Settlements in America. Our young people feel nervously the need of putting theory into action, and respond quickly to the Settlement form of activity.

(Twenty Years at Hull-House, 121–2)

In 1889, in one of the most impoverished neighbourhoods on the south side of Chicago, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr founded Hull House – one of the first, and certainly the most famous Settlements in America – in this spirit.⁶

⁶It should be noted, if only in passing, that the Settlement movement was neither homogenous, nor univocal. For example, as Carson (*Settlement Folk*, 7) notes, some assimilationist factions used the movement as

a kind of license to philanthropists and politicians to exercise far-reaching social control over those large and threatening segments of society outside the pale of the moral law and social codes that nominally governed the behavior of upper and middle classes ... reformers felt a heightened sense of urgency to check and reverse the 'antisocial'

To be sure, this mini-narrative does not begin to do justice to Addams' remarkable life. But it does clear the way for asking this paper's central question: Was Jane Addams an experimental philosopher? Before directly addressing that question, it should first be acknowledged that it is only recently that Addams has been recognized as a philosopher at all. With the (re)publication of many of Addams' work in the 1990s, a growing body of scholarship has emerged which recognizes not only Addams' influence on Dewey, Mead and other 'mainstream' pragmatists, but also Addams' unique contributions to pragmatist ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, pedagogy, and social and political philosophy. These themes have been carefully and convincingly documented in book-length treatments by Deegan (*Jane Addams and the Men*), Seigfried (*Pragmatism and Feminism*), Hamington (*The Social Philosophy*), Fischer (*On Addams*) and others, and so my treatment here will necessarily be selective and incomplete.

To many feminist pragmatist scholars, Addams' status as a bona fide philosopher is beyond doubt. But it cannot be overstated that this was not always the case, and the following example is illustrative: Seigfried (*Pragmatism and Feminism*) notes that in 1935 'Dewey dedicated his *Liberalism and Social Action* "To the memory of Jane Addams." The book is now out of print and the dedication has disappeared from the current critical edition' (45). This erasure is characteristic not only of Addams' legacy in the philosophical canon, but as we will see below, also the sociological canon. The underlying point remains, however, that Addams was an essential, if under recognized, figure in the development of what has now come to be known as classical American pragmatism.

Deegan (*Jane Addams and the Men*) writes that, 'John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, among others, were frequent visitors, lecturers, and close friends of Addams [at Hull House]' and 'Chicago pragmatism was born through their collegial contact and intellectual exchanges' (6). It must be emphasized, however, that Addams' status as a pragmatist cannot be reduced to her influence on her male, University of Chicago acquaintances.⁷ As Seigfried notes:

tendencies of this marginal population. The attraction of localism and direct personal contact in social work was partly their apparent efficiency in imposing social discipline.

This assimilationist agenda, however, was entirely at odds with the progressive vision of the Settlement advanced by Addams and Starr at Hull House. Carson, Addams herself and Addams scholars have taken care to note this distinction. See, for example, Seigfried ('Introduction'); Fischer ('Addams on Cultural Pluralism', esp. 46–8); Sullivan ('Reciprocal Relations Between Races'). Thanks to an anonymous referee for clarifying this point.

⁷Though such influence was surely important in its own right. McKenna and Pratt (*American Philosophy*, 58 ff.) claim that Dewey's encounters with Addams at Hull House were largely responsible for the latter's move away from Hegelianism and towards his distinctive brand of pragmatism. On a lighter note, McKenna and Pratt (*American Philosophy*, 48) also note that Dewey named one of his daughters 'Jane' in honour of Addams.

Besides these explicit acknowledgements by Dewey of the importance of Addams for philosophic thinking and of her influence on him, many aspects of Addams' thought develop and expand on pragmatist themes in original ways. Her perspectivism and pluralism were concretely grounded. She was more explicit than the male pragmatists about the value and insights of women and of disadvantaged ethnic groups.⁸

(76)

In the previous section, I argued that there is a good reason to think that many of the canonical classical American pragmatists were experimental philosophers broadly construed. I take the claims by Deegan, Seigfried and many others beside, as evidence that Addams was indeed a pragmatist philosopher of this stripe. This, in turn, legitimizes the question of whether Addams might also be understood as an *experimental philosopher*. In what follows, I will first elaborate Addams' *experimentalism*. Then I will show how Addams' experimentalism engages substantive social and political *philosophical* questions. The conjunction of these arguments then yields the conclusion that Addams was an experimental philosopher, broadly construed.

4.1. Jane Addams' experimentalism

In what sense might Addams' work be understood as experimental? In the first place, a defining feature of both the settlement movement and Chicago pragmatism was that each 'wanted to combine scientific and objective observation with ethical and moral values to generate a just and liberated society' (Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men*, 6). Indeed, it is impossible to understand either tradition apart from these progressive, social justice aims. As Addams writes in *Twenty Years at Hull House*:

The Settlement then, is an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city. It is an attempt to relieve, at the same time, the overaccumulation at one end of society and the destitution at the other.

(126)

Deegan similarly writes that Addams and her followers:

wanted dramatic, structural alterations in American society. They believed these changes could be accomplished by providing the mechanism for people of all classes, races, and sexes to 'speak together'. Anticipating the extreme conflict that could result, they argued that 'facts' and 'scientific' evidence could persuade

⁸This is especially true with respect to Addams's epistemology, which has been at the fore of her contemporary resurgence. In this regard, Addams's notion of *sympathetic knowledge* has received much attention, most notably in the work of Hamington (*The Social Philosophy*), who claims that it is Addams's 'most significant contribution to philosophy, as well as the moral approach that she brings to every social issue' (71).

all fair-minded people, the members of the community, to formulate the 'right way' for action. Therefore, *Addams and Hull-House became a center for empirical analysis, study, and debate*.⁹

(39, emphasis mine)

We can further bolster this 'experimental' component of Addams' work by considering another often overlooked feature: her founding role in the discipline of sociology. As Deegan notes: 'more books and articles have been written about Jane Addams than any other American woman', and yet, 'the only profession today that acknowledges her preeminent role in its founding is social work', this all despite the fact that 'she left a legacy that formed a basis for sociology as a way of thinking, and area of study, and a methodological approach to data collecting' (3–4).

Of particular interest for present purposes, of course, is the methodological approach to data collection. Deegan's claim is that *Hull House Maps and Papers* (1895), published by Hull House residents, was a foundational text for sociological methodology:

this influential book was only a part of a generalized empirical approach that consistently set high standards of research excellence, later adopted by male sociologists at Chicago. This surfeit of empirical evidence is illustrated by the residents' approach to 'mapping' and the publication of their empirical work in *AJS* [*American Journal of Sociology*], the most respected sociological journal of its era.¹⁰

(46)

Hull House Maps and Papers was one of the first texts which 'mapped' demographic information about city populations onto geographic distributions. This method would later become practically synonymous with Chicago School sociology (as in 'University of Chicago'). The motivation behind Addams' work, however, was not to develop a new academic discipline. Instead, she thought that 'statistical data were needed to document the oppression of the disenfranchised' (Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men*, 50).¹¹

⁹The experimentalist foundation of Addams's vision of the Settlement is also made clear in the following passage from *Twenty Years*:

The only thing to be dreaded in the Settlement is that it lose its flexibility, its power of quick adaptation, its readiness to change its methods as its environment may demand. It must be open to conviction and must have a deep and abiding sense of tolerance. It must be hospitable and *ready for experiment*. It should demand from its residents *a scientific patience in the accumulation of facts* and the steady holding of their sympathies as one of the best instruments for that accumulation.

(126, emphasis mine)

¹⁰Though Seigfried ('The Social Self in Jane Addams', 128–30) argues that Addams actually distances herself from *Maps and Papers* over worries that the Settlement will be primarily perceived as an institution of academic sociological research, rather than a community hub and outlet for progressive social change. Thanks to an anonymous referee for calling this important point to my attention.

¹¹See also Seigfried ('The Social Self in Jane Addams', 131):

Using empirical means for social justice ends stood in contrast to the emerging Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, which largely understood itself as doing serious academic research, opposed to the mere applied work of Settlement residents. Sociology, that is, took the Settlement as an object of study, rather than a vehicle for progressive social change. It is in this context that a distinction arises between sociology as an academic discipline and social work as a vocation. Importantly, this distinction also cuts along gender lines. Deegan notes that ‘collecting quantitative data was considered “women’s work” by the University of Chicago’s male sociologists’ (46), and indeed, much of the statistical work was ‘frequently organized at Hull House or through other social settlements’ (46).

If the situation in Chicago had to be carved up in terms of academic research and abstract theory on one side, and practical, applied work on the other, Addams clearly sided with the latter: ‘The ideal and developed settlement would attempt to test the value of human knowledge by action, and realization ... The settlement stands for application as opposed to research; for emotion as opposed to abstraction, for universal interest as opposed to specialization’ (‘A Function of the Social Settlement’, 187).¹²

This vision of the Settlement and its relation to academia is part of the reason why, when the University of Chicago offered an affiliation with Hull House in 1895, Addams was outspoken in her opposition: she argued that the moneyed interests of the institution would undermine the Settlement’s progressive goals. To be sure, there are likely many other facets to an explanation of why Addams and her colleagues are rarely recognized as foundational figures in the history of the social sciences, but the lack of an official university post is surely central among them. Those issues aside, the important takeaway here is that the historical evidence supports the claim that a core feature of Hull House was the use of experimental, data-driven methods to fight various forms of injustice.

Unlike the growing positivist conviction that science must be neutral, for [Florence] Kelley as well as Addams, lived experience and scientific approaches to knowledge were mutually reinforcing. They believed that gathering data and testing it were enhanced, not diminished, by directing it towards social good.

¹²See also Addams (*Democracy and Social Ethics*, 35):

The dominating interest in knowledge has become its use, the conditions under which, and ways in which it may be most effectively employed in human conduct ... certain people have consciously formed themselves into groups for the express purpose of effective application. These groups are called settlements.

4.2. Jane Addams' experimentalist social and political philosophy

If my argument in the previous section is on the right track, then empirical investigation and experimentalism were core features of the Settlement. But in order to make the case that Addams was an experimental *philosopher*, we need to see whether and how the empirical data are relevant to substantive philosophical questions. At first pass, my claim is that Addams was consistently, deeply and intimately engaged with questions about the polis and how it ought to be organized – political philosophical questions if there ever were any.¹³ To find more substantial answers – and to do so in a pragmatist spirit – our inquiry should begin from, and return to, practical, lived experience.

In the first place, research conducted by Hull House residents revealed a host of problems in Chicago neighbourhoods: lack of sanitation, contaminated water, poor ventilation, sweat-shop working conditions, undocumented industrial accidents, disease, infant mortality, low wages, child labour, corruption, etc. (Elson, 'First Principles of Jane Addams', 6). An advantage of the empirical approach to these problems was that 'it was unnecessary to make appeals on purely emotional or moralistic bases. The facts were presented not only to public officials but also to numerous leaders in the community' ('First Principles of Jane Addams', 6). This led, in turn, to the political realization of many of the goals of the Settlement movement, including:

basic social legislation, such as child labor laws, compulsory education requirements, limitation of hours of work, minimum wage laws, and mothers' pensions; and the establishment of the juvenile court, separate detention and special institutions for children, and many other safeguards for healthy child growth, culminating in the establishment of the United States' Children Bureau.

('First Principles of Jane Addams', 7)

Elson concludes on these grounds that 'one can safely say that there is hardly any field of social reform not enriched and advanced by the fact-finding of Jane Addams and her associates' ('First Principles of Jane Addams', 6–7). I take it that questions of social reform fall well within the purview of social and political philosophical inquiry.

I further contend that these questions about poverty, disease, education, nutrition and labour *just are* the stuff of political philosophical debates about freedom and equality. So when Addams claims that her work at Hull House is a response to 'the overaccumulation at one end of society and the destitution at the other' and that 'this overaccumulation and destitution is

¹³This is not to suggest that Addams's experimentalism is only relevant to social and political philosophy. Though I think the arguments are strongest here, a similar case could be made for Addams's experimental approach to aesthetics (e.g. *Twenty Years* Ch. XVI), ethics (e.g. *Democracy and Social Ethics*) or epistemology (e.g. *Long Road of Women's Memory*). Indeed, the relevance of Addams's experimentalism to epistemology is detailed in Seigfried ('Beyond Epistemology'). Thanks to Scott Pratt and an anonymous referee for these suggestions.

most sorely felt in the things that pertain to social and educational privileges' (*Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 126–7), we can engage this claim in the context of philosophical debates about (in)equality. Similarly, when Addams collects data about the relationship between sweatshop labour practices and access to nutritious food (e.g. *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 129–34), this relationship, *qua* object of study, seems to be the very subject matter of political philosophical inquiry.¹⁴

Additionally, Addams' contributed essay to *Hull House Maps and Papers*, amidst the demographic and sociological data, argues that trade unionism is an effective recourse for addressing widening inequalities. She claims that 'the labor movement is, at the bottom, an ethical movement' (*Hull House Maps and Papers*, 203), and that the Settlement plays a crucial role in the realization of its ends. If these questions about labour, capital and inequality are not properly political philosophical questions, then I do not know what are. And other relevant examples of this sort can be easily multiplied.¹⁵

Yet another philosophical dimension to Addams' experimentalist approach is the manner in which the empirical work informed her thinking about the philosophical foundations and social and political value of the Settlement. In *Twenty Years*, she writes that the Settlement:

must be grounded in a philosophy whose foundation is on the solidarity of the human race, a philosophy which will not waver when the race happens to be represented by a drunken woman or an idiot boy. Its residents must be emptied of all conceit of opinion and all self-assertion, and ready to arouse and interpret the public opinion of their neighborhood ... They are bound to see the needs of their neighborhood as a whole, to furnish data for legislation, and to use their influence to secure it. In short, residents are pledged to devote themselves to the duties of good citizenship and to the arousing of the social energies which too largely lie dormant in every neighborhood given over to industrialism.

(Twenty Years at Hull-House, 126–7)

The point here is not to assess the merit of these claims about tolerance, representation and citizenship. Rather, the point is to show that Addams' experimentalist approach at Hull House informs, and is informed by, substantive social and political philosophical issues such as equality, labour, capital, tolerance, representation and citizenship. And because Addams was a pragmatist, these social and political concepts are ultimately cashed out in terms of the material conditions and policies outlined at the beginning of this section.

¹⁴In precisely this vein, Dewey argues in *The Public and Its Problems* (1927/1984) that 'the questions of most concern', for doing political theory, 'at present may be said to be matters like sanitation, public health, healthful and adequate housing, transportation, planning of cities, regulation and distribution of immigrants ... and so on' (313). Thanks to Colin Koopman for calling this to my attention.

¹⁵Chapters VII and XIV in *Twenty Years* contain numerous examples. See, e.g. Addams' discussion of her philosophical approach to dealing with crooked Chicago alderman (Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 315–9).

4.3. *An even broader view of experimental philosophy*

We are now in a position to see how Addams' work at Hull House was both experimental and philosophical. But why has Addams not been more readily recognized as an experimental philosopher? One way to get an answer is to revisit the first premise in Rose and Danks' brief against the narrow conception of experimental philosophy. Recall the narrow view holds that experimental philosophy is primarily concerned with the study of intuitions, and one of the reasons this view ought to be rejected is that it 'is based on seemingly arbitrary disciplinary chauvinism' (514). I want to suggest that a reason why Addams has (until very recently) gone unrecognized as a philosopher or sociologist has also to do with arbitrary disciplinary chauvinism: She did not occupy the relevant social role as a university professor (nor did she care to). But, and this is my central claim, *working at Hull House rather than the University of Chicago is no reason to think Addams' methods any less rigorous or empirical, nor the problems she addressed any less philosophical.*

Koopman helpfully points out that it is experimental work in psychology and cognitive science 'to which most of the experimental philosophers seem *contingently* committed' ('Pragmatist Resources for Experimental Philosophy', 13, emphasis mine). Are there any principled reasons why experimental philosophy ought to be primarily aligned with psychology and cognitive science? For example, work by Stotz, Griffiths, and Knight ('How Biologists Conceptualize Genes') extends the methods of experimental philosophy to the biological sciences. Are there principled reasons why experimental philosophy could not extend to include work in the social sciences as well? Is it a necessary feature of experimental philosophy that it takes place in a university setting? Is working to address inequality necessarily non-empirical or non-philosophical? My contention is that an affirmative answer to these questions would be little more than a manifestation of arbitrary disciplinary chauvinism. And if this is right, we should ask: Is Rose and Danks' broad conception itself too narrow, arbitrarily privileging the cognitive sciences over the social sciences? I suggest we should answer in the affirmative.

Of course, the obvious rebuttal to this suggestion is that the terms 'experimental' and 'philosophy' are being stretched thin here. But this very same objection is anticipated by Rose and Danks with respect to their claim that Hemholtz was an experimental philosopher. I contend that their response also holds for my even broader view. The objection would go something like the following: Addams was primarily an activist, so she could not be a philosopher, much less an experimental philosopher. The broad views of pragmatism and experimental philosophy, however, imply that Addams was an experimental philosopher. But Addams was an activist, not an experimental philosopher, therefore the broad view must be false. Following Rose and Danks, I submit:

this reaction is based, however, on a misunderstanding: our position is that the philosophy in 'experimental philosophy' is really philosophical naturalism, which is simply a commitment to look to empirical facts to draw substantive philosophical conclusions. Moreover, this entire line of thought begs the question: the *reductio* 'objection' presupposes that Helmholtz [or Addams] was not an experimental philosopher, but the proper understanding of the term 'experimental philosopher' is exactly what is at issue.

(*'In Defense of a Broad Conception'*, 516)

If my arguments in this section have gone through, then there are no grounds for denying that Addams and her Hull House colleagues looked to empirical facts. As a matter of empirical fact, they were the ones collecting and analysing them! And unless we want to claim that social and political questions about equality, labour, capital, tolerance, representation and citizenship are not properly philosophical, then it looks like Jane Addams was not only an experimentalist, but also an experimental philosopher, broadly construed.

5. Conclusion and implications

I wonder whether Jane Addams would care whether or not she was labelled an experimental philosopher. On the one hand, metaphysical debates about what counts as 'experimental' and who counts as a 'philosopher' seem like the kind of abstract, academic debates she eschewed in favour of more applied, politically engaged work. But on the other hand, the question of 'who counts' is a deeply political one. Whatever the verdict, if my arguments have been successful, there are important entailments from the metaphysical debates considered here. I will conclude, then, with a brief consideration of what Addams-as-experimental-philosopher might mean for some recent feminist critiques of experimental philosophy.

In the present context, every historical exemplar of experimental philosophy broadly construed (save Addams and her Hull House colleagues) has been male (Helmholtz, Piaget, Kohlberg, Sapir, Whorf, Peirce, James, Dewey, DuBois, Bourne, Mead). Perhaps gender is insignificant in this historical context, or perhaps it is significant, but the present sample represents an anomalous coincidence. It would take us too far afield to consider the arguments necessary to settle such a dispute, but it should be noted that the contemporary practice of experimental philosophy has been subject to feminist criticisms on the grounds that gender is, in fact, significant for experimental philosophy research.

For example, Pohlhaus (*'Different Voices, Perfect Storms'*) claims that many experimental philosophers: 'have not seriously engaged with philosophical work written within the intellectual traditions of non-white, non-male philosophers concerning questions about what "we" do and do not know, what does and does not circulate as "common knowledge," and that this lack of engagement contributes to:

a picture of philosophy that perpetuates a kind of epistemic injustice. At the very least, the illusion of 'newness' [of experimental philosophy] hinges on disregarding, or remaining ignorant of, whole traditions of thought while granting epistemic authority to define the discipline of philosophy to persons who, for the most part, happen to be white and male.

(17)

Schwartzman ('Intuition, Thought Experiments') similarly argues that this exclusive picture of experimental philosophy harmfully limits the scope of experimental philosophy research:

many of these counterfactual scenarios [used in experimental philosophy studies] focus narrowly on the questions or problems already identified as philosophically 'interesting' within the parameters of current philosophical debate. The questions that are taken to be important philosophical 'puzzles' often reflect the interests and concerns of the most powerful and prestigious philosophers (who are disproportionately male, white, and upper-middle class). Thus, certain questions are unlikely to arise, or are unlikely to be taken seriously, as philosophical.

(309)

My purpose here is not to evaluate the force of these criticisms, but rather to call attention to them in an effort to examine how my attempt to construe Jane Addams (and by extension, other feminists, activists and social scientists) as an experimental philosopher might contribute to the ongoing debate. Schwartzman writes that experimental philosophers 'tout the interdisciplinary nature of their work, but the fields that they typically draw on are not the ones focused on social power and oppression' (313). With respect to the narrow conception of experimental philosophy, this is almost certainly true. But where Schwartzman continues that 'it is not clear how feminist and critical race theory could impact experimental philosophy, at least as it is currently practiced' (313), I would suggest that a more capacious view of experimental philosophy makes it clear how activist, feminist philosophy in the style of Jane Addams not only contributes to experimental philosophy, but constitutes it.

In the end, I hope to have shown that there are a number of good reasons to adopt broad views of both experimental philosophy and philosophical pragmatism. My modest claim was that many of the twentieth-century American pragmatists fit the mould of experimental philosophers broadly construed, and thus, any historical narrative of the development of experimental philosophy ought to include them. I then argued that if Peirce, James and Dewey were experimental philosophers broadly construed, then so too was Jane Addams. Eschewing a university appointment and pursuing progressive political ends does make Addams' work somehow less empirical or philosophical. If it turns out that this broad conception of pragmatism can enhance contemporary experimental practice

(by promoting qualitative methods to supplement the usual quantitative ones), or that this broad conception of experimental philosophy can help to make contemporary practice more inclusive (by recognizing the contributions of women across traditions and disciplines), then all the better.

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