

DIVERSITY READING LIST PRESENTS:

FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY AND EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

A DRL READING GROUP BLUEPRINT BY [SHANNON BRICK](#), [MICHAEL GREER](#) AND [TOMASZ ZYGLEWICZ](#)
LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

INTRODUCTION

Experimental philosophy (x-phi) is the application of methods of empirical and social sciences to address traditionally philosophical questions. Over the last two decades, x-phi has gone a long way from its beginnings as an often frowned upon curiosity, to a well-established branch of the philosophical mainstream. Prima facie, this success could be a welcome development from a broadly feminist standpoint. Firstly, since experimental research naturally invites collaborative work, x-phi encourages a break from the historic individualism of academic philosophy. Secondly, in emphasizing data over appeal to intuition and wit, x-phi has a potential to ameliorate academic philosophy's notorious bias in favor of well-educated white straight cis men. Despite this, however, x-phi has an underwhelming track record of leveling the playing field in the discipline. In fact, several authors working in feminist epistemology have expressed principled reservations concerning the canonical methods of experimental philosophy.

Despite these criticisms, this blueprint is predicated on the conviction that there is space for a fruitful interaction of feminist and experimental philosophy. Three of its guiding questions include:

- What can experimental philosophy learn from feminist thought?
- How can (and do) feminist philosophers benefit from the collection of empirical data?
- What does a feminist X-phi look like?

The blueprint will be most useful for graduate students, or advanced undergraduates, with some prior exposure to feminist philosophy. No prior exposure to experimental philosophy is presupposed.

How to use this Blueprint: The list is organized by weeks. Each week features a topic, required reading(s), a list of optional readings, and a set of questions. Questions feature a mixture of comprehension questions and open-ended ones. If readings tackle difficult or potentially triggering subject-material, we'll include a content note with that information. We suggest you spend some time before the reading group begins agreeing on discussion rules and protocols, especially around sensitive material. This could also be an opportunity for you to set expectations for the group and for yourselves around what you hope to gain from the group.

The authors also encourage the users of this blueprint to try and run their own feminist philosophical experiments. It's fun, easier than ever, and helps one think about the meta-philosophical topics covered in the reading list. Note that if you want to do studies on human subjects you should first check out your institution's Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements.

CATEGORIES

- Metaphilosophy
- Experimental Philosophy
- Foundations of Experimental Philosophy
- Feminist Philosophy
- Data Ethics
- Philosophy of Social Sciences

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:

<https://diversityreadinglist.org/blueprint/feminist-experimental-philosophy/>

WEEK 1. WHAT IS EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY?

This week serves as an introduction to experimental philosophy. The main reading discusses the motivations behind x-phi, its relation to “armchair philosophy,” and replies to some recurring objections against x-phi. The optional readings are examples of two early x-phi papers that have proven to be very influential. For those who have never read an x-phi paper before, we highly recommend reading at least one of the optional readings.

KNOBE, JOSHUA AND SHAUN NICHOLS. *AN EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY MANIFESTO*

2018, In Knobe, J. & Nichols, S. (eds.), *Experimental Philosophy*.
New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-14.

Difficulty: Easy-Intermediate

Abstract: It used to be a commonplace that the discipline of philosophy was deeply concerned with questions about the human condition. Philosophers thought about human beings and how their minds worked. They took an interest in reason and passion, culture and innate ideas, the origins of people’s moral and religious beliefs. On this traditional conception, it wasn’t particularly important to keep philosophy clearly distinct from psychology, history, or political science...

Comment: This paper was published as the opening chapter of the first ever edited volume devoted exclusively to experimental philosophy. It positions experimental philosophy vis-à-vis the traditional philosophical method of conceptual analysis. It discusses three ways in which experimental findings can have philosophical significance. Along the way, it also addresses three common objection to x-phi.

FURTHER READINGS

KNOBE, JOSHUA. *INTENTIONAL ACTION AND SIDE-EFFECTS IN ORDINARY LANGUAGE*

2003, *Analysis* 63 (3): 190-194.

Difficulty: Easy

Abstract: There has been a long-standing dispute in the philosophical literature about the conditions under which a behavior counts as 'intentional.' Much of the debate turns on questions about the use of certain words and phrases in ordinary language. The present paper investigates these questions empirically, using experimental techniques to investigate people's use of the relevant words and phrases.

Comment: According to what Michael Bratman has called “The simple view” of intentional action, an action ϕ is intentional only if the agent had an intention to ϕ . In this short paper, Joshua Knobe presents the results of two experiments that strongly suggests that ordinary people do not ascribe intentionality in accordance with the simple view. Rather, whether they judge a side-effect to be intentional seems to depend on whether the side-effect is good or bad. This effect came to be known as “the side-effect effect” or “the Knobe effect.” Subsequent experimental research has shown that moral considerations influence the folk ascriptions not only of intentionality, but also of other intuitively descriptive notions, such as knowledge or causation.

2004, *Cognition* 92, B1-B12.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Theories of reference have been central to analytic philosophy, and two views, the descriptivist view of reference and the causal-historical view of reference, have dominated the field. In this research tradition, theories of reference are assessed by consulting one's intuitions about the reference of terms in hypothetical situations. However, recent work in cultural psychology has shown systematic differences between East Asians and Westerners, and some work indicates that this extends to intuitions about philosophical cases. In light of these findings on cultural differences, two experiments were conducted which explored intuitions about reference in Westerners and East Asians. Both experiments indicate that, for certain central cases, Westerners are more likely than East Asians to report intuitions that are consistent with the causal-historical view. These results constitute *prima facie* evidence that semantic intuitions vary from culture to culture, and that paper argues that this fact raises questions about the nature of the philosophical enterprise of developing a theory of reference.

Comment: In "Naming and Necessity," one of the most celebrated philosophical works of the XXth century philosophy, Saul Kripke presents a series of thought experiments meant to discredit the description theory of proper names. For a long time, many in the profession believed that Kripke's intuitions about these cases are universally shared. Machery and colleagues challenge this orthodoxy by presenting the results of two experiments, in which they asked American and Hong Kongese populations about their intuitions regarding Kripke's cases.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. An independent variable is the variable that is manipulated by the experimenter. A dependent variable is the variable that is being measured. For example, suppose you're studying the impact of caffeine on the quality of sleep. In the simplest possible design, the independent variable would be whether or not the participant had a coffee, while the dependent variable would be their reported quality of sleep (for example, "good" vs "bad"). Try to identify the independent and dependent variables in Knobe(2003) and Machery et al. (2004).
2. What are the different ways in which experimental results can have philosophical significance?
3. How is experimental philosophy related to philosophical genealogy?
4. How is experimental philosophy different from psychology?
5. Which areas of philosophy could benefit the most from data collection?
6. What are the perils of practicing experimental philosophy?
7. Which topics that have been traditionally investigated by feminist philosophers are particularly apt for investigation using empirical methods?
8. Can you think of any classic feminist texts that use empirical methods that might count as x-phi?
9. Survey experiment is the paradigm most commonly used by experimental philosophers. Can you think of other methods that could be, or have been, used in x-phi?

WEEK 2. ARE INTUITIONS GENDERED?

Philosophy notoriously has a gender disparity problem. While around half of the students in the introductory level classes are women, the proportion of women in the professoriate is much lower than that. One explanation of this phenomenon is what Louise Antony calls “the Different Voices” model. According to it, the problematic disparity could be explained by the fact that men and women think differently. This week we are going to take a closer look at this model and whether it is supported by the available empirical evidence. Although Wesley Buckwalter’s and Stephen Stich’s paper “Gender and philosophical intuition” is listed as optional, we highly recommend reading it before the main reading for the week.

ANTONY, LOUISE. *DIFFERENT VOICES OR PERFECT STORM: WHY ARE THERE SO FEW WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY?*

2012, *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43 (3): 227-255.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Women are significantly underrepresented in philosophy. Although women garner a little more than half of the PhDs awarded in the United States, and about 53 percent of those awarded in the Arts and Humanities, slightly fewer than 30 percent of doctorates in philosophy are awarded to women. And women’s representation in the professoriate falls below that. Why is philosophy so exceptional in this regard? My aim in this paper is not to answer this question but to contrast two different frameworks for addressing it. I call one model “Different Voices” and the other “The Perfect Storm”; I’ll argue that we ought to adopt the second model and that we ought to abandon the first.

Comment: Louise Antony distinguishes between two types of explanation of the gender disparity in philosophy: “different voices” and “perfect storm.” The latter – Antony’s preferred model – explains the disparity in terms of the convergence of non-domain specific phenomena: academic philosophy features a unique combination of factors hampering women’s success. The former, in turn, appeals to the different ways in which men and women think. According to Antony, the different voices model is not only empirically unsupported, but also its very pursuit could have negative social consequences. Her paper also features an extensive critique of Buckwalter & Stich’s paper, both from a methodological and from a feminist perspective. As such, it offers important lessons as to how feminist x-phi should be practiced.

FURTHER READINGS

BUCKWALTER, WESLEY, STEPHEN STICH. *GENDER AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTUITION*

2013, In Knobe, J. & Nichols, S. (eds.), *Experimental Philosophy Vol. 2*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 307-346.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: In recent years, there has been much concern expressed about the under-representation of women in academic philosophy. Our goal in this paper is to call attention to a cluster of phenomena that may be contributing to this gender gap. The findings we review indicate that when women and men with little or no philosophical training are presented with standard philosophical thought experiments, in many cases their intuitions about these cases are significantly different. In section 1 we review some of the data on the under-representation of women in academic philosophy. In section 2 we explain how we use the term 'intuition,' and offer a brief account of how intuitions are invoked in philosophical argument and philosophical theory building. In the third section we set out the evidence for gender differences in philosophical intuition and mention some evidence about gender differences in decisions and behaviors that are (or should be) of considerable interest to philosophers. In the fourth section, our focus changes from facts to hypotheses. In that section we explain how differences in philosophical intuition might be an important part of the explanation for the gender gap in philosophy. The fifth section is a brief conclusion.

Comment: Wesley Buckwalter and Stephen Stich present evidence that men and women have different intuitions regarding certain thought experiments. Furthermore, they recruit these results to offer an explanation of the phenomenon of underrepresentation of women in philosophy. The paper sparked considerable controversy. On one hand, Victor Kumar wrote "B&S's paper at the very least succeeds in showing that the methods employed by experimental philosophers can potentially be used as tools for socio-political critique of philosophy, for achieving feminist and other political ends in the discipline. That's certainly a coup for X-Phi." On the other hand, Louise Antony wrote "Too many people still believe that women lack the brainpower to be good philosophers. To them, Buckwalter and Stich's findings are going to look like ammunition. I'm not sure that they'd be wrong." (Antony, 2012: 251). It should be kept in mind that subsequent studies failed to replicate many, but not all, of the differences in philosophical intuition across genders reported by Buckwalter and Stich.

BEEBEE, HELEN, ANNE-MARIE MCCALLION. *IN DEFENCE OF DIFFERENT VOICES*

2020, *Symposion* 7(2), 149-177.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Louise Antony draws a now well-known distinction between two explanatory models for researching and addressing the issue of women's underrepresentation in philosophy – the 'Different Voices' (DV) and 'Perfect Storm' (PS) models – and argues that, in view of PS's considerably higher social value, DV should be abandoned. We argue that Antony misunderstands the feminist framework that she takes to underpin DV, and we reconceptualise DV in a way that aligns with a proper understanding of the metaphilosophical framework that underpins it. On the basis of that reconceptualisation – together with the rejection of her claim that DV posits 'cognitive' differences between women and men – we argue that Antony's negative assessment of DV's social value is mistaken. And, we argue, this conclusion does not depend on endorsing the relevant feminist metaphilosophical framework. Whatever our metaphilosophical commitments, then, we should all agree that DV research should be actively pursued rather than abandoned.

2015, *Philosophical Psychology* 28 (5), 642-673.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Abstract: In their paper titled *Gender and Philosophical Intuition*, Wesley Buckwalter & Stephen Stich argue that the intuitions of women and men differ significantly on various types of philosophical questions. Furthermore, men's intuitions, so the authors, are more in line with traditionally accepted solutions of classical problems. This inherent bias, so the argument, is one of the factors that leads more men than women to pursue degrees and careers in philosophy. These findings have received a considerable amount of attention and the paper is to appear in the second edition of *Experiment Philosophy* edited by Joshua Knobe & Shaun Nichols, which itself is an influential outlet. Given the exposure of these results, we attempted to replicate three of the classes of questions that Buckwalter & Stich review in their paper and for which they report significant differences. We failed to replicate the results using two different sources for data collection (one being identical to the original procedures). Given our results, we do not believe that the outcomes from Buckwalter & Stich (forthcoming) that we examined are robust. That is, men and women do not seem to differ significantly in their intuitive responses to these philosophical scenarios.

Comment: Hamid Seyedsayamdost presents the results of the replications of three classes of studies invoked by Buckwalter and Stich in support of the claim that philosophical intuitions vary across gender. Most of the studies fail to replicate the original results. Although the paper is rather technical in focus, working through (some parts of) it may help the readers better understand the methodology of x-phi and assess the credibility of results published in x-phi papers.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the differences between the "different voices" model and the "perfect storm" model? Which of the two do you find to be more compelling?
2. On p. 238 of her essay, Antony mentions that the "Different voices" model, but not the "perfect storm" model, predicts that: "The variance in professional success among women should be largely predicted by variance in intellectual 'contact sports.'" Can you think of a way of testing this claim empirically?
3. Do you agree with Kumar that Buckwalter & Stich's paper shows the potential of x-phi to further feminist causes, or with Antony that it is representative of a tendency that might actually hamper the attempts to achieve gender equality in philosophy?
4. In Seyedsayamdost's studies, gender differences were more likely to occur in in-person studies than on the population of university students (Dualism&compatibilism study at the LSE computer lab; Gettier in person). What, if anything, should be made of that?

Exercise: Try to replicate one of the gender differences in intuitions reported by Stich and Buckwalter, using an online survey distributed among your family and friends.

WEEK 3. HOW STABLE ARE PHILOSOPHICAL INTUITIONS ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS?

Feminist philosophers have long emphasized the limitations of intuitions as a source of evidence in philosophical theorizing. In particular, it has been claimed that one's intuitions are shaped by socio-economic factors. Accordingly, one ought to expect a huge variation in philosophical intuitions across different populations. On this line of argument, any appearance of the universality of certain philosophical intuitions is merely a reflection of the fact that analytic philosophers have been historically a very homogenous bunch: affluent, well-educated, white, straight, cis-, men. Many take experimental philosophy to be an important source of support for this sentiment. For its practitioners have over and over, in methodologically respectable ways, demonstrated that philosophical intuitions on topics as diverse as knowledge and free will differ across cultures, genders, personality traits, and so on. However, in a recent series of papers, Joshua Knobe argues that this argument ignores the actual findings of experimental philosophy. He claims that one of the most striking lesson of experimental philosophy is that philosophical intuitions are surprisingly stable across demographic groups. In this week we will look at the source of evidence for this claim, as well as its philosophical implications.

KNOBE, JOSHUA. *PHILOSOPHICAL INTUITIONS ARE SURPRISINGLY ROBUST ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES*

2019, *Epistemology & Philosophy of Science* 56(2), 29-36.

Difficulty: Easy-Intermediate

Abstract: Within the existing metaphilosophical literature on experimental philosophy, a great deal of attention has been devoted to the claim that there are large differences in philosophical intuitions between people of different demographic groups. Some philosophers argue that this claim has important metaphilosophical implications; others argue that it does not. However, the actual empirical work within experimental philosophy seems to point to a very different sort of metaphilosophical question. Specifically, what the actual empirical work suggests is that intuitions are surprisingly robust across demographic groups. Prior to empirical study, it seemed plausible that unexpected patterns of intuition found in one demographic group would not emerge in other demographic groups. Yet, again and again, empirical work obtains the opposite result: that unexpected patterns found in one demographic group actually emerge also in other demographic groups. I cite 30 studies that find this sort of robustness. I then argue that to the extent that metaphilosophical work is to engage with the actual findings from experimental philosophy, it needs to explore the implications of the surprising robustness of philosophical intuitions across demographic differences.

Comment: In this paper, Joshua Knobe challenges the widespread view that philosophical intuitions are variable across the demographic groups. Instead, he argues that the actual results show that philosophical intuitions are surprisingly stable across demographic groups.

FURTHER READINGS

MACHERY, EDOUARD AND STEPHEN STICH. *DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN PHILOSOPHICAL INTUITION. A REPLY TO JOSHUA KNOBE*

2022, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: In a recent paper, Joshua Knobe (2019) offers a startling account of the metaphilosophical implications of findings in experimental philosophy. We argue that Knobe's account is seriously mistaken, and that it is based on a radically misleading portrait of recent work in experimental philosophy and cultural psychology.

Comment: The authors of the paper are the leaders of the recently concluded ["Geography of philosophy project"](#), which studies "diversity in people's conceptions of understanding, wisdom, and knowledge around the world, and seek to promote cross-cultural research in cognitive science." In this response piece, they accuse Knobe of cherry-picking the results to support his conclusion. They supply an impressive list of 100 papers that have found diversity in philosophical intuitions across demographic groups. In addition to claiming that Knobe's view is false, they also argue that taking it seriously may have harmful consequences for the way philosophy is practiced.

KNOBE, JOSHUA. *PHILOSOPHICAL INTUITIONS ARE SURPRISINGLY STABLE ACROSS BOTH DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS AND SITUATIONS*

2021, *Filozofia Nauki* 29 (12), 11-76, Sections 1, 2, 4.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Abstract: In the early years of experimental philosophy, a number of studies seemed to suggest that people's philosophical intuitions were unstable. Some studies seemed to suggest that philosophical intuitions were unstable across demographic groups; others seemed to suggest that philosophical intuitions were unstable across situations. Now, approximately two decades into the development of experimental philosophy, we have much more data concerning these questions. The data available now appear to suggest that philosophical intuitions are actually quite stable. In particular, they suggest that philosophical intuitions are surprisingly stable across both demographic groups and situations.

Comment: In this comprehensive paper, Knobe further unpacks his claim about the stability of intuitions across demographic differences. He scrutinizes some of the studies invoked by Stich & Machery, and argues that many of them do indeed provide evidence of stability.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Suppose that participants from a single demographic group are divided about a certain philosophical question. For example, in study after study, around half of the population says "yes" and the other half says "no." Is this necessarily evidence of the instability of intuitions about this particular topic? Or are there alternative explanations of such data?
2. According to Knobe, why do so many non-experimental philosophers think that experimental philosophy has shown the variability in philosophical intuitions across demographic groups, despite evidence to the contrary?
3. Assume with Knobe (2021) that philosophical intuitions are stable across cultures but non-philosophical intuitions are variable across cultures. What could explain the difference?
4. Why do Stich and Machery think that Knobe's view, that philosophical intuitions are stable across cultures, could have negative impact on philosophy? Do you agree with their assessment?
5. Given the empirical data currently available, across which empirical factors do philosophical intuitions vary the most?
Given the empirical data currently available, intuitions about which topics tend to vary the most across demographic groups?

WEEK 4. IS FEMINIST X-PHI POSSIBLE?

Some prominent feminist philosophers have raised objections to experimental philosophy. Feminist epistemologists have argued that the methods of xphi – particularly the use of surveys – fail to properly appreciate the philosophical significance of differences in intuition across social groups. They have also argued that x-phi methods risk re-entrenching harmful epistemic hierarchies. This week's readings are two of the most prominent of these feminist objections. The main reading, by Gaile Pohlhaus, primarily targets what has been called the "negative" program of experimental philosophy. Both readings, however, focus on questions about the significance, for philosophy, of x-phi studies that reveal that intuitions differ across social groups.

POHLHAUS, GAILE. *DIFFERENT VOICES, PERFECT STORMS, AND ASKING GRANDMA WHAT SHE THINKS*

2015, *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 1 (1): 1-24.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: At first glance it might appear that experimental philosophers and feminist philosophers would make good allies. Nonetheless, experimental philosophy has received criticism from feminist fronts, both for its methodology and for some of its guiding assumptions. Adding to this critical literature, I raise questions concerning the ways in which “differences” in intuitions are employed in experimental philosophy. Specifically, I distinguish between two ways in which differences in intuitions might play a role in philosophical practice, one which puts an end to philosophical conversation and the other which provides impetus for beginning one. Insofar as experimental philosophers are engaged in deploying “differences” in intuitions in the former rather than the latter sense, I argue that their approach is antithetical to feminist projects. Moreover, this is even the case when experimental philosophers deploy “differences” in intuitions along lines of gender.

Comment: Pohlhaus begins by presenting her argument as a critical response to both Buckwalter and Stich's controversial article, and Antony's (2012) reply to it. What follows is an argument about the way x-phi practitioners have failed to fully incorporate feminist insights about the significance of intuition difference. For Pohlhaus, a discovery that some one or some groups has a different intuitive response to one's own is the jumping off point for a potentially transformative conversation, rather than a result that either puts to rest a philosophical concept, or needs to be explained away.

FURTHER READING

SCHWARTZMAN, LISA. *INTUITION, THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS, AND PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD: FEMINISM AND EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY*

2012, *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43 (3): 307-316.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Contemporary analytic philosophers often employ thought experiments in arguing for or against a philosophical position. These abstract, counterfactual scenarios draw on our intuitions to illustrate the force of a particular argument or to demonstrate that a certain position is untenable. Political theorists, for instance, employ Rawls's “original position” to illustrate the power of “justice as fairness,” and epistemologists raise “Gettier cases” to problematize a standard definition of knowledge. Although not all philosophers proceed in this manner, such methods are common in many areas of contemporary analytic philosophy...

Comment: Schwartzman mounts a critical argument about x-phi's feminist potential. She argues that the sorts of methods that are central to much x-phi are uncritical of the ways in which intuitions can be shaped by a variety of prejudicial and ideological forces, and are unable to reveal the existence of the sort of structural injustice that is responsible for professional philosophy's radically unrepresentative demographics. Importantly, along the way she recruits empirical work about the nature of implicit bias and stereotype threat.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Pohlhaus agrees with Louise Antony's argument that claims about gender differences in philosophical intuition are not only scientifically dubious, but likely to have unwelcome consequences from a perspective that seeks to diversify academic philosophy. However, she also disagrees with Antony's response to Buckwalter & Stich's study. She says that Antony, like Buckwalter and Stich, assumes that philosophy's unequal demographics is either explained by women not having philosophical intuitions, or by the "perfect storm" hypothesis. Explain why Pohlhaus thinks this assumption is questionable, and why there might be more possibilities neither Antony, nor Buckwalter and Stich, have taken seriously.
2. Pohlhaus suggests that there is a danger in the attempt to excise, from philosophy, all claims that something is "obvious." Explain why she thinks this is obvious.
3. In your own words, describe the difference between the "negative" and "positive" programs in x-phi. Why does Pohlhaus think that the negative program is not in line with feminist concerns? Does she think the same is true of the positive program? If so, why? If not, why not?
4. Pohlhaus can be read as advocating for a kind of empirical philosophy that does not treat other people as "objects" but as "agents." This would involve treating research participants as people capable of explaining and justifying their intuitions, rather than simply reporting those intuitions to the researcher, who is then left to analyse them. Do you think that it is always necessary to treat participants as agents in this sense? Are there times when it might be appropriate to treat them as "objects"? In answering this question, consider the fact that in Schwartzman's paper, some of empirical work on implicit bias is recruited to advance a feminist argument.
5. To what extent do you think Pohlhaus's arguments are properly targetting the methods of x-phi, and to what extent are they targetting what she calls the "hubris" of some people who recruit the methods of x-phi?
6. Someone might argue that taking Pohlhaus seriously does not mean rejecting the methods of x-phi, so much as making philosophy more diverse and inclusive, as well as expanding the theorists we recognize as engaging in the sort of work x-phi practitioners are concerned with. What, if anything, might a defender of Pohlhaus say in response to this?

WEEK 5. FEMINIST X-PHI: A CASE STUDY, CONSENT

This week's reading is a recent piece of experimental jurisprudence; a piece that engages in the philosophy of law, using methods from experimental philosophy. The x-phi methods used are those of fairly mainstream x-phi – namely, surveys – and seeks to illuminate a question that is of utmost concern to feminist legal scholars: why is it that the law does not treat sex procured by deception as rape, when the canonical view is that deception vitiates consent? Sommers employs a large number of survey studies to argue that the explanation has to do with the folk concept of consent, which would seem to influence legal decisions illicitly. The argument presented is arguably a case of feminist x-phi in the more or less "traditional" sense of x-phi – the sense that Pohlhaus and Schwartzman would seem to argue is impossible. When reading Sommers's article, it is therefore a good idea to keep the arguments of Pohlhaus and Schwartzman in mind, and consider the extent to they would endorse Sommer's methods and argument, and if so what that would mean for their perspective on experimental philosophy.

SOMMERS, ROSEANNA. *COMMONSENSE CONSENT*

2020, *Yale Law Journal*, 2232.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Consent is a bedrock principle in democratic society and a primary means through which our law expresses its commitment to individual liberty. While there seems to be broad consensus that consent is important, little is known about what people think consent is. This article undertakes an empirical investigation of people's ordinary intuitions about when consent has been granted. Using techniques from moral psychology and experimental philosophy, it advances the core claim that most laypeople think consent is compatible with fraud, contradicting prevailing normative theories of consent. This empirical phenomenon is observed across over two dozen scenarios spanning numerous contexts in which consent is legally salient, including sex, surgery, participation in medical research, warrantless searches by police, and contracts. Armed with this empirical finding, this Article revisits a longstanding legal puzzle about why the law refuses to treat fraudulently procured consent to sexual intercourse as rape. It exposes how prevailing explanations for this puzzle have focused too narrowly on sex. It suggests instead that the law may be influenced by the commonsense understanding of consent in all sorts of domains, including and beyond sexual consent. Meanwhile, the discovery of "commonsense consent" allows us to see that the problem is much deeper and more pervasive than previous commentators have realized. The findings expose a large—and largely unrecognized—disconnect between commonsense intuition and the dominant philosophical conception of consent. The Article thus grapples with the relationship between folk morality, normative theory, and the law.

Comment: Content warning: details of rape. This article presents a series of experimental studies that have an important result for understanding a legal puzzle that has plagued many feminist theorists. Sommers argues that the dominant explanation of the puzzle has been wrongly diagnosed by feminist theorists, and that attention to folk intuitions about the nature of consent can explain the law's inconsistent treatment of consent that is procured by deception.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How have feminist theorists understood the common law's refusal to recognize sexual-consent-by-deception as amounting to rape?
1. How does attention to other domains of common law show, according to Sommers, that this understanding is misguided, or at least incomplete?
2. What is "commonsense consent"? How exactly is it supposed to explain the fact that common law often departs from the claim that fraud vitiates consent?
3. Sommers's article describes the results of many many survey studies. Could one have reasoned their way, to Sommers's claim about the way commonsense consent explains the law's inconsistent rulings on certain cases, from the "armchair"? To what extent are the different studies Sommers conducted instrumental in leading her (and the reader) to the conception of commonsense consent that she proposes?
4. What do you think of Sommers's inclusion of quotations from study participants? Does it help to treat participants as agents, rather than mere objects of study? What might Sommers say to someone who argued that her inclusion of the quotes helps to bolster Sommers's arguments by loading the dice in her favor (after all, the fact that one or two people reasoned in the way a quote suggests does not indicate that all participants reasoned in that way)?
5. If the folk concept of consent is different from the legal theorists conception of consent, what should we do about this, in your opinion?
6. Some people argue that consent provides a poor framework for assessing the ethics of a sexual relationship. This is because certain cases involve consent, but still seem wrong. For instance, in some cases consent is given freely, but the power relationship between the participants is sufficient to make a sexual relationship ethically problematic. What might Sommers say, in response to the person who argued that the results of her studies show that we ought to do away with consent as way of assessing the ethics of consent? Do you agree?

WEEK 6. FEMINIST X-PHI: A CASE STUDY, "TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE"

Miranda Fricker's "epistemic injustice" is one of the most widely discussed concepts in contemporary feminist epistemology. Epistemic injustice takes place when someone is harmed specifically in their capacity as a knower. One of the two types of epistemic injustice discussed by Fricker in her seminal 2007 book is testimonial injustice, which occurs when the hearer is unjustly treated as an unreliable source of information, because of an identity prejudice on the part of the hearer. This week we are going to look at a recent attempt to empirically test for testimonial injustice.

DÍAZ, RODRIGO AND MANUEL ALMAGRO. *YOU'RE JUST BEING EMOTIONAL! TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE AND FOLK-PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTIONS*

2021, *Synthese*, 198, 5709-5730.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Testimonial injustices occur when individuals from particular social groups are systematically and persistently given less credibility in their claims merely because of their group identity. Recent "pluralistic" approaches to folk psychology, by taking into account the role of stereotypes in how we understand others, have the power to explain how and why cases of testimonial injustice occur. If how we make sense of others' behavior depends on assumptions about how individuals from certain groups think and act, this can explain why speakers are given different degrees of credibility depending on their group identity. For example, if people assume that women are more emotional than men, they will systematically give less credibility to women's claims. This explanation involves three empirical claims: people assume that women are more emotional than men, people assume that emotionality hinders credibility, and people give less credibility to women's claims. While extant studies provide some support for and, no study to date has directly tested. In two different studies, we tested all these three claims. The results from both studies provide support for, as we found significant negative correlations between emotionality and credibility attributions. However, in contrast to what some accounts of folk psychology posit, we did not find any significant difference in people's attributions of emotionality and credibility towards women versus men speakers. We hope that our studies here pave the way for further empirical studies testing the phenomenon of testimonial injustice in a context-sensitive way, in order to have a better understanding of the conditions in which testimonial injustices are likely to happen.

Comment: The existence of testimonial injustice is widely accepted. Despite this, Rodrigo Díaz & Manuel Almagro contend that no one has attempted to test for it directly. They present the results of two survey experiments which found no evidence of testimonial injustice. Yet, they do not take their results to cast doubt on the existence of the phenomenon.

FURTHER READINGS

FRICKER, MIRANDA. *EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE: THE POWER AND ETHICS OF KNOWING*

2007, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Difficulty: Easy-Intermediate

Fragment: pp. 21-29.

Abstract: Justice is one of the oldest and most central themes of philosophy, but sometimes we would do well to focus instead on injustice. In epistemology, the very idea that there is a first-order ethical dimension to our epistemic practices — the idea that there is such a thing as epistemic justice — remains obscure until we adjust the philosophical lens so that we see through to the negative space that is epistemic injustice. This book argues that there is a distinctively epistemic genus of injustice, in which someone is wronged specifically in their capacity as a knower, wronged therefore in a capacity essential to human value. The book identifies two forms of

epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. In doing so, it charts the ethical dimension of two fundamental epistemic practices: gaining knowledge by being told and making sense of our social experiences. As the account unfolds, the book travels through a range of philosophical problems. Thus, the book finds an analysis of social power; an account of prejudicial stereotypes; a characterization of two hybrid intellectual-ethical virtues; a revised account of the State of Nature used in genealogical explanations of the concept of knowledge; a discussion of objectification and 'silencing'; and a framework for a virtue epistemological account of testimony. The book reveals epistemic injustice as a potent yet largely silent dimension of discrimination, analyses the wrong it perpetrates, and constructs two hybrid ethical-intellectual virtues of epistemic justice which aim to forestall it.

Comment: In this excerpt, Miranda Fricker introduces the concept of testimonial injustice.

ARCILA-VALENZUELA, MIGDALIA AND ANDRÉS PÁEZ. *TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE: THE FACTS OF THE MATTER*

2022, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: To verify the occurrence of a singular instance of testimonial injustice three facts must be established. The first is whether the hearer in fact has an identity prejudice of which she may or may not be aware; the second is whether that prejudice was in fact the cause of the unjustified credibility deficit; and the third is whether there was in fact a credibility deficit in the testimonial exchange. These three elements constitute the facts of the matter of testimonial injustice. In this essay we argue that none of these facts can be established with any degree of confidence, and therefore that testimonial injustice is an undetectable phenomenon in singular instances. Our intention is not to undermine the idea of testimonial injustice, but rather to set limits to what can be justifiably asserted about it. According to our argument, although there are insufficient reasons to identify individual acts of testimonial injustice, it is possible to recognize recurrent patterns of epistemic responses to speakers who belong to specific social groups. General testimonial injustice can thus be characterized as a behavioral tendency of a prejudiced hearer.

Comment: Migdalia Arcila-Valenzuela and Andrés Páez argue that it is impossible to detect an individual instance of epistemic injustice. Their case relies on a review and analysis of the recent research on implicit bias. The key theoretical premise of their argument is that it is impossible to establish, for any individual situation, what is the minimum degree of credibility that the speaker is entitled to. However, they still think we can measure general testimonial injustice, which they construe as "a behavioral tendency of a prejudiced hearer."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the relation between implicit bias and testimonial injustice?
2. How do Díaz & Almagro operationalize testimonial injustice? Do you agree with their way of doing it?
3. Is it possible to empirically test for epistemic injustice? If so, what methods are more likely to detect it than the survey experiment deployed by Díaz & Almagro?
4. Given that it is so difficult to measure testimonial injustice, why have many found the concept to be so illuminating?
5. Arcila-Valenzuela & Páez report that they "have been accused, in discussion, of 'scientizing' testimonial injustice, of requiring scientific evidence for a phenomenon that is quotidian and easily detectable by victims, perhaps by means of a simple inference to the best explanation. In brief, to some, our approach ignores the victim's perspective and places an impossible probative burden on her." Is this a fair accusation?

WEEK 7. ARE NUMBERS OPPRESSIVE? CAN QUANTITATIVE METHODS HELP US TOWARDS FEMINIST ENDS?

There is a long running debate, amongst social scientists, about the relative benefits of quantitative research methods, versus qualitative methods. Speaking very generally, quantitative methods provide an understanding of the world via numbers, measurement, and statistical analysis. For instance, when a philosopher asks participants to complete a survey, and then measures the average responses across different survey conditions, they are using quantitative methods to understand some phenomenon. Qualitative methods seek to help us understand the fine-grained details of phenomena that aren't easily illuminated by numbers. For instance, qualitative researchers might interview people, and construct lengthy narratives that help to explain a phenomenon in a rich and vivid way. For the most part, the research that has been categorized as "x-phi" within academic philosophy has been quantitative research. Some of the objections that feminists have raised to x-phi, and which week three's readings surveyed, can be appropriately understood in light of the more general debate over qualitative and quantitative methods. That is, aspects of Pohlhaus and Schwartzman's arguments can be properly understood as arguments about the limitations, and potential danger, of quantitative methods. In order to put these arguments into some perspective, this week's readings give a sense of the way the debate over qualitative and quantitative methods has played out (and continues to play out!) in other fields. The main reading is from a researcher in computer science, where quantitative methods continue to reign supreme, but where worries about the limits of quantitative methods for understanding the way computer algorithms might reproduce bias, is gaining traction. The other reading is from two psychologists, both of whom advocate for quantitative methods. This supplementary reading gives a nice sense of the background to the debate, and some of the good reasons why members of various social groups are wary of quantitative research methods.

NARAYANAN, ARVIND. *THE LIMITS OF THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH TO DISCRIMINATION*

2022, James Baldwin Lecture Series.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Introduction: Let's set the stage. In 2016, ProPublica released a ground-breaking investigation called Machine Bias. You've probably heard of it. They examined a criminal risk prediction tool that's used across the country. These are tools that claim to predict the likelihood that a defendant will reoffend if released, and they are used to inform bail and parole decisions.

Comment: This is a written transcript of the James Baldwin lecture, delivered by the computer scientist Arvind Narayanan, at Princeton in 2022. Narayanan's prior research has examined algorithmic bias and standards of fairness with respect to algorithmic decision making. Here, he engages critically with his own discipline, suggesting that there are serious limits to the sorts of quantitative methods that computer scientists recruit to investigate the potential biases in their own tools. Narayanan acknowledges that in voicing this critique, he is echoing claims by feminist researchers from fields beyond computer science. However, his own arguments, centered as they are on the details of the quantitative methods he is at home with, home in on exactly why these prior criticisms hold up in a way that seeks to speak more persuasively to Narayanan's own peers in computer science and other quantitative fields.

FURTHER READING

COKLEY, KEVIN AND GERMINE H. AWAD. *IN DEFENSE OF QUANTITATIVE METHODS: USING THE "MASTER'S TOOLS" TO PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE*

2013, *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology* 5 (2).

Difficulty: Easy

Abstract: Empiricism in the form of quantitative methods has sometimes been used by researchers to thwart human welfare and social justice. Some of the ugliest moments in the history of psychology were a result of researchers using quantitative methods to legitimize and codify the prejudices of the day. This has resulted in the view that quantitative methods are antithetical to the pursuit of social justice for oppressed and marginalized groups. While the ambivalence toward quantitative methods by some is understandable given their misuse by some researchers, we argue that quantitative methods are not inherently oppressive. Quantitative methods can be liberating if used by multiculturally competent researchers and scholar-activists committed to social justice. Examples of best practices in social justice oriented quantitative research are reviewed.

Comment: Cokley and Awad are both psychologists, whose work seeks to redress the wrongs of past injustices against marginalized groups, and who both use quantitative methods to do so. In this article, they sketch some of the historical reasons why members of marginalized groups are sometimes rightly suspicious of the use of quantitative techniques. However, they both argue that quantitative methods are not necessarily oppressive, but can be put to good use provided their practitioners are committed to social justice. They offer some examples, from their own work, of how this sort of quantitative work can help to further the cause of social justice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Narayanan says that previous criticisms of quantitative methods, many of which have come from researchers working outside of quantitative fields, have been largely unconvincing to people working in quantitative fields. Explain his reasoning for thinking this.
2. Explain, in your own words, why Narayanan thinks that the choice of the null-hypothesis has normative significance.
3. Compare Narayanan's claims about the limits of data as "snap shots," to Lisa Schwartzman's claim that experimental philosophy cannot study structural discrimination. Are these the same claims? Do you agree that the limits of data, as described by Narayanan, place necessary constraints on the capacity of quantitative methods to help illuminate structural injustice? If so, what should researchers do in response to these limits?
4. How much of Narayanan's argument about the limits of quantitative methods targets the assumptions and backgrounds of many of the people who currently do quantitative research, and how much of his argument is about the limits of quantitative research itself?
5. Compare your answer to question 4, to Cokley and Awad's suggestion that one way to avoid the production of racist research is to ensure that social scientists are committed to social justice (see pages 31-32). Do you think that demanding such a commitment is sufficient to ensure that quantitative research does not reproduce prejudice? If such a commitment is not sufficient, what might research communities do to better ensure that their work won't reproduce prejudice?
6. Narayanan gives several reasons for thinking that, despite its limitations, people interested in injustice should still recruit quantitative methods. What are some of these reasons? Do you agree with him? In their recommendations for Quantitative Social Justice Research, Cokley and Awad make some suggestions that would, if followed, have an impact on the ways that x-phi is often conducted. For instance, x-phi survey studies often ask for the demographic data of their participants, and very rarely give participants the opportunity to provide principal investigators feedback on their experience of the survey. Do you think there are good reasons for changing some of these practices, in light of Cokley and Awad's suggestions? If yes, what do you think Gaile Pohlhaus would think of the kind of x-phi methods that would result?

WEEK 8. WERE EARLY FEMINIST PHILOSOPHERS DOING X-PHI?

This week's readings encourage us to ask the following questions: To what extent were early feminist thinkers doing X-Phi? Does it matter, and if so why, whether we think of these early thinkers as experimental philosophers? The main reading is a 1900 essay by Ida B. Wells Barnett where she appeals to various empirical sources to argue that lynching needed to be reconceptualized. The second reading argues that Jane Addams, the activist and feminist that lived and worked in Chicago about 100 years ago, was an experimental philosopher. This reading explicitly encourages us to critically interrogate the distinction (at least when it comes to activists like Addams), between activist and philosopher. If the author's arguments hold with respect to Addams, then we have good reason for thinking that it holds with respect to other thinkers, like Wells. The third reading is a suggested reading belonging to Jane Addams herself. Chapters two through six delve into different areas of the social work that Jane Addams was involved in. We recommend choosing one of these chapters and pairing it with chapter seven, her conclusion.

WELLS BARNETT, IDA. *LYNCH LAW IN AMERICA*

1995, In *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall. The New Press, pp. 70-76. **Difficulty:** Easy-Intermediate

Abstract: The first major anthology to trace the development of black Feminist thought in the United States, *Words of Fire* is Beverly Guy-Sheftall's comprehensive collection of writings by more than sixty black women. From the pioneering work of abolitionist Maria Miller Stewart and anti-lynching crusader Ida Wells-Barnett to the writings of feminist critics Michele Wallace and bell hooks, black women have been writing about the multiple jeopardies—racism, sexism, and classism—that have made it imperative to forge a brand of feminism uniquely their own. In the words of Audre Lorde, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”—*Words of Fire* provides the tools to dismantle the interlocking systems that oppress us and to rebuild from their ashes a society of true freedom.

Comment: This 1900 essay is seminal in feminist theory and black studies. Wells paves the way, appealing to empirical evidence, for theorizing on the role that white women's sexuality plays in black people's oppression in the US context. This is part of her broader argument for why lynching should be considered a moral catastrophe in the US.

SKORBURG, JOSHUA AUGUST. *JANE ADDAMS AS EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHER*

2017, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 26 (5): 918-938. **Difficulty:** Intermediate

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.

Comment: In this article, Skorburg argues that Jane Addams – the 20th Century activist who worked for poor and immigrant communities in Chicago – can be appropriately understand as an early experimental philosopher. In making the argument, Skorburg distinguishes between narrow and broad senses of what it means to do x-phi, as well as a narrow and broad sense of what it means to be a pragmatist. If we accept broad sense of both x-phi, and pragmatism, Jane Addams counts as both a pragmatist, and an experimental philosopher.

FURTHER READING

ADDAMS, JANE. *DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL ETHICS*

2002, University of Illinois Press.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Fragment: chapter of your choice from body of text and Chapter 7 (conclusion)

Abstract: Nearly a century before the advent of "multiculturalism," Jane Addams put forward her conception of the moral significance of diversity. Each member of a democracy, Addams believed, is under a moral obligation to seek out diverse experiences, making a daily effort to confront others' perspectives. Morality must be seen as a social rather than an individual endeavor, and democracy as a way of life rather than merely a basis for laws. Failing this, both democracy and ethics remain sterile, empty concepts. In this, Addams's earliest book on ethics--presented here with a substantial introduction by Charlene Haddock Seigfried--she reflects on the factors that hinder the ability of all members of society to determine their own well-being. Observing relationships between charitable workers and their clients, between factory owners and their employers, and between household employers and their servants, she identifies sources of friction and shows how conceiving of democracy as a social obligation can lead to new, mutually beneficial lines of conduct. She also considers the proper education of workers, struggles between parents and their adult daughters over conflicting family and social claims, and the merging of politics with the daily lives of constituents. "The sphere of morals is the sphere of action," Addams proclaims. It is not enough to believe passively in the innate dignity of all human beings. Rather, one must work daily to root out racial, gender, class, and other prejudices from personal relationships.

Comment: In this book, published in 1902, Jane Addams makes a case for why politics must be done with an eye to the personal, interpersonal, and lived. She argues that ethics and democracy cannot be properly conceived outside of the realm of the social. Addams thinks of social friction as productive and illuminative. Abstract and passive belief in doing good and being democratic without actually speaking to those who are oppressed or marginalized is not sufficient to do good and be democratic. One cannot be democratic without actually involving oneself with people who are different than you. Addams foreshadows later arguments about multiculturalism, diversity, and participatory democracy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is Wells Barnett's claim regarding the role of white women in lynching practices in the 19c.?
2. Which kinds of empirical sources does Wells Barnett appeal to while making her argument? Could her argument be successful without these empirical sources?
3. What role does Wells Barnett think "debunking statistics" and other kinds of research plays against the injustice of lynching?
4. What concrete political takeaways can we take away from Wells' article from the perspective of:
 - (a) 21st century feminists, and
 - (b) experimental philosophers
5. Skorburg argues that given the broad conception of x-phi, and the broad conception of pragmatism, Jane Addams counts as an experimental philosopher. As Skorburg notes though, Addams herself would probably be very uninterested in whether or not academics considered her to be doing experimental philosophy, let alone philosophy — Adams herself had for more pressing issues to attend to! If Addams herself would not particularly care about whether Skorburg's argument goes through, why should we care about whether or not figures like Addams (and Wells) are categorized as experimental philosophers?

WEEK 9. WHAT ARE SOME QUALITATIVE METHODS THAT PHILOSOPHERS MIGHT USE TO BACK UP THEIR PHILOSOPHICAL CLAIMS?

This week serves as an introduction to qualitative methods and research in philosophy. Broadly speaking, qualitative methods acquire data through personal accounts or documents: by looking at non-numerical evidence. Surveys can count as qualitative methods, but they barely scratch the surface of possible qualitative ways to accrue data: the category can be quite broad and different fields (across social and cultural psychology, history, anthropology, sociology) emphasize different methods and questions. Qualitative approaches to data include: ethnography and autoethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, historical research, and the listening guide, among others. To begin thinking through questions around qualitative methods, we will read the introduction and first chapter of Jennifer Morton's 2019 book *Moving Up Without Losing Your Way: The Ethical Costs of Upward Mobility*, thinking particularly about her use of interviews, narratives, vignettes, and autoethnography.

MORTON, JENNIFER. *MOVING UP WITHOUT LOSING YOUR WAY: THE ETHICAL COSTS OF UPWARD MOBILITY*

2019, Princeton University Press

Difficulty: Easy

Fragment: Introduction: "Strivers" (pp. 1-16) and Chapter 1, "Recognizing the ethical costs of upward mobility" (pp. 17-42).

Abstract: Upward mobility through the path of higher education has been an article of faith for generations of working-class, low-income, and immigrant college students. While we know this path usually entails financial sacrifices and hard work, very little attention has been paid to the deep personal compromises such students have to make as they enter worlds vastly different from their own. Measuring the true cost of higher education for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, *Moving Up without Losing Your Way* looks at the ethical dilemmas of upward mobility—the broken ties with family and friends, the severed connections with former communities, and the loss of identity—faced by students as they strive to earn a successful place in society. Drawing upon philosophy, social science, personal stories, and interviews, Jennifer Morton reframes the college experience, factoring in not just educational and career opportunities but also essential relationships with family, friends, and community. Finding that student strivers tend to give up the latter for the former, negating their sense of self, Morton seeks to reverse this course. She urges educators to empower students with a new narrative of upward mobility—one that honestly situates ethical costs in historical, social, and economic contexts and that allows students to make informed decisions for themselves. A powerful work with practical implications, *Moving Up without Losing Your Way* paves a hopeful road so that students might achieve social mobility while retaining their best selves.

Comment: In this book Jennifer Morton, a philosopher of education and political philosopher, revisits the question of upward mobility and the difficulties under-privileged college students face in completing college. She argues that they face huge, yet-unacknowledged costs: "ethical costs," that impact not just them but their wider (often-marginalized) communities. Her theses in this book therefore touch not just on the individual experiences of marginalized college kids but also on broader issues of social oppression and social change. To make her claims Morton draws on her own lived experiences as an immigrant and a philosopher teaching in a public institution. One might describe this empirical method as autoethnography, although she does not. She also draws upon interviews conducted with the population of students she's interested in, "strivers." Morton's book addresses the phenomenon of upward mobility, the ethical purposes and drawbacks of going to college, and dignifies the experiences of people from marginalized backgrounds who want to make a better life for them and their communities.

FURTHER READINGS

WOMACK, KATHERINE, NORAH MULVANEY-DAY. *FEMINIST BIOETHICS MEETS EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY: EMBRACING THE QUALITATIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL*

2012, *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, 5 (1): 113-132. **Difficulty:** Easy-Intermediate

Abstract: Experimental philosophers advocate expansion of philosophical methods to include empirical investigation into the concepts used by ordinary people in reasoning and action. We propose also including methods of qualitative social science, which we argue serve both moral and epistemic goals. Philosophical analytical tools applied to interdisciplinary research designs can provide ways to extract rich contextual information from subjects. We argue that this approach has important implications for bioethics; it provides both epistemic and moral reasons to use the experiences and perspectives of diverse populations to better identify underlying concepts as well as to develop effective interventions within particular communities.

Comment: Katherine Womack and Norah Mulvaney-Day identify some shortcomings of survey experiments, which are the dominant method of x-phi. They argue, from a feminist standpoint, that x-phi would benefit from the inclusion of qualitative methods.

THOMPSON, KYLE. *QUALITATIVE METHODS SHOW THAT SURVEYS MISREPRESENT "OUGHT IMPLIES CAN" JUDGMENTS*

2023, *Philosophical Psychology*, 36 (1): 29-57.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Experimental philosophers rely almost exclusively on quantitative surveys that potentially misrepresent participants' multifarious judgments. To assess the efficacy of qualitative methods in experimental philosophy and reveal limitations with quantitative surveys, a study was conducted on the Kantian principle that 'ought implies can', which limits moral obligation to actions that agents can do. Specifically, the think aloud method and a follow-up interview were employed in a modified version of a prominent experiment that recorded participants' judgments of ability, blame, and obligation using quantitative surveys. The modified version produced quantitative results similar to the original experiment along with qualitative data that reveal that the surveys fundamentally misrepresented participants' judgments. The qualitative transcripts from 40 participants are analyzed to show that 'ought implies can' judgments are complex and multifarious, that 'ought implies can' judgments are misrepresented by quantitative survey questions, and that the majority of participants uphold or preserve 'ought implies can.' The results suggest that experimental philosophers can more accurately capture judgments by using qualitative methods, and that studies which rely on quantitative surveys possibly misrepresent participants' judgments.

Comment: "Ought implies can" is a principle widely held by philosophers. The results of survey experiments have been recruited to argue that the folk reject the principle. In this paper, Kyle Thompson presents the results of a qualitative study that provides strong reasons for thinking that extant survey experiments on the topic might have painted a distorted picture. Thompson's paper is a compelling demonstration of the value of supplementing quantitative methods with qualitative ones.

2016, *Philosophical Psychology* 29 (8): 1128-1141.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Experimental philosophy brings empirical methods to philosophy. These methods are used to probe how people think about philosophically interesting things such as knowledge, morality, and freedom. This paper explores the contribution that qualitative methods have to make in this enterprise. I argue that qualitative methods have the potential to make a much greater contribution than they have so far. Along the way, I acknowledge a few types of resistance that proponents of qualitative methods in experimental philosophy might encounter, and provide reasons to think they are ill-founded.

Comment: James Andow suggests that experimental philosophers should incorporate more qualitative methods into their toolkit. He also addresses a potential objection to this claim, according to which experimental philosophy is interested in intuitive, as opposed to reflective, reasoning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the pros and cons of using qualitative vs. quantitative methods for x-phi.
2. What makes an empirical method feminist? Do you think Morton employs feminist empirical methods?
3. What is Morton's thesis regarding "strivers," upward mobility, and ethical costs?
4. Focusing on the methodology section of the introduction, answer the following questions:
 - (a) What role does Morton think narratives can play in philosophical inquiry (first think about what a narrative is), and do you agree that they can play such a role?
 - (b) Morton writes that the interviews she conducted "were not intended to serve as a rigorous systematic empirical study of the experiences of first-generation students. Rather, they are meant to show us that narratives of upward mobility are far more ethically complicated than is generally acknowledged" (Morton 14). Does this assertion challenge her research's claim to be qualitative x-phi? Why or why not?
 - (c) Thinking about what you've read of Morton's book so far, discuss the pros and cons of the interview format as an x-philosophical tool.
 - (d) Think back to the third week's discussion of Pohlhaus's views around empirical philosophy needing to take subjects' agency seriously. What would Pohlhaus have to say about Morton's methods of interviewing?
5. What rationale does Morton give for describing the costs she's invested in as "ethical"? Why does Morton think that ethical goods matter intrinsically, and why does she think they matter to our "sense of identity"? (Morton 24)
6. Why does Morton think sacrificing relations with family, friends, and community is so consequential to a striver's life?
7. What reasons does Morton give us to think that ethical costs do not affect everyone equally, and are those reasons empirical reasons?
8. How well would the Sandra, Todd, and Henry vignettes and narratives hold up against a rigorous uncharitable interlocutor? Are they either necessary or sufficient to back up Morton's claims about ethical costs faced by strivers? If not, what qualitative methods would have worked instead?
9. Andow writes "I think that the most important contribution they [qualitative methods] have to make is in supplementing the methods already used by experimental philosophers." (p. 1131) Do you agree?

WEEK 10. HOW DOES LIVED EXPERIENCE FUNCTION AS EVIDENCE FOR PHILOSOPHICAL CLAIMS?

This week we continue to think about qualitative methods through the lens of critical phenomenology, which is the philosophical study of lived experience. You have two required readings for this week. The first is a brief overview of the methods used in the subdiscipline of philosophy called "critical phenomenology" which often draws from figures in the continental tradition as well as feminist and critical philosophy of race. If you are interested in learning more about critical phenomenology we recommend the recently published anthology *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology* ed. Gail Weiss, Ann Murphy, Gayle Salamon.

The second required reading is the introduction from Sara Ahmed's ethnographic and critical phenomenological work, "Complaint!" Here, she discusses her feminist methodology and data collection. Ahmed will help us think about why qualitative research might be especially comfortable and fruitful for feminist x-philosophers.

The optional reading for this week is the first chapter of "Complaint!" This will be of interest for those who are compelled by her introduction to the book.

GUENTHER, LISA. *CRITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY*

2019, In *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, ed. Gail Weiss, Ann Murphy and Gayle Salamon. Northwestern University Press, pp. 11-16.

Difficulty: Advanced

Abstract: Phenomenology, the philosophical method that seeks to uncover the taken-for-granted presuppositions, habits, and norms that structure everyday experience, is increasingly framed by ethical and political concerns. Critical phenomenology foregrounds experiences of marginalization, oppression, and power in order to identify and transform common experiences of injustice that render "the familiar" a site of oppression for many. In *Fifty Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, leading scholars present fresh readings of classic phenomenological topics and introduce newer concepts developed by feminist theorists, critical race theorists, disability theorists, and queer and trans theorists that capture aspects of lived experience that have traditionally been neglected. By centering historically marginalized perspectives, the chapters in this book breathe new life into the phenomenological tradition and reveal its ethical, social, and political promise. This volume will be an invaluable resource for teaching and research in continental philosophy; feminist, gender, and sexuality studies; critical race theory; disability studies; cultural studies; and critical theory more generally.

Comment: Lisa Guenther, author of the 2015 book "Solidarity Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives," gives a quick overview of "critical phenomenology" and how it is different from classical phenomenology. The boundaries of critical phenomenology are still being drawn, but Guenther's concise explanation has already become canon. Understanding, in broad brush strokes, what critical phenomenology is will be important to engage with many conversations in feminist philosophy, especially in the continental tradition, since feminist theorists (inspired by Simone de Beauvoir and Frantz Fanon) often appeal to lived experience in their theorizing of oppression.

FURTHER READINGS

AHMED, SARA. "HEARING COMPLAINT"

2021, In *Complaint!* Duke University Press, pp. 1-26.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Abstract: In *Complaint!* Sara Ahmed examines what we can learn about power from those who complain about abuses of power. Drawing on oral and written testimonies from academics and students who have made complaints about harassment, bullying, and unequal working conditions at universities, Ahmed explores the gap between what is supposed to happen when complaints are made and what actually happens. To make complaints within institutions is to learn how they work and for whom they work: complaint as feminist pedagogy. Ahmed explores how complaints are made behind closed doors and how doors are often closed on those who complain. To open these doors---to get complaints through, keep them going, or keep them alive---Ahmed emphasizes, requires forming new kinds of collectives. This book offers a systematic analysis of the methods used to stop complaints and a powerful and poetic meditation on what complaints can be used to do. Following a long lineage of black feminist and feminist of color critiques of the university, Ahmed delivers a timely consideration of how institutional change becomes possible and why it is necessary.

Comment: Sara Ahmed is a renowned critical phenomenologist who resigned from her job at Goldsmiths over sexual harassment in her department and the university's handling of it. In this 2021 book, she draws on an interdisciplinary corpus, and her own ethnographic skills, to research and theorize complaint against power abuse, broadly conceived. Important are her own experiences and supportive relationships with students that led to her resignation. One thing this book argues is that complaints, and the process of complaining, are an important part of changing the university, and are in themselves useful political tools, since they challenge (and hence illuminate) hidden parts of institutional life.

AHMED, SARA. "INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICS", AND "MIND THE GAP! POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND OTHER NONPERFORMATIVES"

2021, In *Complaint!* Duke University Press, pp. 27-68.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Abstract: In *Complaint!* Sara Ahmed examines what we can learn about power from those who complain about abuses of power. Drawing on oral and written testimonies from academics and students who have made complaints about harassment, bullying, and unequal working conditions at universities, Ahmed explores the gap between what is supposed to happen when complaints are made and what actually happens. To make complaints within institutions is to learn how they work and for whom they work: complaint as feminist pedagogy. Ahmed explores how complaints are made behind closed doors and how doors are often closed on those who complain. To open these doors---to get complaints through, keep them going, or keep them alive---Ahmed emphasizes, requires forming new kinds of collectives. This book offers a systematic analysis of the methods used to stop complaints and a powerful and poetic meditation on what complaints can be used to do. Following a long lineage of black feminist and feminist of color critiques of the university, Ahmed delivers a timely consideration of how institutional change becomes possible and why it is necessary.

Comment: Sara Ahmed is a renowned critical phenomenologist who resigned from her job at Goldsmiths over sexual harassment in her department and the university's handling of it. In this 2021 book, she draws on an interdisciplinary corpus, and her own ethnographic skills, to research and theorize complaint against power abuse, broadly conceived. Important are her own experiences and supportive relationships with students that led to her resignation. One thing this book argues is that complaints, and the process of complaining, are an important part of changing the university, and are in themselves useful political tools, since they challenge (and hence illuminate) hidden parts of institutional life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does Ahmed mean, in her introduction, by saying that in her book she wanted to become a "feminist ears" (p. 3) for complaint? Is it fair to say that feminist x-phi, if there is such a thing, asks x-philosophers to employ "feminist ears"?
2. Why does Ahmed think it's politically and philosophically important to study complaint in the way that she does?
3. What leads Ahmed to decide to conduct research on other people's experiences of complaint? What does her qualitative study look like? How did she "collect" her complaints? What methods does she use to collect her data? Do you think these were good methods to use to study complaint? Can you think of other methods that would have been just as good or better?
4. Why does Ahmed prefer to think of the spoken words in her interviews as a form of "testimony" (p. 13)?
5. Ahmed mentions and explains her research ethic. What is it, and do you think it sufficiently captures the ethical issues at stake in her study of complaint?
6. What is a "complaint biography"? (page 20)
7. Why does Ahmed think black feminist and feminist of color counterinstitutional work can be thought of as "housework" and what does that have to do with complaint?
8. Why does Ahmed think "the lens provided by complaint" is an intersectional one (Page 24)?
9. Having read the Guenther piece, why do you think Ahmed argues that complaint reveals a "phenomenology of the institution" (Page 19) ? Do you think Complaint! is a critical phenomenology? Why or why not?
10. Do you think ethnographic method can be useful for the feminist x-philosopher who's interested in qualitative work? Why or why not?

WEEK 11. WHAT ARE THE LIMITS AND STRENGTHS OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL QUALITATIVE METHODS?

This week we'll continue to think about qualitative methods and feminist philosophical inquiry. The authors this week are both required reading. They consider and debunk racist stereotypes attributed to black women in the US, appealing to historical, social scientific, literary, and cultural evidence. They both argue that these stereotypes play a crucial role in the continued subjugation of black women. After making our way through some comprehension questions, we'll think about what qualitative methods the Davis piece employs. We'll consider the limits of these methods, and what could be done, if anything, to empirically strengthen her analysis.

DAVIS, ANGELA. *THE BLACK WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY OF SLAVES*

1971, The Bancroft Library.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Introduction: The paucity of literature on the black woman is outrageous on its face. But we must also contend with the fact that too many of these rare studies must claim as their signal achievement the reinforcement of fictitious clichés. They have given credence to grossly distorted categories through which the black woman continues to be perceived.

Comment: Content warning: Details of cruelties of slavery, sexual assault. In this 1971 text written while incarcerated, Angela Davis makes an argument against the truth of a stereotype of the black enslaved woman. She argues that, contrary to popular belief, the stereotype of a black woman under slavery as the “matriarch” (i.e., dominating the men in their lives and colluding with the white slaver in black people’s oppression) is not true. Instead, she argues, appealing to empirical evidence and marxist theory, that black women’s position in the community of slaves uniquely positioned them to aid in liberation struggles. She argues it is empirically borne out that they in fact were crucial to both explicit and everyday resistance efforts.

HILL COLLINS, PATRICIA. *BLACK FEMINIST THOUGHT: KNOWLEDGE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE POLITICS OF EMPOWERMENT*

2008, Routledge.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Fragment: chapter 4 'Mammies, Matriarchs, and other Controlling Images', section 2 'Controlling Images and Black Women's Oppression'

Abstract: In spite of the double burden of racial and gender discrimination, African-American women have developed a rich intellectual tradition that is not widely known. In *Black Feminist Thought*, originally published in 1990, Patricia Hill Collins set out to explore the words and ideas of black feminist intellectuals and writers, both within the academy and without. Here Collins provides an interpretive framework for the work of such prominent black feminist thinkers as Angela Davis, bell hooks, Alice Walker, and Audre Lorde. Drawing from fiction, poetry, music and oral history, the result is a superbly crafted and revolutionary book that provided the first synthetic overview of black feminist thought and its canon.

Comment: An excerpt from her landmark 1991 text, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, this text sees Patricia Hill Collins outline four “controlling images” that contribute to black women’s oppression, appealing to cultural and literary devices, as well as social science literature. In the parts of this chapter not excerpted Hill Collins argues that stereotypical images and symbols of black womanhood manipulate society’s perception and ideas about black womanhood and, by extension, black women which contributes to justifying their oppression.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

5. What is “the designation of the black women as a matriarch” in contemporaneous understandings of slave society and why does Davis think it is a “cruel misnomer”(3)?
6. What does Davis argue was the black women’s true role in everyday practices of resistance of slave life? How did gendered divisions of labor create the conditions for this role? How were these gendered divisions of labor complicated by race?
7. Do you agree with Davis, based on the evidence she provides, that the domestic sphere was invaluable to slave resistance?
8. Why does Davis think it’s politically important to clear up this conceptual mistake about a time that has passed? Hill Collins’ explanation of the matriarch stereotype and its influence on the cultural psyche (Hill Collins 268) may prove useful here.
9. Do you think Davis would disagree with Hill Collins when she says that black women who internalize the “mammy” stereotype risk becoming “effective conduits for perpetuating racial oppression” insofar as they end up teaching their own children to be subservient and deferent to the white social order and to be anti-resistance (Hill Collins 267)? What evidence can you find from Hill Collins and Davis to back up your view?
10. Do Hill Collins and Davis disagree about the (a) contents, (b) function, and (c) truth value of the matriarch stereotype? What evidence can you find from Hill Collins and Davis to back up your view?
11. Davis and Hill Collins both make claims about black women’s sexuality and its relationship to black women’s oppression. What do they each say and are their views compatible?
12. Davis writes that the research for her article was impeded because she was incarcerated at the time of writing: she tells us that her thoughts could at most work as a framework for “rigorous re-investigation” of concepts used to understand black women’s experiences (Davis 1). In light of this, and the rest of the piece’s reliance on historical, statistical, and cultural evidence, answer the following questions:
 - (a) What qualitative empirical methods do you see Davis employing here? Why are they empirical, and why are they qualitative? In what way are they strong methods for her argument?
 - (b) Do you think more empirical investigation is called for to back up her claims in this text? What kind of empirical investigation would be useful, and why? You may discuss details of survey methods or interview questions that you think would be useful.
 - (c) Do you think the evidence from Bonnie Thornton Dill’s work in Hill Collins’ article on page 268 could be used to strengthen Davis’s argument? Why or why not?
 - (d) Do you think Davis would agree that scholars with certain identity backgrounds face unique barriers to conducting historical X-phi on black women? What might this mean for X-Phi by marginalized folk on their own lived experience of social injustice?

WEEK 12. WHAT ETHICAL CHALLENGES MIGHT FEMINIST RESEARCHERS FACE WHEN DOING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON OPPRESSED PEOPLES?

This week we'll reflect on ethical challenges that one faces in doing empirical research on oppressed people. Our required reading confronts the dearth of traditional and first-personal evidence with which to theoretically excavate black women's historical oppression. We strongly recommend reading the first supplementary reading. This article emphasizes the importance of considering the meaning and the ethics of the data we use, especially to those from whom we collect it. The final supplementary reading is an older argument for why the social sciences in the US have historically been racist, sexist, and classist, and containing concrete suggestions for how to improve the state of research.

HARTMAN, SAIDIYA. *VENUS IN TWO ACTS*

2008, *Small Axe*, 12 (2): 1–14.

Difficulty: Advanced

Abstract: This essay examines the ubiquitous presence of Venus in the archive of Atlantic slavery and wrestles with the impossibility of discovering anything about her that hasn't already been stated. As an emblematic figure of the enslaved woman in the Atlantic world, Venus makes plain the convergence of terror and pleasure in the libidinal economy of slavery and, as well, the intimacy of history with the scandal and excess of literature. In writing at the limit of the unspeakable and the unknown, the essay mimes the violence of the archive and attempts to redress it by describing as fully as possible the conditions that determine the appearance of Venus and that dictate her silence.

Comment: Content warning: very explicit details of cruelties of slavery, sexual assault. In this seminal black feminist theory text, the Foucauldian scholar Saidiya Hartman considers the "archive" which is what she terms the collection of historical evidence that one writes about the past with. She reckons with the difficulty and ethics of writing about past figures and people who were subject to immense violence, degradation and oppression, since often the only records left of their existence are those written or approved by their oppressors or people who were complicit in their oppression, and those records are often at best only caricatures of the person they pretend to represent.

FURTHER READINGS

RADIN, JOANNA. *DIGITAL NATIVES': HOW MEDICAL AND INDIGENOUS HISTORIES MATTER FOR BIG DATA*

2017, *Data Histories*, 32 (1): 43-64.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Abstract: This case considers the politics of reuse in the realm of "Big Data." It focuses on the history of a particular collection of data, extracted and digitized from patient records made in the course of a longitudinal epidemiological study involving Indigenous members of the Gila River Indian Community Reservation in the American Southwest. The creation and circulation of the Pima Indian Diabetes Dataset (PIDD) demonstrates the value of medical and Indigenous histories to the study of Big Data. By adapting the concept of the "digital native" itself for reuse, I argue that the history of the PIDD reveals how data becomes alienated from persons even as it reproduces complex social realities of the circumstances of its origin. In doing so, this history highlights otherwise obscured matters of ethics and politics that are relevant to communities who identify as Indigenous as well as those who do not.

Comment: In this 2017 paper, historian Joanna Radin explores how reusing big data can contribute to the continued subjugation of Akimel O'odham, who live in the southwestern region of the US, otherwise known as the "Pima". This reading also illustrates how data can, over time, become used for what it was never intended or collected for. Radin emphasizes the dangers of forgetting that data represent human beings.

1977, *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 4 (6).

Difficulty: Easy

Abstract: The term "Sapphire" is frequently used to describe an age-old image of black women. The caricature of the dominating, emasculating black woman is one which historically has saturated both the popular and scholarly literature. The purpose of this paper is debunk the "Sapphire" caricature as it has been projected in American social science. By exposing the racist and sexist underpinnings of this stereotype, it is hoped that more students and scholars might be sensitized and encouraged to contribute to the development of a nonracist and non-sexist social science.

Comment: In this 1977 article, Patricia Bell Scott explains how social sciences had theretofore been racist, sexist, and classist in their research of black women. She identifies concrete failings and biases in the approach of social sciences towards black women, and suggests concrete agendas for research institutions, moving forward.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does Hartman mean by narration on page 3? Is this different from Morton's understanding of narrative? Does feminist x-phi deal with Hartman's kind of narration? If yes, how? If no, why not?
2. Hartman writes on page 3: "How does one recuperate lives entangled with and impossible to differentiate from the terrible utterances that condemned them to death, the account books that identified them as units of value, the invoices that claimed them as property, and the banal chronicles that stripped them of human features?" This section might be said to outline a moral and a practical problem. What are they? Is she outlining any other problems on this page?
3. On page 5, Hartman explains why she titled the paper "two acts" - why did she do this, and what does it have to do with the "ethics of historical representation" (Hartman 5).
4. What does Hartman mean here: "What has been said and what can be said about Venus take for granted the traffic between fact, fantasy, desire, and violence," and how does it help you understand the phrase the "libidinal investment in violence"? (Hartman 5)
5. Hartman seems to think that the historical archive of black women's experience is riddled with bias, destruction, and silence, and is thus contaminated. But at the same time she wants to recuperate history with the records we have, she thinks it's politically important to do so. Do you think this is a problem for feminist X-phi? If not, why not? If yes, how do you think it can be productively wrestled with?
6. Hartman writes "I chose not to tell a story about Venus because to do so would have trespassed the boundaries of the archive." What is the problem here, and what is her eventual solution?
7. What does Hartman mean when she says "the archive is inseparable from the play of power that murdered Venus and her shipmate and exonerated the captain," and what implications might that have for us if we want to do responsible historical X-Phi (11)?
8. What is Hartman's method of "critical fabulation," what is her rationale for using it, and do you think it could be part of a feminist X-Philosopher's toolkit?
9. Last week we saw Davis appealing to statistics on a "factual survey of but a few of the open acts of resistance in which black women played major roles" (Davis 10). What do you think Hartman would say about Davis's archive?
10. Do we have a duty to be creative when exploring potential x-phi routes, especially when considering questions to do with populations with "damaged" archives?
11. What should we do when an archive or an evidentiary route is empty, destroyed, or seems otherwise contaminated as a result of oppression?

WEEK 13. WHY DO FEMINIST PHILOSOPHERS THINK EMPIRICAL WORK AND ATTENTION TO LIVED EXPERIENCE IS SO IMPORTANT?

One reason empirical work might be important for philosophers interested in justice is because empirical work seems to reduce bias and brings us closer to objective truth. The texts this week demonstrate some of the ways feminist philosophers have recruited empirical work to advance important philosophical debates, and so give us a taste of the reasons for which feminists are invested in interdisciplinary research.

Serene Khader's arguments (this week's main reading) give us reason to think that empirical work is important because it can illuminate that certain confusions and debates in contemporary philosophy are actually unfounded, and so likely to be the product of a "parochial" (Western) worldview or pernicious ideology (152). Alternatively, Alice Cray suggests that bias (she talks in terms of "routes of feeling", and an "ethically-loaded perspective") is not necessarily bad, and is actually important for feminist politics (55, 57). Matthew Longo and Bernardo Zacka give three reasons for why ethnography, particularly work found in feminist and postcolonial studies, uses qualitative methods that should be incorporated into political theory at large. They view ethnography's capacity to reveal contingency and variation in experience (for our interests: potential bias) as beneficial for political theorizing.

In their own ways each of this weeks' authors give reasons to think that attention to lived experience is crucial for responsible normative theorizing.

KHADER, SERENE. *DOING NON-IDEAL THEORY ABOUT GENDER IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT*

2021, *Metaphilosophy*, 52 (1): 142-165.

Difficulty: Easy-Intermediate

Fragment: pp 142-152.

Abstract: This paper elaborates and renders explicit some of the views about political philosophical methodology that underlie the author's arguments in *Decolonizing Universalism: A Transnational Feminist Ethic*. It shows how the author's stances on autonomy, individualism, intersectionality, human rights, the colonality of gender, and the oppression of genders besides man and woman grow out of a commitment to scrutinizing our normative views in light of transnational criticism and empirical information from the qualitative social sciences.

Comment: Serene Khader is a feminist and political philosopher whose work engages deeply with empirical work beyond philosophy. In this article, she responds to several replies to her 2018 book, "Decolonizing Universalism." Familiarity with the arguments of the book are not necessary to follow the arguments Khader makes in this piece, and to appreciate the way she recruits empirical work beyond philosophy in order to fruitfully inform her position on several key philosophical disputes. In this short excerpt, readers can gain a glimpse of one of the ways in which contemporary philosophers are opening up new pathways for theorizing precisely because of their interdisciplinarity.

FURTHER READINGS

CRARY, ALICE. *THE METHODOLOGICAL IS POLITICAL: WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH 'ANALYTIC FEMINISM'?*

2018, *Radical Philosophy*, 47–60.

Difficulty: Advanced

Abstract: 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. hooks shows that there is no way to 'overcome barriers that separate women from one another' without 'confronting the reality of racism'. 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. 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.

Comment: In this 2018 article Alice Crary launches a critique against analytic feminists for employing what she terms a "neutral conception of reason," which pretends that the best form of reason is one free from feelings, biases, and value, as if one may employ reason from a "view from nowhere." To the contrary, Crary thinks there is no view from nowhere, and that feminist philosophy's insistence on the importance of lived experience is synonymous with its recognition that reasoning is done from a particular social location and is always-already "ethically" valenced: one's lived experiences and affects saturate one's ethically-loaded point of view, and this is recruited for feminist ends! To illustrate this point, Crary considers Miranda Fricker's 2007 book *Epistemic Injustice*, which we see elsewhere on this reading list. According to Fricker's neutral conception of reason, testimonial epistemic injustice is remedied by neutralizing stereotypical prejudice in one's judgments of credibility. On Crary's reading, however, there is no neutral space of reason. Crary argues for a methodological radicalism (as opposed to what she terms Fricker's methodological conservatism) which begins with ethically-loaded perspectives on the world. Indeed, she thinks this is how we can make sense of the consciousness-raising Fricker is interested in: Crary points out that "in order to get the patterns of [problematic] behaviour constitutive of [...] abuse adequately into focus, we need to look upon the social world from a particular ethically-loaded perspective" (57).

LONGO, MATTHEW AND BERNARDO ZACKA. *POLITICAL THEORY IN AN ETHNOGRAPHIC KEY*

2019, *American Political Science Review*, 113 (4): 1066–1070.

Difficulty: Easy

Abstract: Should political theorists engage in ethnography? In this letter, we assess a recent wave of interest in ethnography among political theorists and explain why it is a good thing. We focus, in particular, on how ethnographic research generates what Ian Shapiro calls "problematizing redescription"—accounts of political phenomena that destabilize the lens through which we traditionally study them, engendering novel questions and exposing new avenues of moral concern. We argue that (1) by revealing new levels of variation and contingency within familiar political phenomena, ethnography can uncover topics ripe for normative inquiry; (2) by shedding light on what meanings people associate with political values, it can advance our reflection on concepts; and (3) by capturing the experience of individuals at grips with the social world, it can attune us to

forms of harm that would otherwise remain hidden. The purchase for political theory is considerable. By thickening our understanding of institutions, ethnography serves as an antidote to analytic specialization and broadens the range of questions political theorists can ask, reinvigorating debates in the subfield and forging connections with the discipline writ large.

Comment: In this 2019 article, Matthew Longo and Bernardo Zacka make a case for why ethnography, in generating what Ian Shapiro calls problematizing redescription, is useful for political theorists: it can capture complex social phenomena in very nuanced, fine-grained ways and can thus advance our collective reflection on concepts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Khader think that attention to empirical reality, rather than mere armchair theorizing, gives us reason to think that autonomy is not a central feminist concept?
2. Khader thinks that there is a close connection between non-ideal approaches to feminist theory, and empirical research. Why does she think this?
3. Khader argues that if we pay attention to empirical matters, we'll see that many liberal feminists have misunderstood decolonial and postcolonial feminist claims. What is one example of an area of misunderstanding?
4. Khader also argues that, if we pay attention to empirical matters, a new understanding of so-called "trans-exclusive feminists" becomes available. What is this new understanding, and how does attention to empirical matters help to deliver it?
5. How does attention to the way concepts function in the real world help to illuminate, in Khader's view, the imperial dimension of certain theoretical views of secularism?
6. Khader recruits empirical work in order to help settle debates in contemporary feminist philosophy. This suggests that empirical work is helpful because it helps to 1) illuminate bias; 2) set aside arguments that are motivated only by bias, and so; 3) move closer to objective truth. Meanwhile, Crary argues that there is no "neutral conception of reason" and that feelings and bias are "internal" to capacities of reason. One way of reading her is as saying that bias itself is not bad, it is only morally wrong bias that is problematic, from the feminist point of view. In your own words, why does Crary think this, and what would Khader say in response?:
7. On page 48 Crary writes that "methodological conservatism" is fatal to feminist politics, and advocates a "methodological radicalism" instead.
 - (a) In your own words, explain the difference between these two things, discussing how feelings and affect are treated by each.
 - (b) Then, consider how "ethically-loaded" lived experience is treated by each. (48)
8. Consider your own research interests. What areas of empirical research might you fruitfully engage in, for the sake of ensuring that your own philosophical work is appropriately responsive to the lived experience of the persons implicated by your arguments? Then, consider how you would justify your methodology to an outside reader: what would you write in your "methodology" section?