WHAT IS A PRAGMATIC PHILOSOPHY?

ANDREW LIGHT
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT: Should philosophy have public import? Most of us would like to think that it does or should? But what exactly does that mean. What form should the public import of philosophy take? Andrew Light gives us his own account of what it is for philosophy to have pragmatic value in areas such as environmental ethics. He compares and contrasts his views with those of others and elaborates on what it is for a philosophy to be pragmatic and have a public face, as he discusses some of the current debates in environmental ethics and several ideas of the key players in the field. Light argues that there is a connection between environmental ethics and serving the public interest in one's community. This public role can take the form of making policy recommendations, serving on boards, and participation in public service. Light then gives us a map of plausible steps to take in motivating the pragmatic or public aspects of one's philosophy.

hat does it mean to do "public philosophy," or philosophy in such a way that it has the potential to have a more pragmatic impact on important public issues of the day? This chapter summarizes my own views on this topic as I have developed them in environmental ethics and then compares them to an alternative set of answers provided by Iris Marion Young in her work in feminist political philosophy. Why the comparison with Young? Primarily because both of us independently developed a methodology for relating philosophy to public affairs which shares the name "pragmatism" but which does not make appeal to an explicit pragmatism as is found in the canonical works of classical American thinkers, such as Dewey, James, Pierce, Mead, etc. In a fairly recent collection of essays (1997) Young refers to her approach as a form of "pragmatic theorizing." I have termed my approach in environmental ethics a form of "methodological pragmatism" (see Light 1996 and 2002). Both share what Young describes as a way of doing philosophy that follows

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"a line of reasoning in order to solve a conceptual or normative problem that arises from a practical context" (1997, p. 5), and later she adds, "By being 'pragmatic' I mean categorizing, explaining, developing accounts and arguments that are tied to specific practical and political problems, where the purpose of this theoretical activity is clearly related to those problems" (p. 17).

I will first provide a brief overview of my own views and then focus on two chapters of Young's book to try to shed some light on the scope and limits of such a pragmatic philosophical project. The overall intent will be to explore to what extent a pragmatic philosophy with a focus on questions of public policy must also be what we might call a "public" philosophy, or a form of philosophical practice better suited to actively engaging in public issues of the day with those outside of philosophy departments. This may be a question for any intellectual endeavor depending on one's views. As the late Edward Said has eloquently defined the responsibilities of intellectuals in general, they include "representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, a philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public" (1994, p. 11). Here we need not raise the issue of whether all philosophy, let alone all intellectual pursuits, need to be directed to and for a public. But for a philosophy that claims to be self-avowedly pragmatic, the questions of its audience may inevitably arise since it seeks to comment on questions that are shaped in the public sphere, and whose fate is ultimately determined in a public context. Because I find our approaches to questions of public policy similar, the questions I put to Young are ones that I also must put to myself.

1. METHODOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM

Environmental ethics is that branch of applied ethics, or applied philosophy, directed at the central issue of ascertaining the moral grounds for preservation or restoration of the environment. Other areas of applied ethics, for example medical ethics, have developed primarily as a form of ethical "extensionism." Different philosophers starting with different traditions in the history of ethics—utilitarianism, Kantian deontological ethics, virtue theories, different versions of principalism, feminism, etc.—apply the resources of one of these traditions to an ethical problem involving medicine, physical health, or the relationship between patients and doctors or other professionals in the medical establishment. The history of environmental ethics however is dominated not by an extension of different established traditions to particular problems involving the human relationship with the environment, or a form of applied ethics directed toward the professional ethical responsibilities of resource managers, foresters, or other environmental professionals. Instead it is more as an attempt to establish a new and unique foundation for the direct moral consideration of nonhuman natural entities, especially those which are at the center of environmental controversies—endangered species, ecosystems, and other large-scale environmental processes. Overwhelmingly, the basis for this new foundation for moral recognition is conceived through arguments that such collective natural entities have some form of intrinsic, inherent, or otherwise

non-instrumental value which warrants some level of moral consideration. As a result, the field has not been dominated by debates between utilitarians and Kantians, or the like, but rather along a very different set of divides than we normally see in other applied areas.

The first and most important of these divides involves the rejection of "anthropocentrism." Tim Hayward defines ethical anthropocentrism as the view that prioritizes those attitudes, values, or practices which give "exclusive or arbitrarily preferential consideration to human interests as opposed to the interests of other beings" or the environment (1997, 51). Many early environmental ethicists were adamant that if environmental ethics was going to be a distinctive field of ethics, it must necessarily involve a rejection of the prevalence for anthropocentrism in the history of ethics. Using Hayward's definition, this amounted to a rejection of the claim that ethics should be restricted only to the provision of obligations, duties and rights among and between humans, thereby prioritizing in moral terms all human interests over whatever could arguably be determined as the interests of nonhuman species or ecosystems.

Among the first papers published by professional philosophers in the field (e.g., landmark papers in the early 1970s by Arne Naess, Holmes Rolston III, Richard Routley [later Sylvan], Val Routley [later Plumwood], and Peter Singer) some version of anthropocentrism was often the target even if it was not explicitly labeled as such. Regardless of the terminology, the assumption that axiologically anthropocentric views were antithetical to the agenda of environmentalists, and to the development of environmental ethics was largely assumed to be the natural starting point for any environmental ethic. So pervasive was this assumption that it was often not adequately defended. It became one of what Gary Varner calls the "two dogmas of environmental ethics" (1998, 142). This position is largely still accepted by most environmental ethicists today. Furthermore, the notion of what anthropocentrism meant, and consequently what overcoming anthropocentrism entailed, often relied on very narrow, straw man definitions of this position. Anthropocentrism was equated with forms of valuing which easily, or even necessarily, led to nature's destruction (rather than other anthropocentric values such as aesthetic value which might count as reasons to preserve nature).

The first divide then among environmental ethicists is those who accept the rejection of anthropocentrism as a necessary prerequisite for establishing a unique field of environmental ethics, and those who do not accept this position, arguing that "weaker" forms of anthropocentrism, for example, those which admit humanly based values to nature other than mere resource value, are sufficient to generate an adequate ethic of the environment (see for example, Norton 1984 for an early description of this debate). If environmental ethics was to start with a rejection of anthropocentrism then the next step was to come up with a description of the value of nonhumans, or the nonhuman natural world, in nonanthropocentric terms. As just mentioned, the preferred description of this form of value has generally been as some form of intrinsic value, or at least non-instrumental value, thought to imply

that nonhumans or ecosystems possessed some sort of value in and of themselves which had to be acknowledged in a complete moral theory.

There are many problems with contemporary environmental ethics that could be mentioned. But I find that these problems are arguably more practical than philosophical, or that their resolution in more practical terms is more important than their resolution in philosophical terms, at least at the present time. For even though there are several dissenters to the dominant nonanthropocentric tradition in the field, the more important consideration is that it is widely acknowledged that the world of natural resource management takes a predominantly anthropocentric approach to assessing natural value, as do most other humans. Because most environmental ethicists are not interested in elucidating reasons for protection of the environment which stem from such anthropocentric considerations, the field as a whole has unfortunately found itself unable to make a substantial impact on the actual debates over environmental policy commensurate with the contributions that have been made by other environmental advocates in the academy. Sociologists and political scientists, for example, have no problem engaging with the human dimensions of environmental problems in the anthropocentric language in which most questions of environmental public policy are played out (see for example Schlosberg 1999). Many in the field would disagree with such a claim (see for example Callicott 2002), but such objections often amount to little more than arguments that a particular figure is an exception to this generally established rule (for a more thorough discussion of this issue see Light and de-Shalit 2003).

Such an outcome, where the debates among environmental ethicists exist largely outside of the realm of environmental public policy, does not present any necessary problem, but it is nonetheless curious. Environmental ethics is one of the fields of study which arose in the academy in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a response to the growing awareness of the severity of human-caused environmental problems. As such, the field did not evolve as a part of professional philosophy in a vacuum—as just another interesting area of research in ethics, metaphysics, or epistemology—but instead as a specific attempt to use the tools of philosophical analysis to both better understand and better resolve a set of specific problems facing humanity. If the metaethical purists and debates among environmental ethicists are hindering the field's ability to make such a contribution then we need to think about whether there is a better way of doing it.

In this context I have been developing a methodological form of pragmatism designed to help make environmental ethics into a more publicly useful philosophy. My start on this question has been to remind environmental ethicists that in addition to being part of a philosophical community, they are also part of another community as well, namely, the environmental community. While this connection has never been clear, the field continues to be part of at least an ongoing conversation about environmental issues, if not an outright intentional community of environmentalists. The drive to create a more pragmatic environmental ethics is not only motivated by a desire to actively participate in the resolution of environmental

problems, but to hold up our philosophical end, as it were, among the community of environmentalists.

How could environmental ethicists better serve the environmental community? The answer for the methodological pragmatist begins in a recognition that if philosophy is to serve a larger community then it must allow the interests of the community to help to determine the philosophical problems which the theorist addresses. This does not mean that the pragmatic philosopher, in my sense of this term, necessarily finds all the problems that a given community is concerned with as the problems for her own work. Nor does it mean that she assumes her conclusions before analyzing a problem, like a hired legal counsel who does not inquire as to the guilt or innocence of her client. It only means that a fair description of the work of the pragmatic philosopher is to investigate the problems of interest to their community (as a community of inquirers) and then articulate the policy recommendations of that community on these problems to those outside of their community, that is, to the public at large. Articulation of these issues from a more limited community to a broader public should be done in terms closer to the moral intuitions of the broader public. This requires a form of "moral translation" whereby the interests of the smaller community of environmentalists is translated into a range of appeals corresponding to the various moral intuitions which are represented in the broader public arena. We can think of this work of translation as the "public task" of a methodologically pragmatist environmental ethics. It is necessarily a pluralist project, attempting to articulate the considered interests of the environmental community in as broad a set of moral appeals as is possible (see Light 2003).

A public and pragmatic environmental ethics would not rest with a mere description of, or series of debates on, the value of nature (even a description that justified a secure foundation for something as strong as a claim for the rights of nature). A public environmental ethics would further question whether the nonanthropocentric description of the value of nature which dominates the philosophical work of most environmental ethicists today is likely to succeed in motivating most people to change their moral attitudes about nature taking into account the overwhelming ethical anthropocentrism of most humans (amply demonstrated by studies like Kempton, Boster, and Hartley, 1997, which shows that most people take obligations to future human generations as the most compelling reason to protect the environment). As such, a public environmental ethics would have to either embrace a weak or enlightened anthropocentrism about natural value (for example, arguing that nature had value either for aesthetic reasons or as a way of fulfilling our obligations to future generations) or endorse a pluralism which admitted the possibility, indeed the necessity, of sometimes describing natural value in human-centered terms rather than always in nonanthropocentric terms in order to help to achieve wider public support for a more morally responsible environmental policy.

The appeal to pragmatism here, however, is methodological only. It does not require anyone to embrace, for example, a fully developed Deweyian approach to environmental ethics or ethics in general. The empirically demonstrable prevalence

of anthropocentric views on environmental issues in the public at large provides the stimulus for this approach rather than an antecedent commitment to any particular theory of value. So, this approach does not insist that environmental ethicists should give up their various philosophical debates over the existence of nonanthropocentric natural value, nor their position on these debates. Such work can continue as another more purely philosophical task for environmental ethicists. But ethicists following this methodology must accept the public task as well which requires that they be willing to morally translate their philosophical views about the value of nature, when necessary, in terms which will more likely morally motivate policy makers and the general public even when they have come to their views about the value of nature through a nonanthropocentric approach. In other work (Light 2002), I have provided more detail on how such a "two task" approach would work. Here I will only note that this strategy, asking that ethicists sometimes translate their views to a language more resonate with the public, is only warranted where convergence on the ends of environmental policy has been reached. That is, where the preponderance of views among environmentalists of various camps, as well as among environmental ethicists themselves, has converged on the same end, then the public task of the philosopher is to articulate the arguments that would most effectively motivate non-environmentalists to accept that end (for a good account of why such convergence does often occur see Norton 1991). Empirically, for many issues, this will involve making weak anthropocentric arguments (which also have the virtue of often being less philosophically contentious). But one can imagine that in some cases nonanthropocentric claims would be more appealing as well. What appeals best is an empirical question. Where convergence has not been achieved however, this public task of moral translation is not warranted. Under those circumstances we must continue with the more traditional philosophical task of environmental ethicists, our version of an environmental "first philosophy," attempting to hammer out the most plausible and defensible moral foundations for the ethical consideration of nonhuman nature. There are many other details to fill in to this approach; I trust charitable interlocutors will allow for its full defense and explication elsewhere. Here, however, I want to use a comparison with another non-orthodox pragmatist to try to tease out two problems that will arise following commitment to this approach.

2. CAN WE ALWAYS GET WHAT WE WANT?

The first issue I wish to take up is what might be called the problem of "incrementalism." My version of pragmatism for environmental ethics is not amenable to "all or nothing" approaches to the application of philosophical ideals to problems of public policy. The methodological pragmatist does not insist that a full acceptance of the nonanthropocentric moral value of nature must be recognized in order to achieve the best ends of environmental policy. For example, it is perfectly fine by me that people endorse stronger laws for the protection of endangered species based on reasons which involve human self-interest (e.g., some version of the precautionary principle applied

to this issue) and that we must accept trade-offs in terms of achieving these ends in some cases so long as the trade-offs do not necessarily lead to a loss of a species. Those who take a more stringent nonanthropocentric position may fairly disagree with this position. Many argue that long-term environmental protection will only be achieved through a more wide-spread change in environmental consciousness. Others, such as Gary Francione (1996), with reference to issues concerning the moral recognition of individual nonhuman animals, argue that only full emancipation and recognition of animal rights is morally acceptable. Anything less is similar to capitulation to the existence of human slavery.

Setting aside these disagreements for now, we may ask whether someone claiming to do a "pragmatic" version of applied philosophy could or should sustain such positions. This issue arises in an assessment of Iris Young's version of "pragmatic theorizing" in feminist political philosophy. As mentioned above, Young's approach shares much with my methodological pragmatism. But while it is ostensibly policy oriented and connected to a specific community of inquirers, it may also have a tendency toward more abstract goals which reject incrementalism when it may be called for. Take for example Young's discussion of the extension of principles in a feminist ethic of care to the problem of the treatment of pregnant drug addicts in a chapter in her collection of essays, *Intersecting Voices* (1997). Young takes up this issue acknowledging that

> feminist ethics in general, and the ethics of care in particular, has done little to apply its insights to the pressing social issues of justice and need that face all societies in the world. I think that at the very least such application means interpreting the reasons for welfare and publicly funded social services very differently from the dominant interpretation in the United States. (p. 83)

Clearly, Young's pragmatic, policy oriented approach shows through here both in the issue taken up and in her expressed intention to test this particular philosophical literature with an actual policy question. But when it comes to the end of the essay where Young makes specific recommendations about how to empower addicted women in drug treatment programs, a question arises about the consistency of her pragmatic approach when faced with the problem of incrementalism.

In the last section of this same chapter, Young identifies two different senses of empowerment. Says Young, "for some therapists and service providers, empowerment means the development of individual autonomy, self-control, and confidence; for others empowerment refers to the development of a sense of collective influence over the social conditions of one's life" (1997, p. 89). Young endorses the second sense of empowerment as the appropriate goal for drug treatment programs arguing persuasively that it does not restrict empowerment to a purely personal, atomistic sense of well-being. The preferred sense of empowerment "includes both personal empowerment and collective empowerment and suggests that the latter is a condition of the former" (ibid.).

Following Foucault, Young claims that the more limited sense of empowerment is subject to a criticism of it as a disciplinary practice. Even with well intentioned

reform-minded therapists, a focus only on the development of autonomy and self-control can fall into an overly individualistic "confessional model of therapeutic talk" which stops short "of a politicized understanding of the social structures that condition an individual's situation and the cultivation of effective action in relation to those structures" (1997, p. 91). But the second, more powerful notion of empowerment, which Young prefers, is not individualistic and does not stop with reform of the self in isolation from a surrounding community as the end of therapy or treatment. This more collective meaning of empowerment for Young seeks "a process in which individual, relatively powerless persons engage in dialogue with each other and thereby come to understand the social sources of their powerlessness and see the possibility of acting collectively to change their social environment" (ibid.).

One may fairly ask whether achieving this expanded sense of empowerment is a viable or practical end for a therapy process, especially one aimed at treatment for drug addicts. It is extremely ambitious, to say the least. In fact, Young anticipates this worry admitting "substance-dependent women sometimes have lost the ability to function in daily life at a basic level, and they are usually self-deceiving about their dependence and are often emotionally damaged from physical or psychological abuse" (1997, p. 92). But Young persists that even though such circumstances make it more difficult to provide empowering services, with "sufficient care and resources it should be possible" (ibid.).

Consistent with Young's sober assessment of the challenges of achieving this level of autonomy with women under this level of distress, one may also wonder what is to happen if sufficient care and resources (especially resources) are not available to pursue as ambitious a program as Young finds necessary. This may sound like an excessively pedestrian worry, but it seems fair for the pragmatic philosopher who is concerned not only with the philosophical defense of her account but also with formulating a response to real problems of public policy. It is analogous to those in environmental ethics who would claim that a full moral consideration of nature in nonanthropocentric terms must acknowledge that nature is a "subject," or that its autonomy from humans must be respected in a moral sense (see for example Katz 1997). Is such recognition feasible even if it is philosophically defensible? It is not accidental, given Young's overall pragmatic, policy oriented approach, that she is taking on problems like this one; it is also not accidental that there is a certain level of vulgar realism required for practical-philosophical responses to the problems Young takes on. Or, more accurately, we may need to try to discern whether this sort of practical concern—whether sufficient resources exist to achieve the ends we desire—is uniquely incurred by the pragmatic theorist, and whether such concerns must be taken more seriously by pragmatists than by others. With a utopian theorist, for example, such a concern would carry very little weight. The utopian theorist is under no obligation to provide a feasible end or means for achieving their ideals. But as Avner de-Shalit has argued in defense of his own communitarian account of environmental obligations to future generations, for

pragmatists, "a theory of morality, of applied philosophy, should not demand what is absolutely impossible" (1995, p. 14).

Surely, Young does not demand the impossible here. But on the assumption that for the foreseeable future—or at least, for foreseeable stretches of time—increased resources are not available for such treatment programs, is it the responsibility of the pragmatist to articulate a second best alternative?

I have no easy answer to this question of how practical or "do-able" reform proposals made by philosophers should be. As suggested above, it is a question that has obvious important implications for the application of philosophical principles to environmental policy. My intuition though is that the pragmatist ought to have a long-term end in view while at the same time she must have at the ready viable alternatives which assume current political or economic systems and structures whenever possible. This is not to say that the pragmatic philosopher gives up on the tasks of defending alternatives to current structures, and the pursuit of those alternatives in democratic debates on the reallocation of resources. It only means that our position may require, for consistency sake to our pragmatic intentions at least, that we not rely exclusively on such changes in articulating our preferred ends for better public policies. In this context, there are at least two senses in which one could understand the meaning of "pragmatic" philosophy as discussed so far. (1) Philosophy that has practical intent, anchored to practical problems, and (2) Philosophy which aids in the development of policy solutions that can actually achieve support and consensus. While Young's approach certainly encompasses (1) the question is whether she also does (2). My own pragmatist approach assumes that there is a connection between (1) and (2) (indeed, that (1) implies (2)). Assuming a successful argument that (1) and (2) are related in this way (for some this may take some argument, for others it will be obvious) then a question remains concerning how to go about achieving (2).

Let me make just one suggestion for how the pragmatist could go about reconciling her desire to change systems with the need to make achievable policy recommendations. As is suggested by my approach, my view is that if a pragmatic philosophy in the end is in the service of an argument to create better polices, then in our democratic society it must be prepared to argue its case before the public, and perhaps sometimes only before policy makers. As Said puts it, the public intellectual not only wants to express her beliefs but also wants to persuade others—meaning the public at large—of her views (1994, p. 12). This raises the critical issue of how such appeals to the public are to be made. It raises the issue of how important persuasion is to the creation of pragmatic arguments.

All philosophy is in some sense about persuasion, though to differentiate ourselves from rhetoricians (if we are interested in making such distinctions, which I still am) we must restrict ourselves to persuasion through some form of argument given more or less agreed upon (and revisable) standards for what counts as a good argument. But the pragmatic philosopher is not simply concerned with persuading other philosophers. She is also interested in persuading the public either

directly (in hopes that they will in turn influence policy makers) or indirectly, by appealling to policy makers who in turn help to shape public opinion. The work of a public philosophy is not solely for intramural philosophical discussion; it is aimed at larger forums. But as I suggested before, such a task requires some attention to the question of what motivates either the public, policy makers, or both to act. Our bar is set higher than traditional philosophical standards of validity and abstractly conceived soundness. For if we are to direct our philosophy at policies in a context other than a hypothetical philosophical framework, we must also make arguments which will motivate our audiences to act. Since we are dealing in ethical and political matters, the question for pragmatic philosophers like Young and myself is how much we must attend to the issue of moral motivation in forming our pragmatic arguments.

If we agree that the issue of moral motivation is always crucial for a pragmatic philosophy then at least two issues arise. First, as I suggested before, we must be prepared to embrace a theoretical or conceptual pluralism which allows us to pick and choose from a range of conceptual frameworks in making our arguments without committing to the theoretical monism which may be assumed in some versions of these frameworks. The reason is that we need to be able to make arguments that will appeal to the conceptual frameworks of our audiences while recognizing that these frameworks can change from audience to audience. So, if we think a utilitarian argument will be useful for talking to economists in decision making positions, then we should be allowed to engage such a framework without completely committing ourselves to utilitarianism.

But a second issue that arises from the question of the importance of moral motivation for a pragmatic philosophy is that if we agree, as I have argued, that pragmatists must attend to the moral or political intuitions of the audience they are addressing, then does this limit the kinds of arguments that the pragmatic philosopher can make? While earlier my worry was over the plausibility of a change in material conditions which would allow for the extension of Young's full programmatic recommendations for a change in policy for treatment for addicts, here the worry is whether a pragmatic philosophy can really expect to reasonably be able to pursue its more radical, or even progressive claims in the face of this requirement of working with the intuitive framework of its audience. So, for example, elsewhere when Young criticizes the frameworks of economic justice which fail to critique a social structure which allows for divisions between rich and poor (1997, p. 100), is she stepping too far outside of this pragmatic framework? Is it too much to ask in a policy recommendation that it undermine the framework in which most policies are made today? If such a question is fair, then perhaps the pragmatic approach asks too much of the social or political philosopher by tying them to the social and political contingencies of their time. But more likely, it may only indicate that pragmatic philosophers must start with an argument on the intuitive grounds of their audience and then carefully try to push that audience in different directions. Surely, the project of the pragmatic philosopher is also one of helping to shape new

intuitions and not only respond to existing ones. As such, Young's more ambitious policy recommendations may have to embrace incrementalism, accepting small changes toward a larger, longer-term goal.

3. WHO ARE WE SPEAKING FOR?

This problem of incrementalism leads me to my second issue involving this pragmatic form of philosophical activity. Let us call this one the problem of "inclusion." By this I do not mean the general question of making sure that all voices are taken into account in some social, political, or cultural institution, but rather, how we are to define the community which our pragmatic form of public philosophy is supposed to serve. Recall that earlier I said that one warrant for my version of methodological pragmatism in environmental ethics was some kind of agreement among the diverse voices in the environmental community on the ends of environmental public policy, even if they disagreed about the reasons for pursing those ends. But even if such a view has merit, it suffers from the obvious critique that the boundaries of the "environmental community" are ill-defined. Who, after all, counts as an environmentalist?

Unfortunately, such a question appears to have only one answer that does not seem fairly easy to reject: Someone is an environmentalist who calls themselves an environmentalist. Though unsatisfying on the face of it, the alternatives are worse. One could argue that environmentalists are only those who have a specific kind of appreciation for the natural world. But clearly there are not only many ways to appreciate the natural world, but also many ways to express that appreciation and no single one seems to be satisfactory. If we tried to characterize this appreciation as "spiritual," for example, would we be willing to admit that those people who do not acknowledge this term as meaningful in their lives are not really environmentalists? One could argue that environmentalists are only those who rank the environment as the first or second most important priority in their lives. But how would we measure such priorities? Is it the case that only those who commit to laying down in front of bulldozers or sit in trees for years to keep them from being cut down are the only ones who are really environmentalists? If this is true then I'm not an environmentalist, or I have no t yet fulfilled my true environmental responsibilities. Or, one could argue that adherence to one particular environmental policy, or range of policies, is what made someone an environmentalist. But certainly adherence to policies can be a matter of disagreement (convergence on ends is after all not universal, nor should we expect it to be) and policies change over time. Perhaps then one can say that an environmentalist is one who is very concerned about the environment as a social, cultural, political, or moral matter. But then again there is no single yard stick for measuring such concern so one might as well stick to the answer that you are an environmentalist if you say that you are.

For the pragmatic philosopher the upshot of such considerations seems to be that the community of environmentalists to which one is responding to will have to be effectively limited to those who organize themselves in self-described

environmental organizations, or otherwise make their environmentalism known through some public process. Though there are many problems with this view, it still has its merits which we may again see through a comparison with Young. For Young faces a similar inclusion problem when it comes to identifying the feminist community. In another chapter in *Intersecting Voices*, "Gender and Seriality: Thinking About Women as a Social Collective," Young runs up against this problem when she tries to answer the question of whether it is possible to define women as a group outside of understanding them as self-described feminists. This is similar to my question of whether or not the identity of environmentalists can be described outside of the intentional community of environmentalists as they constitute themselves through environmental organizations or otherwise in environmental activities. I will go through this discussion with an eye toward showing why a pragmatic philosopher of the sort I have been describing may want to rest content with the claim that their pragmatic activity can be sufficiently ground in identification with a self-described intentional political community.

Young argues that the question of whether women can be conceptualized as a group is generated out of a pragmatic point of view (1997, 17). According to her, we ought to be able to conceive of women as a group (1) in order to "maintain a point of view [for women] outside of liberal individualism," (2) in order to give feminism its specificity as a movement, and (3) to allow for resistance to the collective exclusions and oppressions of women. Says Young, "the first step in feminist resistance to such oppressions is the affirmation of women as a group so that women can cease to be divided and believe their sufferings are natural or merely personal" (1997, p. 18). These are all certainly pragmatic reasons. But is Young's answer to the question of how women can be conceived as a group equally pragmatic?

Young considers two answers to the question of how women are constituted as a group in such a way that does not reduce group identity to an essential condition before moving on to provide her own positive theory. The first answer she considers is that gender identities are multiple—indexed to race (such as black women, Hispanic women), class (working class women), etc.—and second, that "women constitute a group in the politicized context of feminist struggle" conceived as a form of identity politics (ibid.). The first option is rejected in part for reducing to an absurd proliferation of gendered positions which themselves often assume some notion of essential identity in terms relating to class, ethnicity, religion, etc. But more important for my discussion is the rejection by Young of the second strategy—the claim that through the assertion of a feminist identity politics, we can think of women as "a group that is not a natural or social given, but rather the fluid construct of a political movement, feminism" (1997, p. 20).

Though difficult to follow at times, this answer seems on the face of it to be the most pragmatic of the answers to the problem of group identity that Young discusses. The identity politics answer, as Young describes it, appears to eschew theory in favor of a more practical answer that the identity and solidarity of women as a group is more the product of discussion among women, and organization into

identifiable self-described feminist groups, rather than a result of one or another theoretical construct. If we take the practical end to be how we can think about women (or for that matter any group) for political purposes, then a good pragmatic answer is that the constitutive identities of women as a political group are generated in actual political activity as it is self-described by those participating in this activity as feminists. The political identity of women as a group emerges from conversations intended to create that identity. In good pragmatist fashion we can assume that these conversations are never really settled, so that the group identity of women is never rigid or fixed.

But Young rejects this kind of answer for feminism, and her reasons strike me as fairly unpragmatic. While it is certainly true that the pragmatic philosopher does not need to always use this fairly vague notion of "pragmatic theory making" as a yardstick by which to measure the validity of her arguments, it is still a fair question to ask how far the commitment to a pragmatic philosophy drives the particulars of our arguments. If we engage in a pragmatic form of philosophy surely we have to sometimes consider the pragmatic sides to our own philosophical positions.

How is this kind of worry relevant for Young's position? After acknowledging some of the virtues of the identity politics position, Young rejects it for two reasons, which I will actually break down into three. (1) Echoing Judith Butler, Young argues that identity politics, so described, poses a condition of mutually identifying women that "privileges some norm or experiences over others" (1997, p. 21). Instead, "The question of solidarity should never be settled and identities should shift and be deconstructed in a play of possibilities that exclude no one" (ibid.). (2) Young suggests that seeing women as a group makes feminist politics arbitrary (ibid.). Why do women choose to come together to form a group? What, asks Young, are the "social practices that have motivated the politics?" (ibid.) (3) Finally, as part of this last claim, Young asks, "do feminist politics not refer to women who do not identity as feminists?" (ibid.) In other words, can we not agree that an identity politics answer to the problem of seeing women as a social group becomes exclusive only to those women who choose to self-identify, self-consciously as feminists?

Working through each of these answers will shed some light on the kinds of issues at stake in the problem of inclusion. But before getting down to assessing these arguments, consider that from a pragmatic standpoint empirical evidence ought to play an important role for how we do publicly engaged philosophy. While we philosophers cannot pretend to be social scientists, since we clearly are not, we can certainly respond to the empirical evidence gathered by social scientists. And for a pragmatic theory that sets its tasks through some understanding of actual problems in the world, our empirical evidence for what our actual problems are would seem to be crucial. While it would be specious to claim that empirical evidence can give us an easy way of differentiating between "real" and "illusory" problems, it can help us to weed through worries that are more likely to be made manifest and those which are less likely.

For example, it should be predictable from the discussion above that many environmental ethicists would argue that no long-term environmental sustainability is possible in a world where most humans think in anthropocentric terms. But there is actually quite a lot of empirical evidence to suggest that beneficial environmental policies have in fact been based on human-centered notions of natural value, such as the ample appeals in environmental policies to a stewardship ethic. So, while we can be cautious about the utility of basing environmental polices exclusively on anthropocentric grounds, the empirical evidence alone would suggest that there are good reasons not to engage in a wholesale rejection of anthropocentric arguments.

Now, if we allow the empirical evidence to be our guide in assessing Young's critique of the identity politics answer to group identity here, is there any evidence to suggest that we should worry about Young's first argument, the claim which she takes from Butler that an identity politics will privilege some experiences over others? Do political movements necessarily settle identities and limit the "play of possibilities"? Empirically, this challenge is dependent on how we define a group or a movement. If we were to reduce the environmental movement or the feminist movement to a few organizations then the answer would be, yes, the identity politics answer can lead to a stifling of what it means to be a member of that movement. But why would we want to make movements co-extensive with one or even several political organizations? The environmental movement and the feminist movement seem to be constituted by many different organizations with many different identities. At their height (and reasonable people can disagree about whether these movements are on the decline or the assent) these movements could not properly be reduced either to only NOW or Greenpeace. To the extent that we can identify at least some cooperation among organizations then these movements are diverse, not necessarily, but nonetheless so. The pragmatic philosopher worried about this issue could make it part of their work to help broaden social movements so that they do not calcify into a narrow range of possible organizations.

My objection to Young's second claim—the argument that there is no apparent motivation for group formation on the identity scheme—is not as strong as this but it is nonetheless related to the pragmatic ground of my rejection of the first argument. Should we really concern ourselves so much about why any set of persons come together to form a group when in fact they have come together to form a group? Why would we need to concern ourselves with motivations for group formation when our practical end is limited to the question of how we can talk about some group as a group? If the identity account is correct that women do in fact sometimes constitute themselves as a group of self-defined feminists, then why is a worry about their motivation an objection to the question of whether the identity account has it right concerning what constitutes a group? A normative concern here by Young seems to be obscuring her assessment of the identity position. In the end, can't we always just find out why feminists constitute themselves after they have constituted themselves and then go on from there? If we have a worry about the motivations for their constitution that would seem to be a separate issue.

If they actually cease coming together and calling themselves feminists then we can always later resist and reject the identity claim on something like the grounds of Young's second argument.

Young's third worry about whether women have to self-identify as feminists in order to count as the subject of feminism and hence as part of women conceived as a group, is, I think, the most salient of her concerns. On the face of it, it is a pragmatic objection. If the practical end is thinking of women as a group then a view which would exclude lots of women from group membership has problems. And while I think this objection may be all Young needs to reject the identity answer it could also be pushed further on pragmatic lines. Specifically, we may question whether there really is a need to identify all possible members of a group as constitutive of a group for pragmatic political ends? The answer to this question would depend, in good pragmatic fashion, on the problem at hand. Do we actually need a way of identifying women as a group outside of those who identify themselves as feminists in order to achieve the pragmatic goals of engaging in a form of philosophical activity which addresses the political problems of women? Perhaps not.

Indeed, perhaps the problem of inclusion is not as difficult as I have suggested. For, in this case, what if we take the position that the self-described community of feminists is sufficient as a base from which to create a pragmatic philosophy responding to the needs of women? While certainly feminist organizations can be criticized for not responding to all the needs of women, just as environmental organizations can be criticized for not covering all environmental problems, it would be too much to ask of any community that they get everything right all the time. Political communities are constantly in the process of changing priority and personality. A philosophical perspective engaged with any community has to learn to work within such changes, rather than sitting on the theoretical side lines. For if a pragmatic philosophy ought to emanate from a community, or a group, then feminists, as conceived on the identity view, would appear to be sufficient as the community that a pragmatic feminist philosophy would respond to. On strictly pragmatic grounds there may be no need for Young to define a larger group beyond feminists for pragmatic purposes, whether considering women as a group is a problem or not (even though there may still be non-pragmatic reasons for such an inquiry). If the point of a pragmatic feminist philosophy is to help to straighten out the intuitions inside a community of its position on policy issues, then it is plausibly to feminists that such a philosophy first speaks. If a pragmatic feminist philosophy then moves outside of its community to communicate the interests of the community to others, then that philosophy will have to approach all people regardless of gender. A pragmatic feminist philosophy could then conceivably get away with not engaging in this question of defining women as a group, as Young does here, and instead focus even more attention on practical issues of public policy.

In considering the problem of incrementalism and the problem of inclusion I hope to have shown how a publicly engaged pragmatic philosophy could work, as well as how some of the problems of my methodological pragmatism could be solved. I

certainly would never suggest that all philosophy must follow this pragmatic model. I believe that it is only warranted in specific circumstances when a philosophical response is needed to a particular problem of public policy. Where that response is needed though, we would well consider changing our philosophical practice to better serve the larger communities in which we could have a significant public role.

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