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Philosophical Expertise

Jennifer Nado*
Lingnan University

Abstract

Recent work in experimental philosophy has indicated that intuitions may be subject to several forms of bias, thereby casting doubt on the viability of intuition as an evidential source in philosophy. A common reply to these findings is the 'expertise defense' – the claim that although biases may be found in the intuitions of non-philosophers, persons with expertise in philosophy will be resistant to these biases. Much debate over the expertise defense has centered over the question of the burden of proof; must defenders of expertise provide empirical evidence of its existence, or should we grant the existence of philosophical expertise as a 'default' assumption? Defenders have frequently appealed to analogy with other fields; since expertise clearly exists in, e.g., the sciences, we are entitled to assume its existence in philosophy. Recently, however, experimentalists have begun to provide empirical evidence that biases in intuition extend even to philosophers. Though these findings don't yet suffice to defeat the default assumption of expertise the analogy argument motivates, they do force any proponent of the analogy argument to provide more specific and empirically informed proposals for the possible nature of philosophical expertise.

1. *Introduction*

Philosophy is standardly viewed as relying on *intuition* as a source of evidence for or against philosophical claims or theories.[1] A successful philosophical theory of (say) knowledge is expected to align with our intuitions about knowledge – and often rather precisely, too. Gettier's (1963) thought experiments provide the paradigm of this phenomenon; when the venerable 'justified true belief' theory was found to conflict with intuition on the cases Gettier described, this was viewed by most as fatal to the theory.[2] Recently, however, intuition's suitability for the central role philosophers seem to grant it has become subject to increasing dispute.[3]

The most well-known challenge to intuition's evidential status comes from a cluster of empirical findings generated by the new methodological movement known as 'experimental philosophy'.[4] Experimental philosophers employ survey techniques to collect systematic data on the intuitions of large groups of subjects; the results of such surveys indicate that intuitions may be subject to a number of biases, including sensitivity to cultural background (Weinberg et al. 2001; Machery et al. 2004), order of presentation (Swain et al. 2008; Liao et al. 2012), gender (Buckwalter and Stich 2013),[5] socioeconomic status (Nichols et al. 2003; Haidt et al. 1993), and more. Several proponents of experimental philosophy have appealed to such findings to support what Alexander and Weinberg (2007) call a 'restrictionist' view of philosophical methodology – claiming, essentially, that the findings suggest that intuition is so unreliable that its use in philosophy should be radically restricted.

There has been a tendency to respond to both the findings and the overall project of experimental philosophy by labeling the approach as fundamentally misguided. The surveys conducted by experimental philosophers have (until very recently – see Section 3) employed non-philosophers as subjects, but, it is claimed, the intuitions of such persons are irrelevant to philosophical theorizing. The appropriate evidential source for philosophy is *expert* intuitions – in other words, the intuitions of professional philosophers. It's claimed that these experts will

not be prone to the errors observed in the 'folk'; thus, experimental findings do not threaten current philosophical practice. Further, the very project of surveying non-expert intuitions becomes philosophically uninteresting. The growing popularity of this 'expertise defense' has led to increased interest in questions regarding the existence, nature, and impact of philosophical expertise.

2. Expertise and the Burden of Proof

The expertise defense against experimental philosophy has been elaborated by a number of authors, in forms ranging from brief sentence-long mentions to extended discussions. In fact, the earliest mention of something resembling an expertise defense appears in the original experimental findings themselves. Weinberg et al. (2001) list as a possible objection to their findings, the idea that they have focused on the wrong sort of intuitions – the 'right' sort of intuitions being ones that emerge only after extended discussion and reflection (in other words, only after significant practice with the methods of philosophy). This basic idea – that the intuitions employed by professional philosophers are importantly different from the unreflective intuitions of the 'folk' – has since evolved into one of the most common responses to experimental philosophy findings.

Most frequently, defenders of expertise suggest that philosophers possess special skill, which enables them to apply concepts to particular cases more carefully and precisely than the folk. Timothy Williamson, for instance, claims that philosophers are able to 'apply general concepts to specific examples with careful attention to the relevant subtleties' (Williamson 2007, 191). Kirk Ludwig claims that philosophers develop 'skills in responding to questions about described scenarios on the basis of one's competence in concepts involved' (Ludwig 2007, 138). Antti Kauppinen (2007) suggests that the reflective practices of philosophers give them an ability to correct for performance errors and pragmatic effects in concept application.[6] The details of these suggestions vary – but invariably, the implication is that these improved conceptual abilities will allow philosophers to resist problematic variation and bias.

Philosophers clearly do engage in extended reflection and discussion of particular thought experiments – but what evidence do we have that these practices eventuate in any sort of enhanced conceptual skills which will enable them to resist biases? Weinberg et al. responded to their imagined objector by noting that it's unclear why e.g. cultural biases should be expected to disappear after extended reflection. Though they could not prove that biases will persist in the intuitions employed by philosophers, they believed they had made the possibility at least worryingly plausible. We might expect, then, that proponents of the expertise defense would aim to provide empirical evidence for the improved conceptual abilities that they hypothesize.

On the contrary, however, many presentations of the expertise defense portray the existence of philosophical expertise as a sort of 'default' assumption. Williamson (2011) explicitly claims that the burden of proof is on the experimentalist rather than the defender, arguing that proponents of experimental arguments against the use of intuition must provide reason to think that their experimental findings will extend to philosophers.[7] By way of support, Williamson appeals to an analogy with other fields:

> Consider the hypothesis that professional physicists tend to display substantially higher levels of skill in cognitive tasks distinctive of physics than laypeople do. The hypothesis could be tested by systematic experiment. But even before that has happened, one can reasonably accept it (Williamson 2011, 220).

We naturally assume that scientists, mathematicians, and the like have special expertise in their fields; therefore, it's reasonable to assume that philosophers have expertise in their field as well, even in the absence of experimental evidence. Such expertise, it's suggested, can plausibly be expected to mitigate or eliminate the biases observed among naïve subjects.

This strategy of arguing for the existence of philosophical expertise by appeal to analogy with other fields is, in fact, the most common approach to elaborating the basic idea of the expertise defense. Steven Hales, for instance, writes that

> Scientists have and rely on physical intuitions, intuitions that are trained, educated, and informed and yet are good indicators of truth for those very reasons. In the same way, the modal intuitions of professional philosophers are much more reliable than either those of inexperienced students or the 'folk' (Hales 2006, 171).

Michael Devitt (2011) makes a similar claim, appealing to the accuracy of the expert intuitions of paleontologists, physicists, and psychologists. Joachim Horvath (2010) notes that professionals in other fields would balk at the assumption that their own intuitions were as error-prone as those of the folk; and Ludwig (2007) asks us to consider whether a mathematician would feel any threat from a survey of folk mathematical intuition which showed that untrained subjects have inaccurate intuitions about the cardinalities of various infinite sets.

There is surely something right about this argumentative move; it is indeed reasonable, prima facie, to assume that professionals in a given field will have some level of expertise in that field. The weight of the analogical argument has, in any case, been sufficient to prompt experimental philosophers to begin to attempt to provide positive evidence in support of the previously implicit claim that biases observed in folk intuition will extend to the intuitive responses of professional philosophers.

3. Experimental Research on Philosophers

To date, there have been only a limited number of empirical studies focusing on philosophers or persons with philosophical training. A few such studies do not explicitly engage with the expertise defense, yet nonetheless might be viewed as providing suggestive data. Schwitzgebel and Rust (2009) found that peers rated the moral behavior of their ethicist colleagues no more highly than that of non-ethicists; other studies by Schwitzgebel and colleagues have found that ethicists are not substantially more likely than non-ethicists to vote (Schwitzgebel and Rust 2010),[8] to behave courteously at conferences (Schwitzgebel et al. 2012), to respond to student emails (Schwitzgebel and Rust 2013), to pay fees when doing so is on an 'honor system' (Schwitzgebel 2013), or to be vegetarian, donate blood, or contribute large portions of income to charity (Scwitzgebel and Rust, manuscript). Finally, Schwitzgebel (2009) found that ethics books are more likely than other types of books to 'go missing' from academic libraries – implying that ethicists may in some contexts behave *worse* than non-ethicists. Insofar as one might expect ethical expertise to manifest behaviorally, these studies provide some degree of evidence against the existence of such expertise.

Recently, however, experimental philosophers have also attempted to respond more directly to the expertise defense. Schulz et al. (2011) extend earlier data which indicated that, in naïve subjects, 'compatibilist' responses to free will thought experiments are correlated with the heritable personality trait of extraversion (Feltz and Cokely 2009). Schulz et al. investigated whether this effect would persist even in persons who had high levels of knowledge regarding free will debates, as assessed by a questionnaire. The results indicated that the effect did persist – among high scoring individuals, extraversion was still predictive of compatibilist responses. Knowledge of philosophical debates is clearly a key aspect of the skillset provided by philosophical training; yet, it does not seem to serve to eliminate the personality-based biases in judgment observed in naïve subjects.

Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012), who also cast their work as a direct response to the expertise defense, found that philosophers as well as non-philosophers were subject to order

effects in their reactions to moral dilemmas. In one of their cases, subjects were presented with the well-known 'switch' and 'footbridge' variants of the trolley problem; both groups were more likely to judge the cases morally equivalent when the 'footbridge' variant was presented first. Interestingly, among philosophers case order also affected willingness to endorse explicit statements of relevant moral principles – thus, being presented with the 'switch' variant first made philosophers more likely to endorse the doctrine of double effect. Schwitzgebel & Cushman speculate that these findings might indicate that philosophical expertise consists in an improved ability to engage in post-hoc rationalization of one's intuitive judgments; the desire to maintain consistency might lead philosophers to adjust their immediate reactions to the explicit principles.

There is also evidence that philosophers may be subject to framing effects, though again in a slightly different manner than non-philosophers. Extending previous findings on actor-observer bias in naïve subjects, Tobia et al. (2013a) presented philosophers and non-philosophers with moral dilemma vignettes presented either in the second person ('you are the driver of a trolley…') or the third person ('Jim is the driver of a trolley…'). Non-philosophers were less likely to judge an action to be morally obligatory when the vignette portrayed them in the role of the actor; they were also less likely to judge an action morally permissible. Philosophers showed the same bias but in the opposite direction; they were *more* likely to judge an action obligatory/permissible in 'actor' cases. Again, Tobia et al. take this to provide evidence that directly undermines the expertise defense. Interestingly, in a second study of this effect, Tobia et al. (2013b) found that exposure to a 'clean' smell (Lysol) during testing affected the strength of the actor-observer bias in both philosophers and non-philosophers. Lysol-smelling philosophers, in fact, reversed their pattern of bias as compared to philosophers in the control group.

Machery (2012) takes a slightly different approach to testing the expertise defense, by comparing the intuitions of multiple different groups of 'experts'. In response to Michael Devitt's (2011) claim that we should preference expert intuitions on reference, Machery surveyed academics from both linguistics and philosophy of language – both clearly fields which would be held to involve special expertise on issues of language. Participants were presented with a variant on Kripke's well-known 'Gödel' thought experiment, and were asked to identify the person to which the protagonist's utterance referred. Participants were also asked to indicate their area of specialization – e.g. phonology, sociolinguistics, etc. Area of specialization had a significant effect on responses: specialists in discourse analysis, for instance, displayed far more descriptivist intuitions than semanticists. In fact, several groups displayed greater tendency toward descriptivist responses than untrained subjects. These data may indicate that the effect of training on intuition is inconsistent – depending on one's specialization, training might either encourage or suppress Kripkean intuitions. This, of course, would undermine the idea that all experts have improved intuitions within their area of expertise. On the contrary, it would suggest that training itself may impart biases.[9,10]

There is a temptation to conclude from the findings just surveyed that the expertise defense is already well on its way to being debunked; after all, these preliminary findings strongly suggest that philosophers are no less subject to biases than the folk. However, such a conclusion would be premature, and not merely due to the small number of existing studies. The studies just surveyed do suggest that philosophers display various biases when reporting immediate reactions to vignettes presented in an experimental context; but we must be cautious in inferring from this claim to the claim that traditional philosophical methodology is under serious threat.

It's worth noting that several proponents of the expertise defense have aimed their objections not only at the use of non-philosophers as subjects, but also at the use of survey methodology generally. Ludwig (2007) and Kauppinen (2007) have both argued that survey responses are highly subject to issues involving pragmatic effects, failure of subjects to understand the purpose of the task, and so on, and that the very nature of the survey methodology (anonymous, non-conversational, etc.) makes it difficult for the experimenter to distinguish responses

distorted by performance errors from responses based purely on competence.[11] By contrast, it's claimed that traditional philosophical methods of reflection and discussion prevent the occurrence of such performance errors. It's possible, then, that defenders of expertise might respond to the above findings by claiming that survey methodology continues to suffer these failings, even when conducted on philosophers – philosophers suffer from pragmatic effects and the like in experimental settings, but these issues resolve when philosophers elicit their own intuitions from the armchair.

This response, it should be noted, works only for biases that are plausibly solely artifacts of survey methodology – and it seems unlikely that this will suffice to defuse *all* the amassed evidence of bias.[12] We might, however, offer a similar consideration on behalf of defenders of expertise. Though most discussion of the expertise defense has tended to assume that philosophical expertise, if it exists, will consist in improvement in intuition, this is by no means a requirement for the success of the expertise defense; it's possible that philosophical expertise might consist in some non-intuitive capacity that serves to reduce the effect of biased intuitions on developed philosophical theories. Thus, while the immediate intuitive reactions of philosophers might be subject to the same biases as the folk, philosophers might be capable of ultimately correcting for these biases through their practices of reflection.[13]

Consider, for instance, the finding by Livengood et al. (2010) that subjects with philosophical training show improved performance on the Cognitive Reflection Test developed by Shane Frederick (2005). The Cognitive Reflection Test consists of questions for which there are highly intuitive yet incorrect responses, as in the following example:

> 'A bat and a ball cost $1.10 in total. The bat costs $1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?'

In order to provide the correct answer ($0.05), the subject must suppress the immediate inclination to answer $0.10. Philosophers were more likely than untrained subjects to answer such questions correctly, even when controlling for education level; one possible interpretation of this finding might be that philosophers have an enhanced ability to reflect on and correct their own intuitions. It's possible that this ability, if it exists, could also mitigate biases observed in response to thought experiments.

Of course, this interpretation would only leave us with a further puzzle. Why do philosophers appear to be capable of correcting their intuitions in this particular experimental context, yet not in the other experimental contexts surveyed above? Perhaps correcting biases in one's philosophical intuitions requires greater reflective time and effort than correcting for obvious errors such as those involved in the Cognitive Reflection Test. But alternately, perhaps whatever increased reflective ability philosophers possess is simply insufficient to mitigate the relevant biases, even during normal philosophical activity.

Grundmann (2010) offers a relevant argument here, noting that in actual philosophical practice, we find very few instances of substantive variation in intuitions. Agreement on the Gettier case, for instance, is nearly unanimous. Thus, we might infer from this sort of unanimity that philosophers do indeed have some ability to reduce the sort of problematic variation experimental philosophers have uncovered. Unfortunately, this inference isn't as strong as it appears. When Weinberg et al. (2001) found cross-cultural variation on the Gettier case, the implication was that the consensus among philosophers is *due to* the predominantly white, western, male, and high-SES demographic makeup within academic philosophy. Unanimity may then suggest the *existence* of cultural bias in philosophical theories, not its absence.

On this front, then, it seems we are back to the question of the burden of proof. The existence of an ability to correct immediate intuitions under certain non-experimental conditions is of course possible; but should it be our default assumption, even in the absence

of empirical evidence? Or do the studies demonstrating biases among philosophers suffice to shift the burden of proof onto the defender? Perhaps further consideration of the appeal to analogy with other fields is in order.

4. The Nature of Expertise

As presented in Section 2, the argument from analogy appeals to a comparison with other fields to support a default presumption of the existence of philosophical expertise. On what might be called the 'standard' version of this argument, the analogy rests on the claim that professionals in other fields exhibit *improved intuitions* within their domains. It thereby aims to motivate the prediction of improved intuitions among philosophers. This version is clearly endorsed by Hales, by Devitt, and by Horvath, all of whom appeal specifically to the existence of improved intuitions among professionals in other fields.[14] The studies above, however, appear to suggest that no such improved intuition exists among philosophers. What explains this apparent exception to the rule?

The 'intuition' terminology, in fact, tends to obscure crucial features of the expert judgments exhibited by non-philosophers. As an example, let's focus on two fairly typical cases, which might show 'improved intuition' among professionals in other fields. For the first, take Ludwig's (2007) undoubtedly correct prediction that mathematicians would display fewer errors than untrained subjects when comparing the cardinalities of various infinite sets. For the second, take the empirical finding that subjects with training in physics are resistant to certain errors displayed by untrained subjects when asked to predict the trajectories of moving objects (see e.g. McCloskey et al. 1980; McCloskey 1983).[15]

Consider the etiology of the improved physical and mathematical 'intuitions' just mentioned. A mathematician's improved judgments regarding the cardinality of a set, or a physicist's improved judgments regarding future movement trajectories, are almost certainly mediated by explicit theoretical principles learned during the course of their education. Those principles could be immediately articulated if prompted – they are introspectively transparent. The physicist could, for instance, detail the relevant mechanical principles underlying her judgment; the mathematician could explain how one-to-one correspondence can be used to compare infinite sets. Consider further the methodological role played by those 'improved intuitions'. These judgments are not employed as evidence to support a mathematical or physical theory; quite the opposite. The physicist wouldn't appeal to her judgment to support her favored theory of motion – she'd appeal to her theory of motion to support her judgment.

If examples such as these are used to ground the analogy, what sort of expertise might they lead us to expect among philosophers? Plausibly, they should lead us to expect instances of improved judgment mediated by explicitly learned theoretical principles in an introspectively transparent manner; further, we should expect such judgments to be *supported by* theory rather than being appealed to as *evidence for* theory. Professional philosophers' judgments in response to thought experiments do not fit this characterization. For one, they are generally introspectively opaque. Philosophers typically find it quite difficult to explicate the principles that lead them to judge as they do on thought experiments – witness the extensive literatures dedicated to puzzling out the principles underlying our intuitions on the Gettier case or the various incarnations of the trolley problem. For another, they are standardly appealed to as evidence for theory.

Philosophers do, however, plausibly display other improved judgments that fit the characterization just given. Consider, for example, a philosophers' judgments about what sorts of cases reliabilist theories would classify as knowledge; such judgments are arguably a reasonable analog for the mathematical and physical judgments just discussed. Unfortunately, expertise in such judgments is of little use to the defender of expertise. What the defender needs is not improved judgments of the form 'If reliabilism is true, then case x is a case of knowledge', but rather

improved judgments of the form 'case x is a case of knowledge'. The former sort of judgments are quite useful in their own right (a good deal of philosophical work involves teasing out the consequences of existing theories), but it is use of the latter that experimentalists take to be the focus of their critique.

It is possible to give a weaker version of the argument from analogy. On this weaker view, the argument rests on the mere claim that professionals in other fields all exhibit *some* form of special expertise within their domain. The weak version is suggested by aspects of Williamson's argument; Williamson does not appeal to the claim that physicists have superior physical *intuitions*, but instead to the claim that they are superior at e.g. performing laboratory experiments. This weaker version, then, would merely motivate the claim that we should expect *some* form of expertise among philosophers.

The weaker analogy does plausibly motivate the existence of *some* form of philosophical expertise. We should not, therefore, take the experimental findings to show that philosophers are simply not experts after all. But, of course, there are numerous possible forms of philosophical expertise, and many of these would be quite unlikely to mitigate the relevant biases – if philosophical expertise consists merely in, say, the ability to design creative thought experiments, this would do little to alleviate the challenge presented by experimental philosophy. Thus, the weaker interpretation threatens to be *too* weak. If the defender is to adopt this interpretation, what's needed is a more specific argument as to the sorts of expertise the analogy could plausibly lead us to expect – ideally, one motivated by appeal to empirical facts about the nature of expertise in other fields and the plausibility of analogs for such expertise within philosophy.

Weinberg et al. (2010) make essentially this same complaint against current explications of the expertise defense. They note that generic appeals to analogy don't suffice; even if they motivate some default assumption of expertise, not just any form of expertise will plausibly serve to enable philosophers to resist the relevant biases. Weinberg et al. were writing prior to the publication of the studies on philosophers surveyed in Section 3; now that we have such studies at our disposal, we can add the further requirement that the hypothesized form of expertise must be such that it could plausibly be inactive or ineffective in the relevant experimental contexts, thus explaining the failure of philosophers to exhibit the expected improvement.

Weinberg et al. argue that many defenders of expertise seem to invoke a 'folk theory' of expertise, according to which sufficient experience suffices to improve performance in all areas of a given discipline. On the contrary, however, psychological work on the development of expertise indicates that the situation is much more complex. Not all areas are conducive to the development of expertise – even extensive experience in areas such as stock brokerage and clinical psychology appears not to improve predictive ability (see Shanteau 1992). Even where expertise does develop, it does not always guarantee the absence of bias – Weinberg et al. cite a case study by de Waal (2003) of cultural biases within biology. The defender of expertise, then, needs a much more specific account of the expertise being hypothesized – one which explains why their favored form of expertise can reasonably be expected to develop among philosophers, and how said expertise will successfully mitigate bias.

Drawing on existing psychological literature on the nature of expertise, Weinberg et al. isolate three possible candidates for a robust account of philosophical expertise – each of which draws plausibility from corresponding forms of expertise that have been studied in other fields. These three possible candidates are (i) improved conceptual schemata; (ii) more sophisticated theories; and (iii) more finely tuned cognitive skills. Each of these proposals, Weinberg et al. argue, faces serious problems – thus casting doubt on the prospects for a successful elaboration of the expertise defense.

The notion of improved 'conceptual schemata' covers any kind of improved informational structures underlying concept application. This might include specialized higher-order

concepts, which aid in the application of other concepts (Weinberg et al. give the example 'deviant causal chain'), or special 'configural rules' for concept application – essentially, decision procedures in which a small set of features would be used to infer category membership. This sort of account fits well with suggestions by e.g. Ludwig (2007) and Williamson (2011) that philosophers are more sensitive to relevant features of thought experiments – specialized concepts or configural rules for concept application might cause philosophers to attend to different features of a thought experiment than the folk do. However, Weinberg et al. note that such conceptual schemata might just as easily introduce error as eliminate it – indeed, they survey several indications from the expertise literature that expert schemata often introduce new biases. They also note that philosophers are arguably not presented with clear, unambiguous feedback on the accuracy of their conceptual applications,[16] and that we might therefore worry that our 'expert' abilities to apply concepts simply reflect inaccurate conceptual schemata that have become entrenched rather than corrected and refined over time. We might add another concern to that of Weinberg et al. – it's not at all clear why improved such conceptual schemata should be ineffective in the experimental contexts in which philosophers have exhibited biases.

Another possibility for the locus of philosophical expertise is improved theory – this is the sort of expertise that underlies, e.g., physicist's abilities to more accurately predict motion trajectories. Weinberg et al. worry that such knowledge might not count as improved intuition – though, as argued earlier, improved intuition is not required for the success of the expertise defense. Further, though, they argue that philosophers simply do not have theories that are well-established enough to serve the appropriate role. Few uncontroversial, 'textbook' theories exist in philosophy. Our philosophical theories are based on intuition, and the accuracy of intuition that is currently in question. Again, we can add to Weinberg et al. by noting that it is unclear why theoretical knowledge, if it could reduce bias, would fail to do so in the experimental contexts we have examined.

The final account of expertise that Weinberg et al. consider is improved skill in consideration of thought experiments. This would have to be some sort of ability distinct from enhanced conceptual schemata – a form of knowledge-how rather than knowledge-that. Weinberg et al. suggest as a possibility an improved ability to extract and mentally entertain details from described cases (somewhat analogous to a chess master's ability to mentally reproduce a briefly viewed board). Yet, Weinberg et al. claim that this ability would not obviously serve to reduce the relevant biases. Another possibility, inspired by Sosa's (2009) suggestion that cross-cultural variation stems from the tendency to 'fill in' missing details in a thought experiment in different ways, is that philosophers have an improved ability to 'fill in' those unspecified details in appropriate and consistent ways. Weinberg et al. express more hope for this account than the others, but again the recently amassed empirical data appear to bring this proposal into question as well – if philosophers have such a skill, why does it fail to prevent the biases observed in experimental contexts?

The basic challenge Weinberg et al. propose – that of specifying and defending the relevant expertise in more detail, rather than resting on a 'folk theory' of expertise – has received a few responses. Thomas Grundmann, for instance, proposes that philosophical expertise consists in the ability to 'grasp the relevant aspects of the hypothetical case considered' (Grundmann 2010, 500). Horvath (2010) suggests that philosophers display both 'conceptual sensitivity' – an awareness of potential 'ambiguities, unclarities, or incoherencies' (Horvath 2010, 467) in applying concepts – and 'interpretive competence' – an ability to rule out unintended interpretations of underspecified thought experiments. Both of these proposals, however, face challenges in light of the recent empirical findings experimental philosophers have offered – for, as with the proposals discussed by Weinberg et al., it isn't immediately clear why such abilities would fail to cause improved performance in experimental contexts.

Debates over philosophical expertise are approaching a turning point. A preliminary round of empirical studies on philosophers has just emerged, with troubling results; responses to these

findings from defenders of expertise have yet to materialize, though one suspects that they will not be content to throw in the towel. The next step in the debate involves a move beyond underspecified appeals to analogy and speculative proposals for the nature of philosophical expertise. Experimentalists, too, are frequently guilty of oversimplified approaches to expertise – many seem to assume that the relevant philosophical expertise must involve some capacity of 'improved intuition', and that the expertise question can therefore be decisively answered by merely broadening the subject pools of their studies. As noted earlier, however, numerous possible forms of non-intuitive expertise that might serve to vindicate the expertise defense – some of them reasonably plausible. As Weinberg et al. have shown, comparisons with other fields, when done in a reasonably empirical manner, can provide potential models for psychological processes that might produce philosophical expertise; and it's these sort of detailed, empirically informed, testable models of philosophical expertise that are now needed to advance the expertise debate.

Short Biography

Jennifer Nado is an assistant professor in Philosophy at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. She received her PhD from Rutgers University in 2011 under the direction of Stephen Stich. Her research centers on issues in metaphilosophy, with a particular focus on experimental philosophy's implications for the status of traditional philosophical methodology. Her work has been published in the *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* and *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

Notes

* Correspondence: Department of Philosophy, Lingnan University, Tuen Mun, New Territories, Hong Kong. Email: jennifernado@gmail.com

[1] Within the past few years, a few philosophers have expressed doubts about this characterization of the methodology of philosophy – see e.g. Williamson (2007), Deutsch (2010), and Cappelen (2012).

[2] See Weatherson (2003) for an argument that we should reject the Gettier intuition and retain the JTB theory of knowledge.

[3] For an early, highly influential collection of papers on the evidential status of intuition, see DePaul and Ramsey (1998). Beyond these and works mentioned elsewhere in this paper, the following is a short list of a few central, non-experimental contributions to the intuition literature: Jackson (1998), Hintikka (1999), Pust (2000), Kornblith (2002), Williamson (2004), Devitt (2006), Goldman (2007), Sosa (2007).

[4] For overviews of experimental philosophy, see Alexander and Weinberg (2007), Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007), and Alexander (2012). Knobe and Nichols (2008, 2013) collect many of the central papers in the field.

[5] This particular finding may not prove robust – see Adelberg et al. (2014) for a failure to replicate these findings.

[6] See also Adams and Steadman (2004a, 2004b), McCann (2005), and Cullen (2010) for arguments that some experimental findings may be largely influenced by pragmatic effects.

[7] See also Williamson (2007, 2009) for similar arguments; see Weinberg (2009) for a reply.

[8] Political philosophers, by contrast, did have a higher tendency to vote.

[9] See also Machery (2011) and Machery et al. (2013) for further discussion of Devitt on the expertise defense.

[10] See also Vaesen et al. (2013) and Knobe and Samuels (2013) for further relevant studies.

[11] See Cullen (2010) for evidence that these sorts of issues can be resolved through experimental manipulations.

[12] There are also substantive questions that might be raised about the notion of 'competence' being employed in such responses, though pursuing this is unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. Ludwig (2007) provides the most thorough attempt in the current literature to characterize the relevant notion of competence.

[13] Some might prefer to frame this as an improvement in 'reflective intuition', thereby drawing a distinction between immediate intuitions and reflective ones. I am hesitant to adopt this terminology. Intuition is frequently characterized as an immediate judgment made in the absence of introspectively obvious conscious reasoning; once conscious reflection is

applied, the resulting states are plausibly no longer intuitions, but ordinary beliefs supported by conscious reasoning. Nonetheless, nothing hangs on the terminological choices here.

[14] Ludwig's position is more complicated, since he prefers to use the term 'intuition' to apply only to judgments *solely* reflecting competence with a concept – thus suggesting that experts have *more* intuitions rather than 'better' ones. The spirit, however, is the same.

[15] As an example of such errors, naïve subjects frequently judged that a ball dropped by a runner would fall straight down rather than continuing to travel forward.

[16] See e.g. Cummins (1998) and Weinberg (2007) on our inability to detect and correct for errors in intuition. See also Williamson (2009) for an argument that philosophers do in fact receive sufficient feedback in the form of input from teachers and colleagues.

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