

Analogy, moral intuitions, and the expertise defence

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Abstract: The evidential value of moral intuitions has been challenged by psychological work showing that the intuitions of ordinary people are affected by distorting factors. One reply to this challenge, the expertise defence, claims that training in philosophical thinking confers enhanced reliability on the intuitions of professional philosophers. This defence is often expressed through analogy: since we do not allow doubts about folk judgments in domains like mathematics or physics to undermine the plausibility of judgments by experts in these domains, we also should not do so in philosophy. In this paper I clarify the logic of the analogy strategy, and defend it against recent challenges by Jesper Ryberg. The discussion exposes an interesting divide: while Ryberg's challenges may weaken analogies between morality and domains like mathematics, they do not affect analogies to other domains, such as physics. I conclude that the expertise defence can be supported by analogical means, though care is required in selecting an appropriate analog. I discuss implications of this conclusion for the expertise defence debate and for study of the moral domain itself.

Keywords: expertise defense, mathematics analogy, moral intuitions, philosophical training

1. Introduction: moral expertise and analogies to other expertise domains

A number of recent experimental studies suggest that the moral intuitions of ordinary people are unreliable, casting doubt on the suitability of intuitions for use in the construction of philosophical theories.¹ One response to this line of argument does not dispute the empirical findings, but claims that they have limited relevance to philosophical practice. This response has come to be called the *expertise defence*, because it claims that philosophical training instills a greater degree of reliability in the intuitions of professional philosophers. At times, the expertise defence is (partly) motivated by analogy to expertise in other domains. For example, Ludwig (2007: 148) points out that we do not regard as

¹ For an example of an empirically-motivated argument for the unreliability of moral intuition, see Sinnott-Armstrong (2008). In this paper I follow Ryberg (2013: 3) in using the term 'moral intuition' to mean "a moral belief that is not the result of conscious inferential reasoning".

unreliable the intuitions of trained mathematicians simply because ordinary people have unreliable intuitions about the cardinality of infinite series.²

But is it really reasonable to ground claims of *moral* expertise in this way? Aren't there strong disanalogies between the moral domain and other domains? In this paper I consider challenges to the analogy strategy. I suggest that proponents of the expertise defence should be careful about *which* domains they appeal to for analogies. There are persuasive reasons to doubt that analogy to expertise domains like mathematics or chess can be sustained. But, interestingly, these reasons for doubt do not apply to other potential analogies, such as to domains like physics, medicine, or the law. Attending to this difference can help illuminate prospects for the expertise defence.

My strategy in this paper is two-fold. First I will discuss a recent paper by Jesper Ryberg (2013), who aims to debunk attempts to ground the expertise defence in analogy. I will argue that Ryberg has misstated the strength of his argument; although it may weaken analogies to certain domains, like mathematics or chess, it does not do so for other domains.³ I then suggest that we can learn some important lessons from the partial failure of Ryberg's argument. Ryberg proposes criteria that he believes a domain must meet to be suitable for the development of expertise, which he claims moral intuition cannot meet. I will argue that Ryberg's criteria are too stringent, because they rule out expertise in domains where it seems obvious that expertise does exist, such as physics, medicine, or law. So these cannot be criteria for expertise *tout court*. Perhaps, however, they serve to pick out a particular *type* of expertise, and perhaps moral expertise is of *another* type. Following on this suggestion, I

² Strictly speaking, the expertise defence is typically treated as a defence of philosophical intuition *in general*, not of moral intuition in particular. See Weinberg et al. (2010) and Williamson (2011). Here I primarily focus on expertise in moral intuition, though I will return to other forms of philosophical intuition in the final section.

³ In this paper I will not dispute Ryberg's claims about the nature of expertise in mathematics and chess. But see Clarke-Doane (2012) for recent discussion of the similarities between moral and mathematical epistemology.

conclude by discussing three implications for the expertise defense and moral philosophy. First, the resilience of the analogy strategy gives opponents of the expertise defence reason to adopt another tactic. Second, we may have to separate moral expertise from other forms of philosophical expertise (e.g. expertise in metaphysics or epistemology); it may be that the expertise defence works differently (if it does at all) in different areas of philosophy. Third, and most radically, analogizing moral expertise to other forms of expertise may require us to take on surprising commitments about the nature of the moral domain.

Some clarifications before we begin. It is important to be clear about the role of analogy in the expertise defence. There are other ways we might ground the expertise defence, ways which do not appeal to analogy, but these will not be discussed here. For instance, it might be argued that moral philosophers are better than the folk at *understanding* test cases, or have developed a reduced *susceptibility to bias* or prejudice in forming moral intuitions.⁴ I'll call these examples of a *developmental strategy* for the expertise defence. They identify important features of particular instances of utilizing moral intuition by non-experts, make a positive argument that the training of moral philosophy would lead to developmental improvement in these features, and conclude that moral philosophers possess expertise. The analogy strategy is different.⁵ It proceeds by characterizing the practice of already-trained moral philosophers (not untrained folk), suggesting that this practice importantly resembles that of acknowledged experts in other domains, and so concluding that moral philosophers' use of intuitions likely exhibits a similar expertise. Notice that the analogy strategy needn't advert to *specific capacities*,

⁴ Philosophers' purported reduced susceptibility to bias has been empirically tested, and so far seems dubious. See Schulz, Cokely, and Feltz (2011); Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012); and Tobia, Buckwalter, and Stich (2012). See also Weinberg et al. (2010) for arguments that philosophical training does not provide the right sort of experience to generate these benefits.

⁵ Great thanks to an anonymous referee for helpful suggestions on how to express this point.

such as increased understanding or reduced susceptibility to bias, in order to ground the plausibility of expertise.

Hence Ryberg's characterization of the analogy strategy:

[E]ven if it is assumed that there is no difference [between philosophers and the folk] in terms of the capacity to comprehend a particular case and that there are no distortions caused by biases or the like, it may still be the case that the intuitions of trained philosophers are better – i.e. more reliable – than layman intuitions, precisely because philosophers are experts in the field. (Ryberg 2013: 4)

It may not be clear why this sort of strategy should carry much weight – without a positive argument for a *particular* developed capacity, why should we believe that philosophers possess anything like the expertise of mathematicians? But it is important to keep in mind the dialectical situation here. The expertise defence is just that – it is a *defence*, a response, to an attack on philosophical methodology. There is an established method of constructing principles from intuitions. Critics of that method claim, on the basis of experimental findings about the unreliability of *folk* intuitions, that the reliability of *professional* intuitions is also suspect. The analogy strategy is meant to show that attacks of this sort employ a questionable inference from folk behaviour to that of professionals, an inference we would not accept in other domains. The availability of the analogy strategy helps to secure the claim by some defenders of the expertise defense, such as Timothy Williamson, that the *burden of proof* rests on those who are attacking established philosophical method. Williamson writes:

Nor should philosophers be expected to suspend their current projects in order to carry out psychological investigations of their capacity as thought experimentalists, on the basis of evidence that undergraduates untrained in philosophy are bad at conducting thought experiments. After all, we do not expect physicists to suspend their current projects in order to

carry out psychological investigations of their capacity as laboratory experimentalists, on the basis of evidence that undergraduates untrained in physics are bad at conducting laboratory experiments. Standards of laboratory experimentation in physics are doubtless higher than standards of thought experimentation in philosophy; nevertheless, in both cases the point remains that it would be foolish to change a well-established methodology without serious evidence that doing so would make the discipline better rather than worse. (Williamson 2011: 217)

Of course, establishing that the burden of proof is on the critic of established method (if this indeed what Williamson establishes) does not mean that the burden cannot be met. In this case, one way to meet it is to show that the analogy *fails*, that (moral) philosophical practice is unlike practice in other domains in some way that makes the analogy inappropriate. Challenges of that sort will be the focus of the rest of this paper.

2. First Challenge to the Analogy Strategy: Causal Origin of Judgments

Let us then look for ways that the analogy strategy might be defeated – ways in which the practice of moral philosophers does not resemble that of experts in other domains. One option explored by Ryberg is to examine the *causal origin* of expertise. Since expertise is a matter of training, expert's intuitions are causally connected to significant prior experience of making intuitive judgments about their domain. How might we find out whether this is true of experts in a particular domain, such as moral judgment?

Ryberg suggests a simple test. Compare the reactions of a novice and an expert to unfamiliar phenomena. An expert can often make immediate judgments about novel instances of phenomena in her domain of expertise. Can a novice in that domain *also* form immediate and strong intuitions about

novel instances? Ryberg claims that in domains that allow for genuine expertise, a novice is generally *not* able to do this. He uses mathematics and chess as examples; in these domains, he claims, a novice will generally be incapable of providing *any* immediate judgment about a difficult proof or board arrangement. This reveals the causal origin of genuine expertise in prior experience:

In both cases the explanation is the same: if the intuitions are the result of prior experience then it is no surprise that the novice and the amateur have only very vague intuitions – if any – compared to the trained mathematician or chess player. (Ryberg 2013: 6)

By contrast, the domain of moral intuition is not like this. ‘Novice’ moral judges (non-philosophers) do not hesitate to offer strong and immediate intuitive judgments about difficult moral cases. So, since philosophers do not stand out from the folk on this test, it seems implausible to hold that philosophers’ moral intuitions are the causal result of wide experience. (Or, more precisely: it seems that if philosophers’ moral intuitions are the causal result of some sort of experience, it is a form of experience also possessed by the folk.)

Notice how Ryberg’s argument works. He attempts to deny the analogy strategy by showing that in one domain –mathematics – there is a readily detectable difference between the behaviour of experts and novices, a difference plausibly explained by positing a causal process uniquely responsible for the expert’s ability to form judgments quickly. The domain of morality, however, does not display this same difference between novices and (purported) experts. Hence, the moral domain is not appropriately analogized to the mathematical domain, so this analogy cannot ground the expertise defence of moral intuition.

But what does this show? Does it show that moral philosophy does not resemble *any* expertise domain? I will now argue that Ryberg has overestimated the strength of his argument. I allow (for the sake of argument) that he has shown an important disanalogy between moral philosophy and

mathematics or chess. But if we think about still other domains, we can see that his novice judgment test is not very reliable. Consider physics. Ordinary people are often quite ready to offer intuitive verdicts about how they would expect physical entities to behave; this is implied by the frequent description of post-Newtonian physics as “counter-intuitive”. Or consider medicine. Ordinary people are often quite ready to diagnose themselves or others with various medical conditions on the basis of a few symptoms. Or consider law. Ordinary people are often quite willing to express views about the guilt of a criminal defendant or even the constitutionality of a particular statute.⁶

Following Ryberg’s test, it is clear that there is also a disanalogy between the domain of mathematics and the domains of physics, medicine, or law. Yet it seems exceedingly implausible to deny the existence of expertise in these domains. We are generally quite prepared to treat the intuitions of physicists, physicians, and judges (within their respective domains) as more reliable than the intuitions of the folk, and it seems reasonable that we do this. Hence, since it can be shown that various domains in which expertise *is* possible nevertheless differ on Ryberg’s novice test, it is clear that this difference is not a relevant disanalogy for the purposes of ascribing expertise. Another way to put this: the novice test is not a good test for the possibility of expertise within a domain. So showing that the moral domain is disanalogous from the mathematical domain on this test does not really tell us anything about moral expertise.

So, if one is in search for a disanalogy threatening to the moral expertise defence, causal origin does not seem like a good candidate, at least not as Ryberg understands it. But there is another nearby option. Perhaps instead of asking about the *origin* of the capacity for moral intuition, we can ask about

⁶ I cannot cite empirical evidence (such as surveys) to substantiate my claims about ordinary people’s willingness to render intuitive judgments in the domains of physics, medicine and law. Nor does Ryberg cite empirical evidence to substantiate his claims about their *unwillingness* to do so in mathematics or chess. In both cases, it seems to be a matter of everyday experience, hopefully shared by the reader.

the causal *process* through which this capacity has been shaped. Extensive experience changes the novice's capacity for forming intuitions, such that the expert's intuitions become better than those of the novice.⁷ This seems very plausible. We trust expert physicists, physicians, or lawyers precisely because we think that their ability to form judgments in the relevant domain has been improved by wide experience. Even if we as non-experts do have an ability to form immediate judgments, we doubt that ours are as *good* as those of the experts.⁸

Of course, non-experts do have *some*, and perhaps quite lengthy, experience forming judgments about physical, medical, and legal matters. So the idea must be that experts have significantly *more* experience doing this, or perhaps that the sort of experience they have is somehow different. This seems an independently plausible account of how expertise works, and it seems to account well for expertise in (some) domains other than mathematics or chess. So an opponent of the analogy strategy might next look for an opening to attack here. Is there reason to doubt that moral intuition is analogously *improved* by a particular sort or extent of experience? The next section takes up a challenge to the analogy strategy on exactly this point.

⁷ Something like this notion of expertise (which precedes the current discussion of the "expertise defence") is defended in Goldman (2001: 91).

⁸ Ryberg considers a proposal along these lines, which he calls a "shaping" thesis, "in the same way as, say, a muscle is not generated by previous exercises but shaped by them." (7). But he rejects this proposal for two reasons. First, he claims that it doesn't make a difference to his central thesis: per his novice test, it seems that expertise in mathematics or chess really is generated (not shaped) by experience. However, as I have argued, showing a disanalogy to mathematics isn't enough, if other expertise domains (like physics, etc.) are available for an effective analogy. Ryberg's second reason for setting aside the "shaping" thesis is more interesting: he thinks that morality is not the sort of domain in which it is possible for experience to *improve* intuition. I discuss this sort of argument in the next section.

3. *Second Challenge to the Analogy Strategy: Quality of Judgments*

The fact that a person has plenty of experience rendering intuitive judgments within a domain is not a sufficient condition for attributing expertise to that person. After all, if someone has long experience consistently rendering *incorrect* judgments within a domain, that person surely does not possess expertise. Ryberg draws out a sensible implication of this point:

[T]he step from experience to expertise presupposes that the activity in question is assessable on some sort of quality parameter. If it, for a certain activity, does not make sense to talk of being better or worse, then neither does it make sense to talk of someone as being an expert in this activity. (Ryberg 2013: 7)

Ryberg illustrates by returning to his standard examples of expertise: in mathematics or chess, there is a “clear quality parameter – the validity of proofs and the victory in games” which must be exhibited by an individual in order for that person to possess expertise (8). By contrast, he goes on to argue, one cannot say the same about moral philosophy. There is no clear quality parameter for making correct moral judgments, so it cannot make sense to talk of being better or worse at making moral judgments, so there cannot be such a thing as moral expertise.

Obviously much turns on the claim that there is no clear quality parameter in moral philosophy. It will be useful to consider this claim at length. I will start with a clarificatory point. It seems to me that Ryberg has run together two distinct things. The first thing is whether it “makes sense to talk of being better or worse” in performance within a domain, and the second is the nature of quality assessment parameters. These things should be separated, or else Ryberg’s argument is vulnerable to the following objection: colloquial English does contain statements like ‘you’re a good judge of moral character’, or ‘ask grandma; she always knows what to do about tough moral decisions’. Presumably people who say things like this believe that it *does* make sense to talk about being better or worse in making moral

judgments; these utterances apparently attribute certain levels of quality to the moral judgments of individual people. So Ryberg's claim that it does not "make sense" to talk this way seems flatly contradicted by perfectly ordinary uses of language.

Of course, the fact that people tend to talk in a certain way does not mean that they *should* talk this way. Or, more precisely, it does not mean that they have appropriate grounds for making the sort of claims they appear to be making. It may be that people don't have appropriate grounds for attributing levels of quality to moral judgments, because in reality there just *do not exist* levels of quality within the domain of moral judgment. This, I think, is what Ryberg really intends to claim; he is an error theorist about levels of quality talk in the moral judgment domain. Or, perhaps, he might allow that there *could* (in principle) be levels of quality to moral judgments, but claim that in practice no one is ever in the right epistemic position to assess whether they obtain. Whatever the details of the argument, its core comes across in this passage:

It is, I believe, not a correct description of a philosopher's prior experience to hold that she has been through numerous cases in which she has started out, say, by rejecting a moral position because it had a counter-intuitive implication and then, subsequently, found out that the rejection of this position was in fact correct. On the contrary, the intuitive judgment itself is often what justifies the judgment that a moral theory should be maintained or rejected. In other words, while there exists an intuition-independent criterion for the assessment of mathematical proofs and success in chess, this is usually not the case with regard to moral theory. (Ryberg 2013: 8)

Here Ryberg amends his quality condition for expertise: in order for it to be right to attribute expertise in some capacity to someone, it must not only be the case that there *exists* some parameter for assessing the quality of the capacity, but it must also be the case that the parameter is somehow

assessable through a means *independent of the exercise of that capacity*. Hence the suggestion that because the quality of moral intuition cannot (purportedly) be assessed in an “intuition-independent” way, it cannot be correct to describe philosophers’ wide experience with moral intuition as contributing to greater quality in their intuitions.⁹

This seems to clarify the force of Ryberg’s quality argument; the point is not about whether it “makes sense” to talk about levels of quality in moral judgment, but about whether the quality of moral intuitions can be assessed independently of the content of the intuitions themselves. According to Ryberg, in genuine expertise domains (such as mathematics or chess) there exists some method for assessing the quality of intuitions other than through intuitions themselves – but no such method exists in the domain of morality. Hence, the implication goes, one cannot effectively analogize the practice of trained moral philosophers to that of trained mathematicians, and so one cannot rest the moral expertise defence upon an analogy to other expertise domains. Ryberg claims that genuine expertise domains show what I’ll call the *independence condition*: quality of judgments within the domain can be assessed by some means other than exercise of the capacity for judgment itself.¹⁰

⁹ A somewhat related argument avoids taking a position on whether there *could* be assessable criteria for the quality of moral intuitions, but insists that even if there are such criteria, the *actual practice* of moral philosophy does not involve engagement with them, and therefore philosophical training should not be thought of as improving the capacity for moral intuition.

Weinberg and colleagues (2010) make an argument of this sort, disputed by Horvath (2010).

¹⁰ Archard (2011, 122) discusses a related challenge to the idea of moral philosophical expertise: “We have clear, evident and agreed criteria for the successful ascent of a mountain or for the repair of a malfunctioning car. We do not have such criteria for the solution of a problem in practical ethics.” Interestingly, Archard dismisses this objection by appealing to analogy; he claims that other (unspecified) academic disciplines display a similar uncertainty of success criteria, yet we still allow that expertise is possible there.

Does this argument threaten the analogy strategy? I think not, for two main reasons. First, it is overly quick in its characterization of practice in the moral domain. Second (as with the causality condition above) it appears to imply implausible things about clear expertise domains.

Ryberg claims that in moral philosophy, “the intuitive judgment itself is often what justifies the judgment that a moral theory should be maintained or rejected” (6). But this is overly quick. In reflective equilibrium, as John Rawls (1971, 20) famously wrote, moral philosophers “work from both ends”, adjusting intuitions and principles relative to one another, to achieve greatest overall coherence. It is very rare that a single intuition is ultimately taken to justify itself, or that a moral principle is taken to be justified by a single intuition; rather, an intuition or principle is ultimately justified by the fact that it fits well into a coherent structure comprised of many separate intuitions and principles.¹¹

Hence, it would seem that moral intuition *does* meet the independence condition, at least if this is understood as the demand that each token intuition be assessed on criteria other than its own content. Being assessed by fit to a system of other intuitions and principles *meets* this condition. Perhaps Ryberg could avoid this objection by reformulating his independence criterion to require that token intuitions be quality-assessed in some way independent not only of their own content, but also independent of the content of other moral intuitions, because these intuitions originate in the same *capacity* for moral intuition that is at issue.

¹¹ Gesang (2010) cites this feature of moral philosophy as *support* for moral expertise. If (as Gesang claims) coherentism is an especially plausible model of justification in morality, and if philosophers have more extensive understanding of the principles and general theories that must be made coherent with individual case judgments, then philosophers are in a better theory-constructing position than are the folk (see also Singer 1972). But see Noble (1982) for an argument that philosophers’ technical proficiency actually distracts them from the core subject matter of ethics.

But this formulation does not work either, as my second objection will now show. Demanding that the output of a capacity be quality-assessed by means other than exercise of the capacity itself leads to a far broader scepticism than scepticism about moral expertise. Consider perception. It seems that the only means we have for assessing the quality of a particular perceptual state are its fitting with *other perceptual states*.¹² Hence perception cannot meet Ryberg's independence condition. This would appear to imply that there is no such thing as quality of perception, or that it does not "make sense" to say that one person is a better perceptual judge than another. Yet we are often quite ready to say that one perceptual state is of higher quality than another, or to allow that certain people (air traffic controllers, piano-tuners, wine connoisseurs) possess certain forms of perceptual expertise.

Indeed, we can see the same problem for other obvious expertise domains (as in the causality discussion in the previous section). Consider again physics, medicine and law. In physics and medicine (like other empirical sciences), observations and principles are justified by how they cohere with other observations or principles.¹³ Similarly, the quality of legal judgments can only be assessed relative to other legal principles and precedents. So if Ryberg's quality argument casts doubt on the plausibility of expertise in the moral domain, it must also cast doubt on the plausibility of expertise in physics, medicine and law. Yet, as discussed in the previous section, this is a deeply implausible result. Once

¹² Note that this claim is not the same as the claim that our only defence of perception against scepticism relies upon appeal to perception itself. There may be other ways to defend perception. See e.g. Pryor (2000). The point here is about how to assess the quality of *particular* perceptual states – and here is it indeed quite hard to see what other standard might be possible.

¹³ It might be claimed that physics and medicine do possess independent means of quality-assessment: physical theories predict the behavior of physical entities and medical theories can be checked against the well-being of patients. However, in practice these forms of assessment may not be fully independent; they may require theory-relative observation statements which are themselves only justified by the standards of the relevant theory (Feyerabend 1957). This, of course, is a complicated issue, which I cannot explore further here. But see Flanagan (1982) for a helpful discussion of the relationship between observation-statements in science and ethics.

again, although some facet (means of quality-assessment, in this case) may point to a disanalogy between moral philosophy and *some* expertise domains, such as mathematics or chess, it can be shown that this same facet permits an analogy between moral philosophy and other expertise domains, such as physics, medicine, or law.

Although it is surely true that genuine expertise domains are those in which there is *some* means of assessing the quality of judgments, it does not follow that this means must be independent of the exercise of the capacity for judgment in that domain. The analogy strategy survives this challenge.

4. What is shown by the disanalogy to mathematics or chess?

The aim of this paper has been to explore the analogy strategy for grounding the expertise defence, chiefly by evaluating challenges to its plausibility. I have considered two such challenges, primarily represented in Ryberg's recent paper. I have granted (for the sake of argument) Ryberg's claims about disanalogy between moral philosophy and mathematics, but I have argued that the strategy can be maintained by appealing to analogies to other expertise domains. I'll now use this last section to sketch three implications of the preceding discussion. What does it mean if we grant that there are disanalogies between moral philosophy and certain expertise domains (such as mathematics) while insisting that analogies to other expertise domains remain plausible? The implications are surprisingly far-ranging, from guiding debate over the expertise defense itself to informing study of the moral domain.

First, it is worth noting that Ryberg's disanalogy between morality and mathematics or chess *does* have some significance for the ongoing expertise defence debate, if only because some expertise defence proponents have explicitly appealed to mathematics (Ludwig, for instance, as cited earlier in

this paper). If Ryberg is right, then motivating the expertise defence with this particular analogy is indeed a mistake. Of course, perhaps proponents of the expertise defence will be happy to substitute analogies to other expertise domains; Williamson, for instance, makes his analogy to physics.

Whether there are deeper consequences to Ryberg's apparent disqualification of mathematics as a suitable analog will depend on what sort of argumentative strategy we have in mind. Recall my distinction between developmental strategies and the analogy strategy. For a developmental strategy, one must identify *specific* capacities whose development constitutes expertise. If one wishes to pursue a developmental strategy, then knowing that the analogy to mathematics fails should be very instructive; it is doubtful that the specific capacities that constitute expertise in the mathematical domain will have precise counterparts in the account of moral expertise. So a developmental strategy indeed ought to be sensitive to these findings.

It is less clear that the analogy strategy will be affected very deeply. Recall that an analogy strategy need not identify *specific* expertise-constituting capacities; it need only plausibly claim that two domains broadly resemble one another in the practice of their highly-trained members, and point out the implausibility of denying expertise to one while attributing it to the other. At most, Ryberg's argument shows that mathematics cannot be brought in to serve this purpose. But there is no particular cost or great significance, on an analogy strategy, to substituting other domains, such as physics or medicine.

This point helps to highlight the peculiar dialectical situation surrounding the expertise defence. As I noted in the first section, some expertise claimants regard philosophical practice as protected by a burden of proof imbalance: the burden is on those who wish to challenge a well-established and seemingly quite productive method of inquiry. That burden imbalance comes through plainly in the discussion here; even if challengers can show (as Ryberg claims to) that philosophical expertise cannot

be grounded on analogy to one domain, there is little cost to the expertise defender to switch to another analogy, one that evades the particular challenge. This should not be a surprise – having the burden of proof on one's side makes things easier. Tactically speaking, then, opponents of the expertise defence may find it more productive to avoid engaging with the analogy strategy, and instead build a more direct case for the impossibility of philosophical expertise (such as by showing empirically that philosophical intuitions are just as vulnerable to biases as those of the folk).¹⁴

The second implication I wish to discuss concerns the applicability of the expertise defence to different areas of philosophy, and what I will here call the 'unity of intuition'. In this paper I have concentrated specifically on moral expertise, though the expertise defence is typically presented as a reply to *general* critiques of philosophical intuition. But it might be that moral intuition possesses traits that set it apart from intuitions in other areas of philosophy, such that empirical challenges to intuition should carefully distinguish among philosophical subdisciplines (Nado 2012).

Challenges to the analogy strategy, like those considered in this paper, help to sharpen this point. The unity of intuition would be called into question if *some* areas of philosophy appear to survive analogy to certain domains, while other areas of philosophy can only be analogized to *other* domains. For instance, I've argued in this paper that even if (per Ryberg's arguments) expertise in moral philosophy cannot be effectively analogized to expertise in mathematics, analogy to expertise in areas like physics or medicine is much more effective. Is the same pattern true of other areas of philosophy? Perhaps not. Consider intuitions about modality in metaphysics, or Newcomb's problem in epistemology. These are relatively obscure problems, and it is often the case that novices are unable to appreciate what is at stake, or even to form stable intuitive reactions to test cases. Perhaps, then,

¹⁴ See note 4, above, for citations to work pursuing this direct, empirical challenge. For further discussion of the 'burden of proof' issue, see Williamson (2011), Alexander (2012) and Williamson (2013).

certain questions in metaphysics and epistemology *do* meet Ryberg's 'causality condition': it is the case the experts possess a capacity for forming intuitive judgments about cases which is lacking in novices. Hence, it might be claimed that expertise in metaphysics and epistemology *can* survive analogy to expertise in domains like mathematics – though of course much more would need to be said to substantiate such a claim.¹⁵

Here is not the place to take a firm position on the extremely wide issue of whether various domains of philosophy can or cannot be effectively analogized to various fields. For the moment, I am merely raising a speculative possibility, for further research. If we want to understand how different sorts of philosophical intuition relate to one another – whether or not the unity of intuition holds in philosophy – then it may prove helpful to see how the analogy strategy fares for various combinations of philosophical sub-disciplines and other expertise domains.

Finally, we should consider how the conclusions of this paper bear on our understanding of the moral domain itself. I have granted Ryberg's conclusion that moral expertise is not like mathematical or chess expertise in certain ways, but I have argued that it *does* resemble physical, medical, or legal expertise in those ways. Assuming all of this is right, what can that tell us about the nature of morality?

To address this question, we should look for common features among the domains we have compared. Here are some possibilities: mathematics and chess are *formal systems*; they centrally involve *deductive* inferences; assessment of particular decisions can be made on *a priori* grounds. In contrast, physics, medicine and law are (in some ways at least) *empirical systems*; they centrally involve

¹⁵ In particular, we would need to return to Ryberg's 'quality' condition. Can intuitive judgments in metaphysics and epistemology be quality-assessed by means other than the intuitive capacity itself? This is a very difficult matter, too vast to be tackled here. (See Williamson 2007 and Cappelen 2012 for relevant considerations.) In any case, it would certainly be interesting to compare Ryberg's treatment of moral intuition to these discussions.

inductive inferences; assessment of particular decisions requires some *a posteriori* investigation.¹⁶ Given these observations, it is perhaps surprising that the moral domain should turn out to resemble the latter group. Many philosophers have long insisted that morality is a formal, deductive, and/or a priori discipline.¹⁷

But there is another philosophical tradition, one which sees moral inquiry as importantly resembling certain forms of empirical discovery. On views of this sort, traceable to Aristotle, moral knowledge is a form of practical wisdom, acquired through experience and reflection. On some versions, the moral domain is understood as (in part) an extension of empirical science, as per John Dewey: “A morals based on study of human nature instead of upon disregard for it would find the facts of man coterminous with those of the rest of nature and would thereby ally ethics with physics and biology.”¹⁸

The disagreement between a priori and experiential traditions in moral philosophy is ancient and vast, and I will not say anything conclusive about it here. But it is worth considering the arguments of this paper in light of that far more grand debate. If Ryberg is right to claim that moral expertise cannot be effectively analogized to a priori, formalist disciplines like mathematics, and if I am right to

¹⁶ The claim that judgment in the legal domain is empirical, inductive or a posteriori might very well be challenged. Certainly some aspects of legal reasoning (such as constitutional interpretation) have elements of formal reasoning. But other aspects (such as applying precedent) can be understood on empirical models. In any event, participants in debates about the nature of jurisprudence, like those in metaethical debates, might wish to consider counterparts of Ryberg’s arguments.

¹⁷ Kant (1785) and Sidgwick (1907) are classic sources of this view. More recent defenders include Nagel (1978), Singer (1981) and Dworkin (1996). Nagel explicitly cites the mathematics analogy as a reason to affirm the a prioricity of moral philosophy: “someone who abandons or qualifies his basic methods of moral reasoning on historical or anthropological grounds alone is nearly as irrational as someone who abandons a mathematical belief on other than mathematical grounds...” (Nagel 1997, 105).

¹⁸ (Dewey 1922/1957: 12-13). For a historical sketch and extensive development of the experiential tradition, see Flanagan (1993). Other philosophers I have in mind here include (in quite different ways and extents) Baier (1985), Williams (1985), Nussbaum (2003), and Kitcher (2011).

claim that it *may* still be analogized to empirical, inductive disciplines like physics or medicine, this seems to be a point in favour of the experiential tradition. That is, if moral expertise is more like physical or medical expertise than like mathematical expertise, there are likely to be other ways in which morality more closely resembles physics or medicine than it does mathematics.

The aim of this paper has been broadly defensive: I have defended the analogy strategy against challenges raised by Ryberg. This defensive orientation is appropriate, perhaps necessary, given the broader dialectical situation; the analogy strategy is, after all, adjoined to the expertise *defence*. But I have aimed to also reach beyond a merely defensive set of points. Although I claim that the analogy strategy survives the current challenges, I have also tried to show that the ways in which it may seem to fail are instructive – not just to the psychology and philosophy of moral intuition, but ultimately to the study of morality itself.¹⁹

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