

INTUITIONS AS INVITATIONS*

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ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been a great deal of skepticism about appeals to intuitions in philosophy. Appeals to intuition often get expressed in the form of what 'we' believe. Many people take the 'we' in this context to refer to what the folk believe. So the claim about what we believe is an empirical claim. And it looks like the support for this claim comes from a biased sample consisting solely of analytic philosophers. In this paper I want to explain a different way appeals to intuition are used in the literature and why it survives such attacks. The basic idea, which comes from Bernard Williams, is that the 'we' used in many appeals to intuitions is not a referring expression at all. The appeal to intuition is not a claim about what any group of individuals believes. Rather it is an invitation to make a judgment. I argue that when you hear a philosopher say 'P is what we intuitively believe' the proper response is not 'who is this 'we'?' The proper response is to wonder whether one ought to accept P.

Keywords: *intuition, experimental philosophy, Bernard Williams*

1. Who is this “we”?

Recently, there has been a great deal of skepticism about appeals to intuitions in philosophy. Appeals to intuition often get expressed in the form of what ‘we’ believe. Many people take the ‘we’ in this context to refer to what the folk believe or what the folk would believe upon (suitably qualified) reflection. So the claim about what we believe is an empirical claim. And it looks like the support for this claim comes from a biased sample consisting solely of analytic philosophers. This leads Weinberg, Nichols, and Stich to tell us that “the best reaction to the High-SES, Western philosophy professor who tries to draw normative conclusions from the facts about ‘our’ intuitions is to ask: What do you mean by ‘we’?” (2001: 455). Likewise, Bishop and Trout tells us that in standard analytic epistemology (SAE) the theories we get “merely tell us how we do make epistemic judgments (and by ‘we’, we mean the tiny fraction of the world’s population who has studied SAE)” (2005: 110). The skeptics can also point out the empirical tests that have been done show a high degree of instability and variability in what the folk intuitively believe. Hence, appeals to intuition are highly suspect and ought to be avoided.

In this paper I want to explain one common way appeals to intuition are used in the literature and why it survives such attacks. The basic idea, which comes from Bernard Williams, is that the ‘we’ used in many appeals to intuitions is not a referring expression at all. The appeal to intuition is not a claim about what any group of individuals believes. Rather it is an invitation to make a judgment. Here is how Williams expresses the point in a footnote to *Shame and Necessity*.

More than one friend, in reading this book in an earlier version, has asked who this ubiquitous “we” represents ... I hope it means more than people who already think as I do. The best I can say is that “we” operates not through a previously fixed designation, but through invitation. (The same is true, I believe, of “we” in much philosophy, and particularly in ethics.) It is not a matter of “I” telling “you” what I and others think, but of my asking you to consider to what extent you and I think some things and perhaps need to think others. (1993: 171).

On this reading, when philosophers say ‘we’ believe that P they are not saying anything about what a group believes. Rather it is an invitation to think through a possibility and make a judgment that P. It also seems to express a kind of confidence that audience will accept the invitation because P is very plausible and hard to deny. It expresses a kind of optimism that P will fit particularly well with judgments about similar cases and rejection of P will fit poorly. So, on this interpretation of the claim that ‘P is intuitive’ or ‘what we believe’, the phrase expresses an invitation to think through some possibility and judge that P. It also typically implies that P is very plausible and expresses optimism that

audience will accept it. So it is natural for the author to go on as if it is now common ground. However, on this interpretation of appeal to intuition, it is only the invitation that is essential.

In this paper I defend Williams' account of the way 'we' works in some philosophical debates. I defend it as a way to understand many, though certainly not all, appeals to intuition in the literature. I argue for three claims. The first is that if we accept this account of what philosophers mean by saying that P is intuitive, the skeptical argument does not get off the ground. The second is that there are some very good reasons to read appeals to intuition in this way. And finally there appears to be nothing epistemically suspect about such appeals.

So we are attacking the claim that when philosophers claim that 'P is intuitive' they are making an empirical claim about what individuals believe that could be studied by the methods of empirical science. Arguably, this is one of the fundamental assumptions of experimental philosophy. Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007) claims it is. They write, "there is a shared distrust of philosophers' (common) claims of the general form 'X is intuitive' ... These are claims philosophers usually make based upon armchair reflection ... But these methods of determining what is widely accepted seem highly susceptible to well-known biases." (2007: 125). Here they are claiming that the intuitive is just what is widely accepted. I hope to show that this is not true for many interesting uses of 'intuitive' and associated terms. I should note though that I do not take this paper as an attack on all experimental philosophy because I do not agree with Nadelhoffer and Nahmias that the claim above is a fundamental assumption. There are a number of different projects that fall under the heading of experimental philosophy and it seems to me some of it can stand without this assumption. Knobe (2006) seems a clear case. In fact, other work by Nadelhoffer and Nahmias with colleagues, I have in mind Nahmias, Morris, Nadelhoffer and Turner (2006), does not seem to need it.¹ But I won't make that case here. The only goal is to show that in some cases asking whom this 'we' refers to is misplaced. It is to take one's eye off the ball.

¹ There they challenge the claim that incompatibilism is part of common sense and therefore the burden of proof is on the compatibilist.

2. Why Skepticism about Intuition Misses the Mark

The skeptic attacks appeals to intuition because they take such an appeal to be making a claim about what most people believe. They take it to be a prediction about how people are likely to respond to cases. Empirical tests can be performed to see if people do make those judgments. The tests that have been done seem to show that many people do not make the relevant judgments.²

However, if we understand the function of 'we' in the way described by Williams, it cannot be tested in such a way. A philosopher making such an appeal is not making a claim about any set of individuals. Instead, he is inviting one to make a judgment. Hence, showing that some set of individuals does not find the claim intuitive simply misses the mark. What such a philosopher is saying when he says that P is intuitive is that he finds P to be the thing to think on the matter. Indeed, he is confident his audience will as well. So he invites them to do so. How would such an invitation be shown to be illegitimate? We will return to this issue below. However, since no claim about the folk is being made, it seems that a survey of the folk is philosophically irrelevant.

On this understanding of appeals to intuition the fact that P is intuitive is not doing any special work. 'P is intuitive' invites one to judge that P, while expressing the expectation that the audience will do so.³ Hence, the question is whether to accept the invitation or not. That is, we must think through the case and make some judgment about P. Of course, in many philosophical debates there will not be universal agreement about what to think about P upon reflection. And, as Weatherson (2003) argues, even if P is a counterexample to some theory that may not mean we need to reject the theory. All of this will depend on the details of the theory and the case at hand. I will not offer any guidelines about that here. Yet, it is important to see that often no claim whatsoever is being made about what the folk believe. To ask who believes that P is to ask the wrong question, one should focus on whether one ought to believe that P.

² Swain, S., Alexander, J., and J. Weinberg (2008), Weinberg, J, Nichols, S. and Stich, S. (2001), and Machery, E. Mallon, R., Nichols, S. and S. Stich (2004) all use this basic argument.

³ I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me on this point.

3. Is This the Right Way to Read Appeals to Intuition?

It must be admitted that not all appeals to intuition are plausibly read as invitations. Many philosophers mean by 'intuition' as special sort of *a priori* evidence that has various features. Bealer (1999) is a prime example. Roughly, Bealer claims that intuition is a distinct propositional attitude produced by reason in which some claim seems to be a necessary truth.⁴ The line taken up here is not open to Bealer or like-minded philosophers.⁵

Whether or not there are intuitions in the sense that Bealer describes is a very important epistemological issue. Yet, not every appeal to intuition in the philosophical literature should be understood to be invoking such states. This is because many people who are not rationalists still sometimes appeal to intuitions. For instance, I am a moral sentimentalist who rejects moral rationalism. Yet, I am perfectly happy to appeal to intuitions in teaching normative moral theory. I am certainly not claiming any access to a moral truth revealed by reason. I expect the same is true of a fair number of other philosophers. Many expressivists, error theorists, and fictionalists have said that 'intuitively it seems like' when explaining trolley cases to students. Because of this there must be a broader sense of intuition at play in philosophical discussion than the one employed by Bealer.

More generally, there are philosophers who are skeptical that the sorts of mental states described by Bealer actually exist. Yet this does not preclude them from ever saying something is intuitive. It would be surprising to find that all philosophers who use the expression 'that is intuitive' are thereby committed to some strong form of rationalism. With the exception of some experimental philosophers and other proponents of very strong versions of methodological naturalism, almost all philosophers appeal to intuition at some point. These appeals occur in all sorts of debates. It seems unlikely that all these philosophers are committed to the same very controversial positions in metaphysics and epistemology. Because of this it seems clear that some philosophers appeal to intuitions in ways much looser than the way Bealer describes.

Cappelen (2012) argues that philosophers do not appeal to intuitions because he does not find that philosophers standardly appeal to intuitions

⁴ Bealer's position is complex and interesting. To be clear, nothing I say here counts against his account. I do not dwell on the details because I only aim to show it is not the only sort of intuition at play in philosophy.

⁵ Ernest Sosa is another prominent defender; I am not sure to what extent he would agree with the account of intuition on offer. Sosa (2007) says that "to intuit that *p* is to be attracted to assent simply though entertaining that representational content" (101). That might simply amount to the claim that *p* is very plausible and hard to deny coupled with expectation that other will think so as well. But I will not try to settle that matter here.

in something like Bealer's sense. To do so he has to argue that many philosophers are mistaken about their own practice and have false metaphilosophical views. It seems to me that a better option is to adopt a more liberal interpretation what philosophers mean by 'intuitive'. Note that this is partly an empirical question about best way to interpret appeals to intuition in the practice of philosophy. So it can only be answered by doing a fair amount of descriptive metaphilosophy. Cappelen (2012) does an admirable job of that. Here I only consider two famous cases. Mostly though I offer intuitions as invitations as another way to understand intuitions because we need to define some alternatives to choose from before asking what fits best with standard philosophical practice. One lesson from experimental philosophy is that we are often not very clear about what we mean by 'intuitive'. We need a better understanding of how appeals to intuition function in the philosophy.

What reason though do we have to read appeals to intuitions as invitations? The first set of considerations comes from analyzing philosophical practice. Consider what you do when you teach your favorite thought experiment designed to elicit an intuition. If some students do not find it intuitive, what do you do? Perhaps, you throw up your hands and say 'I guess it is not intuitive after all'. Or you might judge that they are not capable of latching on to some *a priori* truths. However, what some philosophers do is ask them for their reasons. They might not have much to say. Undergrads do not always cherish the Socratic method. Nevertheless, it seems like this is an opportunity for philosophizing. A professor might try to convince the student that something else he believes entails it or that he makes different judgments in analogous cases. For instance, many of my students do not have the semantic externalism intuition that one tries to elicit with the Twin Earth thought experiment. So I describe a case where a family owns a dog they call 'Spot'. However, Spot is a twin and another family owns his twin and they call him 'Spot'. Now imagine both dogs get loose at the park and each family calls out 'Spot!' Are those families referring to the same dog? Here almost all my students have the intuition that meaning is not in the head and we can begin to talk about how the cases differ. This seems like common practice in philosophy. It seems to me what I am doing is trying to make the invitation more enticing. This is just what the intuition as invitations account would predict one would do.

Likewise, it seems to me that intuition as invitations is the most charitable way to read some philosophers. One reason for this is that some philosophers would see it as simply beside the point that the folk do not assent to what they find intuitive.⁶ Perhaps, some philosophers think,

⁶ Of course, many might take it very seriously. All I am claiming is that not all appeals to intuition are claims about what the folk believe. That is compatible with some being about the folk.

or hope, that they could convince a fair number of the folk if the folk were inclined to listen to philosophical explanations. But a fair number of philosophers would see a survey of the opinion of the folk as utterly irrelevant to their claims. Of course, they may be mistaken about this. But the question at issue now is what *they intend* to be claiming, not whether that claim is true or false. The fact that they would explicitly deny that they are making some claim about some population is surely good grounds for thinking that they are not. The appeal to intuition as invitation proposal allows us to take them at their word and still see them doing something philosophically interesting.

Now we turn to an examination of two famous cases to see if they fit our hypothesis. Epistemologists often talk about intuitions in Gettier cases and many philosophers would point to that argument as a prime example of an appeal to intuition. Let us suppose that it is a paradigm case of an appeal to intuition. But, as Cappelen (2012) noted, nowhere in the original paper does Gettier mention anything about intuitions. He does not claim that his counterexamples produce intuitions or are intuitively compelling. Rather he says things like “it is equally clear that Smith does not know” and “these two examples show that” in arguing against knowledge as justified true belief (1963:121-123). Given that Gettier says nothing about intuition, why do some many philosophers take it be a paradigm case of appealing to intuition? Well, Gettier does seem to invite us to share a judgment with him. He also seems to express confidence that his readers will accept once they think through it. Now if those are the reasons why philosophers see this as an appeal to intuition, then that supports the intuitions as invitations account.

Moreover, I see no reason to think that Gettier is committed to anything about what the folk believe. That is, it seems that we could drop the sentence ‘of course, the folk do not realize this’ into his argument without contradiction. In fact, it would not make the paper any harder to interpret or understand. We would simply assume he is a bit of an intellectual snob about the folk. But, if we dropped the sentence ‘these claims are not very plausible and are not hard to deny’ his position would be much less clear. How could these cases show anything if they were not, at the least, very plausible? For these reasons, it seems to me if you think of Gettier’s argument as a prime example of an appeal to intuition, then you should think that some appeals to intuition function as invitations.

Now Gettier never directly engages in any speech act that can be described as an invitation. Nevertheless, his example is compatible with the hypothesis. Thomson (1971) case of the unconscious violinist does on my reading clearly invite a judgment. Thomson describes that case and then asks you what you would think if the doctor told you that you could not unplug from the violinist. She says “I imagine you would regard this as outrageous” (1971: 49).

Now this ‘imagine’ might be read as a prediction. Then she would be making a claim about how readers are likely to judge. But this strikes me as implausible. Thomson knows there is entrenched disagreement about the moral permissibility of abortion and that the folk rarely change their mind on such issues. She knows she is defending a position that many people reject and I don’t think we should assume that she believes she can change most people’s mind with one example. She knows that some of the folk will instead judge that she is morally depraved for being pro-choice. We should not paint Thomson as outrageously optimistic about the power of philosophical arguments to change society.

Instead it is more plausible to read this ‘imagine’ as a way of confidently making an invitation. It is like a bartender who sees a patron looking over a list of what is on tap and saying ‘I imagine you would like a beer’. And that is a way of inviting the patron to order a beer. On this reading Thomson is just inviting the reader to make the same judgments she does about the case. Which is a perfectly sensible thing to do in the course of a philosophy paper.

4. Are Such Appeals Legitimate?

Now we come to the real question. Are such appeals to intuition ever legitimate? Well, in certain contexts such appeals are epistemically unproblematic. When teaching a proof in a logic course it can be natural to say something along the lines of ‘by modus ponens we get the conclusion that’. The ‘we’ here functions much like the ‘we’ in our appeals to intuition. It is not making a claim about the mental states of our students; they might not be paying any attention. Rather it is inviting the students to think through the proof and come to the same judgment. Such expressions are also natural when teaching mathematics to children. A parent might say ‘when we carry the 1 we see that the answer is 522’. We express such confidence in these invitations because there is only one way to think on the matter. We are sure when the student or child takes their time to form a judgment they will reach the same conclusion.

With this background, it is easy to see the worry skeptics have about appeals to intuition. The argument is that the expression of confidence associated with appeals to intuition is inappropriate because there are entrenched disagreements in philosophical disputes. Philosophical questions in metaphysics and epistemology are not like the questions in mathematics and logic. There is almost always more than one way to think about the issue.

If this objection relies on the claim that appeals to intuition are only permissible where there is universal agreement on the content of the intuition, then it is not very persuasive. That standard is too high.

We might reasonably offer P as evidence for some claim even if not everyone accepts P. One might take it that the question now is how much agreement must there be before we can legitimately make an appeal to intuition? That seems to me to be the wrong question. We should evaluate the content of the intuition, not whether other people accept it. After we make a judgment we might need to assess the epistemic weight of disagreement. But that is a separate issue. First we need to decide to accept the invitation to make the judgment or not. And that depends on how reasonable we find it.

We should also note that appeals to intuition might not be intended to convince everyone. They might sometimes simply serve to signal common ground in a debate. If our disagreement runs so deep that we share no premises, there is simply no hope of shedding any light on a problem. Appeals to intuition can serve as useful shorthand for signaling that common ground. It signals that there are some judgments about cases that need to be accepted by a theory or explained away. They cannot be ignored. It tells one's interlocutors that 'if you reject that claim I am not really sure how we can proceed'.

Here the skeptic is likely to point out that appeals to intuition do not play such a limited role in the philosophical literature. That is true and I would not want to defend every appeal to intuition in the literature as legitimate or philosophically interesting. Yet, even in more contested cases appeals to intuition might be permissible. It places a burden on one's opponent to explain why some philosophers think that claim is so attractive. The strength of such appeals will depend on what is supposedly intuitive. If the invitation is not inviting, then the appeal will carry no weight. This is how it should be. We should assess the appeal to intuition based on the content of the claim, not on the fact that it is supposedly intuitive.

Other experimental philosophers may object that I have misrepresented their position.⁷ They present the restrictionist challenge. They claim that intuitive judgments have shown to be effected by a number of irrelevant factors. Hence, they should be restricted from counting as evidence. Alexander and Weinberg (2006) present the worry in this way "proponents of the restrictionist view argue that empirical research into the nature of intuitions generated in response to thought experiments, rather than supporting the use of intuitions as evidence, challenges the suitability of intuitions to function in any evidentiary role" (62-63). So it is not that we misrepresent the folk, but that intuitive judgments are not reliable. We need empirical evidence that intuition judgments are reliable.

This challenge assumes there is a special sort of judgment or mental state that is at issue. And that is a fair assumption given the way many philosophers have defended intuitions. But the intuitions as invitations

⁷ I thank an anonymous referee for presenting this objection.

proposal does not make that assumption. The judgment one is invited to make need not be pre-theoretical or considered. It need not be robust or quick. It has no special phenomenological component at all. It is only a philosophical judgment. That does not mean it is special or privileged in any epistemic sense. Only that it is indispensable to philosophical practice. One cannot do philosophy without philosophical judgment. There is no way to restrict philosophical judgments from philosophical practice.

Here the restrictionist may reply that just because philosophical judgments are essential to philosophy does not show they are justified. Weinberg and Alexander (2014) argue that those who wish to stick with intuitions face a dilemma. Either one must defend a thin conception or a thick conception of intuitions. In a thin conception, the mental states in questions have no distinctive traits. In a thick conception, for a mental state to be an intuition it must meet certain conditions. As should be clear, I favor a thin conception of intuitions. Weinberg and Alexander claim that this approach comes “at the cost of *evidential diversity*” (italics in original. 2014: 190). That is, not all intuitions should be given the same weight and we need some way to distinguish between the good from the bad. Moreover, the empirical work on philosophical judgments show that these judgments are problematically sensitive to matters that are irrelevant to the matter at hand. So the restrictionist challenge stands.

One response to this challenge is to claim that we separate the good intuitions from the bad ones by doing philosophy. There is no evidential standard based on different types of mental states. Instead they are based on the content of the mental state and the quality of the argument. The quality of the judgment determines how strongly we should weigh it in deliberation. If some one invites us to judge that P, we have to decide whether we think P is true or not. That requires using philosophical judgment. Here the restrictionist will point to the experiments and say we cannot trust philosophical judgment given the data we have. They claim it is incumbent on the defender of intuition to explain why philosophical judgments of philosophers are immune to problems of the philosophical judgments of the folk. And that requires a thick conception of intuition to distinguish some philosophical judgments from others.

Weinberg and Alexander lay out three conditions that any thick account needs to meet. They are:

The Immunity Condition: “genuine philosophical intuitions are not themselves susceptible, to any worrisome degree, to the sorts of problematic effects that form the basis of the restrictionist challenge” (2014: 195)

The Hippocracity Condition: the constraints on philosophical practices must “do no harm to those practices” (196)

The Manifestability Condition: the factors “need to be *detectable*, and not just in principle or theory, but in practice and-most of all- from the armchair.” (196)

Now I will argue that much of current philosophical practice, as understood on the intuitions as invitations model, meets all three conditions.

Experimental philosophers often lament the use of the armchair in philosophy. I take that as short hand for the fact that philosophical methods are non-empirical. One just sits in an armchair and thinks about some case. And that is exactly what they ask subjects in their experiments to do. Here I want to argue there are a number of epistemically relevant differences between asking the folk for judgments and actual philosophical practice. There is much more to the practice of philosophy than thinking alone in an armchair. I will describe my own case, but what I say roughly applies to ever working philosopher I know.

At the outset, I get an idea that I find compelling. I will think about it quite a lot before I share it with anyone else. Eventually, I find a friend to share it with and I ask them what they think. They almost always offer constructive criticism. They say things like ‘what about this similar case’ or ‘try describing it in this way’ or ‘does it matter that it is a man in the example’. I trust you have had enough philosophical conversations that you could go on expanding that disjunction in countless way. These discussions are often repeated until I see my friend give me the ‘oh no, not again’ look, as one receives from pushing a friend’s patience too far. It should be noted that I often do this to more than one friend. After all that, I begin writing. Again I seek comments from people I trust. They are often critical and suggest various changes. I rewrite trying to address these worries. Next, I try to present at conferences. I invite my audience to judge that P and a commentator usually does everything she can to discourage the audience from accepting that invitation. Hopefully, I have productive discussion with strangers or acquaintances after the presentation. Again, I rethink and rewrite. Finally, I submit to a journal in order to pass peer review. Often papers are rejected with substantial comments. Again, there is rethinking and rewriting. Sometimes this involves reconsiderations of the most fundamental claims. This whole process typically takes years. I get feedback from dozens of very intelligent people who consider the case in a wide variety of circumstances. If the idea ever sees the light of day in a journal, it has passed a test of critical reflections by me, some of my friends, some strangers and at least a few expert anonymous reviewers. Think about how different this process is from asking random groups of people to make judgments based on reading a passage. The only similarity is that they are thinking about the same case.

This process clearly meets the manifestability condition. We all have had the experience of an idea we like failing at any of the previously mentioned stages. Immunity is a bit harder to establish conclusively. But it should be noted that my interlocutors and I consider that case in a variety of different circumstances. The way it is presented changes. The order that it is presented differs throughout the process. The mood of the audience fluctuates. What my audience thinks about before they think about my case varies. Of course, most philosophers do not systematically vary these factors. However, given the length at which these cases are deliberated and argued about there is good reason to think these judgments are immune to the factors we find present in the studies of experimental philosophy. Hence, I remain optimistic that group judgments made after careful and long deliberation by dozens of experts are immune to many of the foibles of individual judgments of non-experts who consider the case briefly.

The Hippocracity condition is probably the hardest to establish. How can we rule out the possibility that philosophical training and debate somehow harm our ability to make judgments? We need to remind ourselves that mere possibilities are not enough to raise the worries experimental philosopher aim to realize. There needs to be a real hypothesis that has some significant probability of being true. The most likely candidate is that those who engage in this practice are a biased sample. Perhaps trading in intuitions is merely self-congratulatory backslapping that enforces in-group ways of thinking. There is a possibility that people with conflicting intuitions are not part of the profession.

Maybe we need a more representative sample. This is an important concern.

It is certainly true that philosophy needs more diversity. It would be a very good to recruit and train more women, people of color and people of different socio-economic backgrounds. But the claim that we need more diversity of judgment is less plausible. In fact, it is very surprising to see the claim that philosophy suffers from some kind of problem of homogeneity of judgment or coerced agreement. One sure way to get noticed in the field is to offer an interesting argument for some highly unpopular view. Individuality and novelty is prized, not squashed. It is also an often-lamented fact that philosophers disagree about almost everything. Almost every position has an advocate. So given the incredible diversity of views defended it is difficult to believe that the discipline suffers from some kind forced intuition conformity.

Perhaps, the thought is that we need the diversity that comes from including people of different levels of philosophical training. Professional philosophers are a non-random group, but there is good reason to focus on that biased sample. They have been trained to do philosophy.

By that I just mean they are qualified to teach an introduction to logic or critical thinking course that most people could not do. They know what necessary and sufficient conditions are. They understand validity. They know what counts as a counterexample to a generalization. They also know many of the most common fallacies that people commit. People untrained in philosophy do not know that. They are more likely to fall into simple confusions that philosophers are better at avoiding. In general, the thinking of philosophers is clearer. This does mean that they have privileged access to the nature of knowledge or reference, but it does mean they are less likely to be lead astray by irrelevancies. Extensive philosophical training makes one well qualified to decide whether to accept some philosophical judgment.

I can see no other potential harm that is likely to corrupt philosophical judgment. So I take that the Hippocracity condition has been met. And with that there is good reason to think actual philosophical practice meets the challenge that the restrictionist sets for it.

5. Conclusion

This paper has *not* argued that the skeptical argument misses the mark on all appeals to intuition in literature. Nor has it argued that philosophers can rest comfortably in the armchair ignoring science or experimental philosophy. What it has argued is that in many cases when you hear a philosopher say “P is what we intuitively believe’ the proper response is not ‘who is this ‘we’?” The proper response is to wonder whether one ought to accept P.

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