

Précis of *Philosophy without Intuitions*

Replies to Weatherson, Chalmers, Weinberg, and Bengson

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Précis of *Philosophy without Intuitions*

Philosophy without Intuitions (hereafter, ‘PWI’) is in many ways a simple book. It has a simple guiding question:

Guiding Question (GQ). Is it characteristic of philosophers that they rely on intuitions as evidence?

The central thesis of the book is also simple: *the answer to GQ is ‘No’*. A corollary is that all the work that assumes a positive answer, e.g. experimental philosophy and what I call ‘methodological rationalism’, is based on a false assumption.

For those familiar with the last 30 years of metaphilosophical debates, it should be easy to see the importance of the answer to GQ. A shared assumption among practically all participants in those debates is that the answer to GQ is ‘Yes’ (I call that thesis ‘Centrality’). However, *no one* has *ever* presented a detailed case for Centrality. I mean this literally: not even a page is devoted to setting out a careful case for a positive answer—it’s just assumed that the answer is ‘Yes’.¹ This is a bizarre state of affairs. If someone proposed that philosophers tend to eat carrots while writing about thought experiments (and then went on to investigate the possibly insidious or positive effects of carrot-eating on contemporary philosophy), we wouldn’t even pay attention unless careful evidence was presented. A proponent of this proposal would have to investigate the eating habits of philosophers. One simple aim of PWI was to encourage those interested in metaphilosophy to engage in empirical work: to empirically investigate whether it’s true that philosophers do

¹ It is also an historical aberration. Prior to roughly 1970, leading metaphilosophers would have been very surprised to hear that their work relied on intuitions as evidence. This wasn’t the view of Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, or Davidson. So proponents of Centrality can’t claim that they were

something properly labeled ‘rely on intuitions as evidence’. To engage in that work, you need at a minimum to do three things:

- (i) Tell us what intuitions are;
- (ii) Tell us what it is to rely on intuitions as evidence; and
- (iii) Tell us how you found out that philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence: i.e. what part of philosophical practice you investigated.

Metaphilosophers sometimes tell us about (i) and (ii), but never put serious work into (iii).

Before saying more about the content of PWI, a brief big-picture remark: if one effect of PWI is that philosophers who endorse Centrality start focusing on (iii), that alone would be immense progress. More generally, many metaphilosophical claims are empirical claims about how a group of people (those who call themselves ‘philosophers’) goes about doing something (what they call ‘philosophy’). To find out how people do something, you have to study their actions. So a very big-picture goal of PWI is the encouragement of a practice-centered metaphilosophy.²

PWI’s strategy for answering GQ is also simple. I consider two basic forms of argument for the view that philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence. In Part One I consider the view that philosophers’ use of ‘intuition’-vocabulary provides evidence for reliance on intuitions as evidence. Roughly speaking, the view I consider is that the way people use ‘intuitive’ in texts shows that Centrality is true. This part of the book contains detailed discussions of how ‘intuitive’ is used in philosophical texts and I conclude that the term isn’t used to denote a source of evidence. It is worth highlighting that the issue of how ‘intuitive’ is used is an empirical one. One needs to look in careful detail at a wide range of sentences and passages where the relevant terms are used and then propose interpretations.

Part Two of PWI explores the view that Centrality is established not by how philosophers speak, but by how they argue and judge. The intuitive kind of judging can be prevalent among philosophers even if it isn’t accompanied by ‘intuition’-talk (much like we can rely on vision as evidence even when we don’t use words like ‘sees’). Part Two of PWI has a big-picture simplicity to it: I develop a set of diagnostics for when someone is judging intuitively, then look for evidence that such judging takes place in the relevant kind of texts. I find no such evidence and so conclude that this second strategy for defending Centrality also fails.

While the overall strategy of Part Two is simple, the details are extraordinarily messy. I think that’s in the nature of this kind of investigation. There are three sources of messiness. First, it is impossible to pick diagnostics that all (or even a majority of)

² That of course is not all metaphilosophers should do: we should also make normative claims, but even those often presuppose descriptive assumptions.

the participants in the debate will agree on. Second, the selection of texts³ to be investigated will be controversial. Third, having settled on a set of diagnostics and texts, determining what to say about a particular text is very difficult—requiring detailed interpretative work. Here’s a brief overview of how I approached these three problems: I chose a very weak set of diagnostics (see PWI, chapter 7). I operated with the *disjunction* of three features that are mentioned by most intuition-theorists. I chose case studies that are widely claimed to be paradigms of intuition-based philosophy from a wide range of philosophical disciplines (see chapter 8). When it comes to applying the diagnostics to particular texts, there’s no simple methodology. I basically just read carefully and then improvised.

One point about my procedure in Part II is worth highlighting: in several of the responses to PWI, one of the diagnostics I appeal to, ‘Rock’, have come under particular scrutiny. This is the idea that intuitive judgments justify, but need no justification. They have a kind of default justificatory status. When writing PWI, I always assumed that many of those inclined to defend Centrality would respond in three steps: (i) first, they would use *only* Rock to characterize the intuitive (even though no one who has ever written on intuitions before PWI did that—the characterization is always richer, including at least one of the other diagnostics), (ii) then they would make Rock very difficult to detect—they would give some extremely vague (or purely negative) characterization and make sure not to say anything about how to actually go about discovering the presence of this feature in a particular text, and finally, (iii) they would point out that PWI doesn’t prove the absence of this (obscure, impossible to discover) feature.

This kind of reply not only fails to engage with PWI, but more generally fails to take seriously the task at hand. I think it would be real progress to find improved diagnostics that would help us determine whether in a particular text we can find a reliance on the intuitive. What is not helpful is a watering down of the intuitive to something entirely mysterious, undetectable, and largely pointless, and then insist that no one can prove its absence.

In closing, I’ll offer some brief remarks about why these topics should be of interest even to philosophers who don’t work specifically on metaphilosophy. What we philosophers think about philosophy affects how we philosophize. The caricature of philosophy as resting on a foundation of spontaneous flashes of insight (or however you choose to spell out the intuitive) misleads us about what the core of philosophy is and is responsible for institutional and professional prejudices (see e.g. Weatherson, this vol.). Maybe most strikingly, this false metaphilosophical belief is singlehandedly responsible for the birth of an entire sub-discipline of philosophy—experimental philosophy—devoted to the study of so-called ‘intuition’. This has had an insidious

³ Even the choice of focusing on written texts over spoken philosophy (e.g. Q&A sessions) is non-trivial.

effect even on those who are not experimental philosophers. It has, for example, made many philosophers think that they need to do something they call ‘explaining away intuitions’. If I am right, that kind of activity is a waste of time and should have no place in serious philosophy. So the worry isn’t just that a few metaphilosophers have some false beliefs about how philosophy is practiced. False metaphilosophical beliefs impact the practice of first-order philosophy in many, often unpredictable ways.

Reply to Critics

The replies in this symposium are some of the most insightful contributions to contemporary metaphilosophy I have read. I wish I had seen them before I wrote PWI. It would have made it a better book. I also wish I had space to explore all the important issues raised, but unfortunately, the focus here will have to be on points of disagreement. The replies build on each other – I draw on material from the earlier replies in the later ones. It is possible to read each reply in isolation, but they are best read in sequence.

Socratic Knowledge and Its Role in Philosophy

Reply to Brian Weatherson⁴

Weatherson presents one of the most interesting accounts of the role of intuitions in philosophy that I have encountered. For Weatherson, the role is limited, fragile, and elusive (as soon as you even remember them, their argumentative role is shattered!).⁵

⁴ Thanks to Josh Dever and Brian Weatherson for helpful comments and suggestions.

⁵ One of the most interesting ideas in the paper is that “the important intuitions are the ones you barely notice or remember....if you remembered them enough to argue about them (or experimentally test them), the fragility conditions had probably been triggered, and the intuition probably wasn’t doing much argumentative work” (this vol.).

In what follows, I focus on areas of disagreement. In sum: I think what Weatherson calls ‘Socratic knowledge’ is extremely important in philosophy, but my understanding of it differs from Weatherson’s. I don’t think Socratic knowledge is tied (or even interestingly connected) to heuristics, speed or to anything in the neighborhood of the intuitive.

1. Socratic knowledge and its role in philosophy

Weatherson introduces the notion of Socratic knowledge in this way: “It’s interesting that we can expand the common ground, or at least expand the explicit common ground, by introducing claims that most people recognise as true when they hear them. This relies on people having what I’ll call Socratic knowledge” (this vol.). I like the idea of Socratic knowledge, but not all aspects of Weatherson’s account. Here is how I think of it:⁶ we know a lot that we cannot bring to mind at a moment’s notice. One way to describe this phenomenon is to say that we have much tacit knowledge. Rather than give you a theory of tacit knowledge, I’ll give you some examples that will, I hope, make obvious what I have in mind. You know what thousands of people are called and how you can talk about them using their names. If you’re like me, it’ll take a lot of time to recall all (or even just a few) of those names—you don’t have that knowledge on immediate recall. More generally, you have an enormous (probably infinite) amount of knowledge about how to talk about objects, how you have talked about objects in the past, and how others have talked about objects to you. You have tacit knowledge of that kind about many domains: you might never have thought about whether more than 32,184 people live in Belgium, but you know it. You know an enormous amount about how people justify, rationalize and explain their actions, about how we attribute mental states to others, about knowledge ascriptions, and about the rules, norms, and conventions that govern interpersonal behavior. So it goes in many domains of interest to philosophers (and of course also in non-philosophical domains). Three points about this kind of tacit knowledge: (i) It is often mundane knowledge that no one but an extreme skeptic would deny that we have. For example: *I have a daughter called ‘Nora’. I can use that name to talk about her. I have on thousands of occasions used ‘Nora’ to talk about Nora. I have told others that she is called ‘Nora’ and when I’ve done that, they are able to use ‘Nora’ to talk about Nora.* (ii) Making tacit knowledge explicit can be difficult work and when we are made explicitly aware of knowing what we know tacitly, it can come as a surprise. (iii) Putting tacit knowledge together into interesting patterns and generalizing over (or inducting on) can be very difficult. That, I take it, is the kind of process that Weatherson says can result in Socratic knowledge. I’ll use the same term.⁷

⁶ I wish I had made this clearer in PWI: this is what I had in mind when I talked about ‘common ground’ and it is what I was relying on e.g. in the discussion of Thompson’s violinist in section 8.3.3 (and throughout the book).

⁷ The phenomenon described above I take to be fairly non-controversial. Full-blown theories of tacit

2. Tacit and Socratic knowledge in philosophy

The best way to describe the roles of tacit and Socratic knowledge in philosophy is through examples. Kripke's work is a paradigm. Here is Kripke's remark about the name 'Feynman':

Consider Richard Feynman, to whom many of us are able to refer. He is a leading contemporary theoretical physicist. Everyone *here* (I am sure!) can state the contents of one of Feynman's theories so as to differentiate him from Gell-Mann. However, the man in the street, not possessing these abilities, may still use the name 'Feynman'. When asked, he will say: well he's a physicist or something. He may not think this picks out anyone uniquely. Still I think he uses the name 'Feynman' as a name for Feynman. (1980, p. 81)

A normal English speaker who has never thought about this particular case will have sufficient tacit knowledge (of the kind described in the previous section) to have a justified true belief *that the agent in the example uses the name 'Feynman' as a name for Feynman* (call this proposition '*Q*'). Of course, making the justification explicit would be hard (and often pointless) work. But the agent is in a position to know *Q* before having gone through the process of making it all explicit.⁸ Note that this is *not* to say that the fact *that we think (or intuit) that Q is true* is treated as evidence that *Q* is true. Rather, we know a lot about reference and that knowledge puts us in a position to know the truth about the cases Kripke draws our attention to. The justification isn't transparent to us, but that lack of transparency is an entirely mundane phenomenon, not an indication that something called 'an intuition' serves as a source of evidence.

What I just said applies also to beliefs we form about more general principles. Consider this more general thesis, based, with only slight modifications, on passages in *Naming and Necessity* (91):

Someone, let's say, a baby, is born; his parents call him by a certain name. They talk about him to their friends. Other people meet him. Through various sorts of talk the name is spread from link to link as if by a chain. When the name is passed 'from link to link', the receiver of the name must intend when he learns it to use it with the same referent as the man from whom he heard it. The receiver can then use the name to refer to the baby at the beginning of the chain.

You might not have thought about this before reading *Naming and Necessity* (and you might even have endorsed a philosophical theory incompatible with it) but you knew it (or knew enough to come to know it on reflection). What you know (tacitly and explicitly) about language and communication puts you in a position to know it.

Of course, often when we rely on 'Socratic knowledge' we can also give some reasons. When we say that the man on the street refers to Feynman with 'Feynman', and we're asked why, we're not just completely at sea. Maybe we start with an

knowledge will no doubt be controversial, but the points above will, I predict, not be points of contention between more sophisticated theories.

⁸ These points are, I think, common ground between Weatherston and me.

argument from analogy: I know lots of specific cases in which someone refers to someone with a name, and this case seems relevantly analogous to those cases. Of course, filling out all the details of the argument from analogy is enormously complex, and people will probably quickly get lost and baffled if you ask them to do it. But that's exactly the same as in explicit arguments from analogy, so there's no special phenomenon here. Sometimes we can elicit little bits of proto-theory. People say, 'Well, people would blame him for saying false things about Feynman, so he must be talking about Feynman when he says "Feynman"'. Again, at best partial and weak arguments will come to us in this way, but again that's how it is with most explicit theorizing. Once we see that the bits of 'Socratic knowledge' are often backed up by little pieces of argumentation, we then realize that we can do some evaluation of the epistemic weight of the bits of Socratic knowledge. We don't have to take them to be oracular dictates of some mysterious faculty, but conclusions of pieces of reasoning. So we can push back against the judgments in the Feynman case by pointing out disanalogies to other cases of naming, by arguing that blame doesn't track semantics (and so, 'we wouldn't blame him...' is irrelevant), etc.

After reading the case studies in PWI, many readers ask: *if we don't base case-judgments on intuitions, then how can the beliefs we have about them be justified?* Many readers find it unsatisfactory that I don't give a general answer to this kind of question. They find what I say vague and inconclusive. I still don't have a general answer (or think one should be given), but I took it to be obvious that in many cases the justification is Socratic in the sense sketched above, often mixed up with little bits of explicit reasoning.⁹

3. Why tacit and Socratic knowledge have nothing to do with intuitions

The notion of the intuitive is obscure and the term 'intuition' is used in many different ways in philosophy and other disciplines. Despite that, I know of no usage of 'intuitive' that would make appeals to tacit knowledge of the kind described above intuitive. Keep in mind: it is *not accompanied by any kind of distinctive phenomenology*, they are *not judgments that are based solely on conceptual competence*, they are *not judgments that have the kind of distinctive epistemic status I characterized as Rock in PWI*, they are *not justified in what Chalmers (this vol.) calls a 'broadly noninferential' way*. Finally, and this is important in connection with the reply to Weatherson, *they are not what psychologists would describe as 'intuitive'*. Jennifer Nagel gives the following helpful summary:

Mercier and Sperber describe intuitive judgments as generated by 'processes that take place inside individuals without being controlled by them' (Mercier & Sperber, 2009, 153). The spontaneous inferences produced by these processes modify or update what we believe 'without the individual's attending to what justifies this

⁹ For an elaboration on these remarks, see also Cappelen 2014a.

modification' (ibid.). (2012, p. 498)

The reflections that generate Socratic knowledge (e.g. the kind of reflections we engage in when we think hard about the material in *Naming and Necessity*) are slow and under our control. We engage in explicit, sequential reasoning and devote personal-level attention to the grounds of the conclusions we reach. In other words, the work that goes into generating Socratic knowledge is exactly what e.g. Mercier and Sperber *contrast* with the intuitive (see Nagel 2012, pp. 498-99).

4. First point of disagreement with Weatherson: The irrelevance of speed

For Weatherson, Socratic knowledge is tied to the psychological notion of the intuitive (the kind of thing described e.g. by Nagel) and he puts a particular emphasis on *speed*.¹⁰ Socratic knowledge is, for Weatherson, tied to judgments that happen quickly and are not subjected to reflective, sequential attention. This is a crucial point of disagreement between Weatherson and me: I don't think speed (or lack of personal-level attention and sequential reasoning) plays *any role whatsoever* in philosophical argumentation. In particular, it plays no role in reflection about thought experiments.

There is nothing in philosophical practice that supports the claim that we follow the norm: *rely on judgments that are rapid and made without personal-level attention or sequential reasoning*. Nor is there any evidence that as a matter of fact, we rely on judgments of that kind. In particular, and this is what is crucial for an assessment of Centrality, there is no evidence that such judgments are (sources of) evidence in philosophy. When considering a case, say Kripke's Gödel case or Thompson's violinist case, there is no norm to the effect that we should think about the case for less than, say, 30 seconds.¹¹ Kripke and Thompson reflected carefully on these cases and the audience is expected to do the same.

One thing philosophers often do is beautifully summarized by Lewis in his paper "Elusive Knowledge" (quoted by Weatherson):

I implore you to be honest, be naive, hear it afresh. 'He knows, yet he has not eliminated all possibilities of error.' Even if you've numbed your ears, doesn't this overt, explicit fallibilism still sound wrong? (1996, p. 550)

Lewis is not asking you to think for less than 30 seconds (or to avoid personal-level attention etc.). He is asking you to put aside theoretical prejudices when thinking about whether it can be true that *He knows, yet he has not eliminated all possibilities of error*. Putting aside theoretical prejudice can be hard work, require 'personal-level

¹⁰ See Weatherson's (F4): **Speed**: Intuitions are rapid reactions. He refers to Nagel (2007, 2012).

¹¹ 30 seconds is my guesstimate of the point at which a judgment moves from being intuitive to reflective (e.g. in the Mercier and Sperber (2012) sense.) If that turns out to be wrong (and it's really 22 or 84 seconds), it makes no difference to the points made here and below.

attention’ and sequential reflection. It can also take more than 30 seconds.¹²

I’ve just made some empirical claims about philosophical practice—about what norms we take ourselves to be governed by and what we as a matter of fact do and don’t do. Weatherson, in section 5, reports that in some of his verbal exchanges with colleagues, he expects (and gets) snap judgments as responses from his interlocutors. It is hard to argue with that piece of self-reporting, but reporting on my own experience of philosophical conversations, I don’t operate with a ‘less-than-30-seconds-don’t-pay-personal-level-attention-and-don’t-engage-in-sequential-reasoning’ norm. Of course, conversational back-and-forths are typically rapid; many philosophers speak quickly, and pauses longer than, say, 30 seconds will often be awkward. As a result, we typically get quick responses, but a) this is in part a trivial consequence of the conventions of spoken conversations, and b) more often than not, the initial response is *a request for elaboration, clarification or a description of reasons for going one way rather than another*.^{13, 14}

5. Second point of disagreement with Weatherson: On the nature of philosophy

What do all the questions that philosophers at Michigan and St Andrews work on have in common? Weatherson and I agree on a number of negative points:

1. Philosophical questions have no thematic unity.
2. Philosophical questions are not those we can answer by relying solely on conceptual competence.
3. Philosophical questions are not those that have a priori or necessary answers.
4. Nor is there a ‘core’ of philosophical questions that is correctly described by (2) and (3) above. As Weatherson points out (and this will be important below),

It would have shocked Plato, and Locke, and Hume, and practically every other major figure in the history of philosophy to learn that political philosophy wasn’t central to the field. ... some philosophy involves a priori and conceptual investigation ... But it’s not true that when I’m doing that I’m doing work that’s deeper, or more philosophical, or more central to

¹² All of this is compatible with it sometimes being possible to make a snap judgment about a philosophical topic (e.g., *I have two hands*). The point is that it is not a norm that we restrict ourselves to snap judgments and it is not, as a matter of fact, what we do most of the time or even typically (though of course we do it occasionally).

¹³ I have, maybe, made the disagreement seem larger than it is: Weatherson thinks the significance of appeals to intuitions are typically overstated and in sect. 7 he lists several case studies from Lewis where he claims the intuitive is appealed to. The problem with the cases is that no evidence is presented that Lewis operated with (or expected his readers to operate with) a quick-no-personal-level-attention-and-no-reflection restriction or norm. Looking at the text of “Causation as Influence” will not settle that question.

¹⁴ What I just said about philosophy is neutral on the question of whether intuitive judgments are important outside of philosophy. Such judgments might be extremely important in everyday life. Philosophy is not like everyday life—in PWI, I call it “a hyper-rational, epistemically hyper-demanding” context (p. 190).

philosophy than the work that, for example, Rae Langton or Susan Moller Okin or Tamar Szabó Gendler or Sarah-Jane Leslie do. (this vol.)

5. A final point of agreement: philosophical questions are not distinctively deep.

So why is it all philosophy? My own preferred answer is institutional/historical. The account is analogous to the institutional theory of art. Put extremely roughly: *a philosophical question is whatever you can be paid by a philosophy department to work on. A philosophy department is whatever stands in a certain causal-historical connection to an initial stack of questions (or practice), e.g. the questions Plato addressed.* The account needs lots of elaboration: how do you pick the initial stack of questions without begging the question? What about philosophy outside our tradition—i.e. philosophy not in the relevant historical-causal connection to the initial stack? The elaborations will, again, be analogous to those given for the institutional theory of art, but this isn't the place to elaborate on this sketchy idea. What I want to do is contrast this strategy with Weatherson's. His answer to the question: "What ties all the questions together?" is this:

...philosophical questions are those where implicit or Socratic knowledge, including crucially intuitions, can plausibly play a large role in getting to an answer.... a question is fit for philosophy iff it is plausible that the intuitive, armchair methods which are part of every academic's toolkit can, on their own, generate serious progress on the question. (this vol.)

I think there's a danger here of marginalizing certain fields of philosophy. Weatherson makes a point of saying that questions like (1)-(5) are as central to philosophy as any others:

1. Do bans on pornography involve trading off speech rights versus welfare considerations, or do they just involve evaluating the free-speech interests of different groups?
2. Is it permissible to eat whales?
3. Under what circumstances is it permissible to end a terminally ill patient's life, or to withhold life-saving treatment?
4. Which animals (and which non-animals) have beliefs?
5. Is there only what there is in space and time? (i.e. the kind of question that naturalists and anti-naturalists dispute).

The title of Weatherson's reply—"Centrality and Marginalisation"—is meant to remind us that endorsement of Centrality leads to marginalization of certain subfields of philosophy. I worry that using Socratic knowledge the way Weatherson ends up doing runs the same risk: it is far from clear to me that (1)-(5) are questions where implicit or Socratic knowledge (including what Weatherson calls 'intuitions'), can plausibly play a large role in getting to answers. While the idea of Socratic knowledge is important, I don't think it makes it into the essence of philosophy.¹⁵

¹⁵ Not only does Weatherson's account undergenerate, it also (as Josh Dever pointed out to me) overgenerates. Many topics in linguistics will get counted as philosophy and large parts of

Philosophy Without Minimal Intuitions

A Reply to Chalmers¹⁶

According to David Chalmers, a minimalistic notion of the intuitive makes it easier to defend the thesis that it is characteristic of philosophy that it relies on intuitions as evidence. I have no doubt that the move to some version of minimalism is tempting in response to the arguments in PWI. I was aware of that when writing the book and that's why I operated with a disjunction of diagnostics and focused most of my attention on one of the disjuncts, Rock. Chalmers-style minimalism fails for two reasons. First, even if we endorse minimalism about the intuitive, no support for the thesis is forthcoming. Second, minimalism fails as an account of how 'intuitive' is used by philosophers (and so fails to capture what they mean (and commit to) when saying e.g. 'Philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence').

1. On the absence of positive evidence for Centrality

In PWI, I have a straightforward project: someone says that e.g. Burge's paper "Individualism and the Mental" (1979) relies at significant points on appeals to intuitions about cases. In response I say: *okay, where does that happen in the paper?* I look at the literature on intuitions to see what people mean by 'relying on intuition', try to figure out whether that kind of thing takes place in Burge's paper, and conclude

mathematics. More generally, specific arguments in various places would end up counting as philosophy: e.g. a conclusion in physics that the sled will slide a certain way under certain forces will count as part of philosophy because we can make a Socratic judgment of that case.

¹⁶ Thanks to Dave Chalmers for extensive feedback on various drafts of this reply.

that it doesn't.

Maybe this is what Chalmers has in mind when he says, "Perhaps Cappelen is really trying only to undercut support for Centrality, and not to refute Centrality" (this vol.). I'm not sure what more of a refutation can be asked for in this kind of empirical project (more on that below), but, that aside, 'trying to undercut support for Centrality' is a fair description of my goal. So the focus should be on the question of whether Chalmers presents any *positive evidence* for the presence of intuition features (even construed minimally) in Burge's or any of the other texts I investigate. I think the answer is clearly 'No'.

Chalmers mentions four possible sources of positive evidence—I discuss three in this section and a fourth in the next.

1. Chalmers points out that there is extensive 'intuition'-talk in philosophical texts.

Reply. I agree and that is the topic of Part One of PWI. There I show that such talk does not support Centrality. Chalmers doesn't engage with the arguments in Part One (Chalmers doesn't try to refute any of what I say), so I simply don't know what he thinks about my detailed discussion of such usage. Maybe additional support for Centrality can come from what I call the 'Argument from 'Intuition'-Talk', but Chalmers doesn't provide it in his reply.

2. Chalmers points out that many philosophers say and believe that they rely on intuitions as evidence.

Reply. That is of course common ground between us: the widespread endorsement of Centrality is one of the main motivations for writing PWI. One of the central theses of PWI is that many philosophers have false second-order beliefs about their practice. In general, it is not an uncommon phenomenon: people who are good at *Y-ing* can have many false beliefs about *Y-ing*.

3. Chalmers suggests that we look at different texts from those I have investigated.

Reply. A good idea: As I emphasize throughout PWI, we need better diagnostics and more case studies. But Chalmers provides none of these. He says it would be good to look at other cases, e.g. secondary and introductory texts, but doesn't actually do it. (I say more about secondary and introductory texts in section 4 below).

In response to my rejection of (1)-(3), Chalmers has (in conversation and in this vol) asked: *What could count as better evidence? I'm sure readers would like to know what you would count!* Two replies: (i) I think presence of (1) would *count* as evidence in this sense: it is the right place to look—that's why half of the book is devoted to it. However, when you look carefully at the usage, it doesn't support Centrality. I also think that (3) would be good evidence. The challenge here is: Do it! (ii) The proponents of a remarkable claim such as Centrality owe us a story about how *they* have convinced themselves it is true—it is their job to tell us what evidence convinced them. I read all the prominent intuition-theorists, presented my summary in

chapters 6 and 7 and based the diagnostics on their work. My discussion in PWI is a more careful account of how reliance on the intuitive can be discovered than anything I found in the writings of Centrality proponents.¹⁷

2. Chalmers on the insignificance of ‘in-text’ evidence and the significance of ‘non-text based reflection’

At a crucial point in the reply, Chalmers downplays the significance of the absence of positive textual evidence. He says,

...even if Cappelen were right that the textual argument for Centrality does not succeed, it would not follow that he has given a strong textual argument against Centrality. That would require a principle along the lines of “absence of (textual) evidence is (textual) evidence of absence”. (this vol.)

What’s Chalmers’ alternative to textual evidence? He says we should rely on “non-text-based reflection on the structure of arguments” (this vol.). We should “reflect on dialectically and epistemologically effective arguments that are available” for various claims “(whether or not anyone makes these arguments)” (this vol.). When we do that, we will, according to Chalmers, find that some of these arguments involve “premises with broadly noninferential support” (this vol.).

This is an intriguing and puzzling proposal. Three questions: First, what is it for an argument to be ‘dialectically and epistemologically *effective*’? I’m going to assume that to be ‘effective’, the argument has to *be* (broadly) noninferentially¹⁸ dialectically and epistemologically justified. Second, what is it for such an argument to be ‘available’ in the relevant sense? I am going to assume that it depends at least in part on the justification being available to the author we are attributing the argument to (i.e. *the author* has to be noninferential epistemologically justified and the dialectical justification has to apply in *her* dialectical context). Third question: Does Chalmers provide evidence that such arguments are available in a wide range of cases—e.g. the cases I investigate? This third question is crucial if one is interested in whether Chalmers provides any positive evidence for Centrality. Putting aside concerns one might have about this non-text based strategy (and I have many), what is indisputable is that Chalmers does no more than mention it as a possibility. He considers no cases in detail, and doesn’t provide positive evidence that arguments relying on noninferential (epistemic and dialectical) justification are available in the relevant cases. What he says is: “I think that there is good philosophical reason to think that relevant judgments about the Gettier or Burge or Jackson case have noninferential justification, for example. No textual analysis is required to make this point” (this

¹⁷ It is also worth noting that Chalmers repeatedly points out that it is consistent with e.g. the Gettier text that the intuitive, minimally construed, is present in it. That, again, is not *positive* evidence of presence.

¹⁸ In what follows, I use ‘noninferential’ as shorthand for ‘broadly noninferential’, in the sense of Chalmers (this vol.). I will, however, still use ‘broadly’ to modify ‘inferential’.

vol.). We are told that Chalmers thinks this, but that's not positive evidence. It is also hard to reconcile with other things Chalmers says in the same paper. Keep in mind that we are looking for *both epistemic and dialectical noninferential justification* when we explore this non-text based reflection on arguments. Let's first focus on the availability of effective noninferential epistemic justification. Note that Chalmers earlier in his reply says:

I think it is far from obvious that the intuitions that philosophers appeal to have a noninferential *epistemic* justification. It is quite possible that there is often some inferential justification operating under the surface, perhaps hidden from the view to the subject.¹⁹

I agree with this: on my view the judgments are typically epistemically justified by *Socratic knowledge* of the kind I describe above in reply to Weatherson. If this is right, the first conjunct fails (i.e. we won't find arguments that appeal to premises that have noninferential justification). Focusing on the second conjunct, it faces the same kind of issues: just as everything in the common ground isn't immediately transparent to us, the justification for what is in the common ground (the reason for it being in the common ground) can be opaque. So showing that we have an instance of noninferential dialectical justification will be difficult for any particular case. In sum, while the idea of non-text based reflection on the structure of arguments is intriguing, considerably more work is required in order to use it to provide positive evidence for Centrality (I suspect Chalmers would agree—after all, he is simply writing a brief response piece).

In response to the concerns in the above paragraph, Chalmers (in conversation) says, “at this point the central issue seems to come down to epistemology and not to sociology or linguistics”—and, so, the conclusions of PWI are hostage to the conclusions of the epistemological debate sketched in the previous paragraph. I disagree, in part because I think this kind of non-text based reflection on arguments is the wrong way to learn about how philosophy as a matter of fact is done. I emphasize throughout PWI that I am interested in *effective* features of philosophical debates—not how they *could* or *ought to* have been conducted.²⁰ The notion was introduced with just this kind of response in mind (so it's unfortunate that Chalmers doesn't mention it). I agree, of course, with Chalmers that the caricature of philosophy I'm arguing against *could* have been true (and that we *can* reconstruct the arguments so that they have premises with some of the intuition features (and maybe some secondary literature does that.) But that's neither here nor there with respect to the

¹⁹ Maybe the charitable way to read this sentence is not as denying that there's noninferential epistemic justification, but as claiming that there *is* broadly inferential epistemic justification and then emphasizing that it can coexist with a broadly inferential justification. But so read, it is hard to make it 'just obvious' that there's noninferential epistemic justification: after all, we easily confuse that with the non-transparency of the broadly inferential justification that is available. In my view, that's what goes on in most of these cases: we have non-transparent broadly inferential epistemic justification and we confuse the non-transparent part with there being something noninferential providing justification.

²⁰ The notion of an 'effective feature' is introduced on pp. 115-16, and appealed to throughout the book.

question of whether the intuition features are *effective*—i.e. *non-idle*—features of philosophical debates.

One point Chalmers makes is relevant in this connection. He says he relies on the following bridge principle: *Philosophers tend to use effective arguments when they are available*. If true, then, maybe (at least in some cases), we could get from *This argument is effective and available* to *This argument is used*, and maybe we can get from ‘is used’ (in Chalmers’ sense) to my (admittedly vague) ‘is an effective feature of philosophical debate’. However, the bridge principle is either false or unhelpful for Chalmers. If ‘available’ means ‘available to the author’, we can’t just assume that whatever argument we (the interpreters) can come up with is available to the author. If ‘available’ means ‘available to us (the interpreters of the text)’, then we have no reason to think the author (of the text we are interpreting) is using it. The history of philosophy (and the history of human reasoning) makes it abundantly clear that more often than not, the arguments available to someone for conclusion *C* aren’t typically the best argument for *C*. For illustration, suppose Chalmers can come up with a really great argument for Quine’s conclusions in “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” and that this great argument has noninferential premises and so the conclusions have noninferential epistemic justification. This argument, we can assume, isn’t found in the famous paper (i.e. there’s no ‘in-text’ evidence that Quine relied on Chalmers’ argument). I take it to be obvious that we can’t use Chalmers’ bridge principle to read this new argument into “Two Dogmas” and it certainly doesn’t show that that argument is an effective feature of the debate about analyticity. To get evidence that this Chalmers-style argument for Quine’s conclusion played an important role in the debate about analyticity, we need more evidence than simply: *it’s a really great argument and philosophers tend to use really great arguments*. What we can read into Quine’s text is text-based (maybe supplemented with some evidence about Quine’s intentions, etc.).

3. Chalmers’ theory of ‘intuitions’: Claims with a noninferential dialectical justification

So far I’ve argued that there’s no evidence that we actually rely on intuitions as Chalmers construes them, I turn now to why minimalism isn’t a good account of how ‘intuitive’ is used in “informal metaphilosophical discussion” (this vol.). I focus on three deficiencies and they generalize to all versions of minimalism: it overgenerates ((i)) and it undergenerates ((ii)-(iii)).

(i) *Pure Negativity Overgenerates*. I have no broadly inferential justification for or against the claim *that the city of Tottenham is bigger than the city of Oxford*. I have no evidence either way—I’m neutral. That’s not enough to make it intuitive *that the city of Tottenham is bigger than the city of Oxford*. How does minimalism explain that? If minimalism is characterized *purely negatively*—i.e. just as the absence of

broadly inferential justification—no explanation is forthcoming. The way Chalmers thinks this can be avoided is by describing the intuitive as the presence of assumed justification, but the characterization of that (assumed) justification is purely negative: we're supposed to be in a position where we think *P is justified, just not in a broadly inferential way*. But that characterization fails. It isn't '*some justification, just not broadly inferential*' that moves us from 'not justified' to 'intuitively justified'. If you're convinced that *P* has no broadly inferential justification, you won't have credence in *P* unless you have *positive* reason to think there's a *specific* other source of justification for *P*. And not just any alternative source will do to make *P* intuitive: if I think that tasseography (or tea-leaf readings) supports Oxford being bigger than Tottenham, that's not enough to make the claim intuitive.

This is why Chalmers in several places appeal to 'obviousness'. He says: "Any reasonably neutral positive story about intuition will be thin: perhaps something to the effect that the intuitive claim seems obviously true" (this vol.). Three points about this appeal to obviousness:

1. This positive element isn't optional for minimalists. If there isn't some positive element—e.g. obviousness—then minimalism either overgenerates absurdly or just fails to tell us when e.g. *that the city of Tottenham is bigger than the city of Oxford* moves from not justified to 'intuitively justified'.
2. The appeal to obviousness is in effect an appeal to the feature I called F1. F1 was introduced to capture e.g. Plantinga's characterization of the intuitive as "that peculiar form of phenomenology with which we are all well acquainted, but which I can't describe in any way other than as the phenomenology that goes with seeing that such a proposition is true" (1993, pp. 105–6) (for more on F1 see PWI, Chapter 7). One central piece of evidence against Centrality in PWI is that F1 is absent in the relevant case studies (see PWI, Chapter 8). Chalmers says that's irrelevant since it was a mistake to focus on F1—the relevant notion of the intuitive is Chalmers' minimalistic notion.²¹ But minimalism without (something like) *obviousness* fails. As soon as obviousness is added, the relevance of F1 as a diagnostic can't be denied, and no response has been given to the claim that it is absent in all of the relevant case studies.²²
3. Chalmers owes us an account of what obviousness is and why we should trust it and treat it as an indicator (or source) of justification. If it is 'seeming true' *at first glance* (but *not on reflection*), then we can all agree that this is a feeble

²¹ He writes: "Concerning (F1): this involves a certain *theory* of intuitions. ... Many theorists deny that there is such phenomenology, ...But these theorists are not ipso facto denying that there are intuitions." (this vol.).

²² Chalmers says nothing about what obviousness is, so it's possible that what he has in mind is something very different from F1. Maybe a more developed theory of the obvious could push the debate forward.

source and it would be unfair to assume it plays a central philosophical role. If it isn't 'seem true on first glance', then what is it? Why should we care about it? Do we, as a matter of fact, care about it? In answering these questions, I suspect Chalmers will need to move far beyond his minimalism.

(ii) *First Undergeneration Problem for Minimalism*. In 'informal metaphilosophical discussion', it is standardly agreed that the naïve comprehension axiom is intuitive. It is typically paraded as one of the paradigms of the intuitive. But we *don't* take ourselves to have a dialectical justification for asserting the naïve comprehension axiom (since we agree that it is false and that there is no (epistemic or dialectical) justification for it²³). Minimalism fails to capture a basic feature of the informal notion: it can be applied in cases where there is an absence of justification.²⁴

(iii) *Second Undergeneration Problem for Minimalism*. In 'informal metaphilosophical discussion', we describe claims that *have* a broadly inferential justification as intuitive. So minimalism is wrong. This point is made clearly by Williamson, who points out that in response to a philosopher who argues that there are no mountains, the following would be considered an acceptable reply: 'Well, intuitively, that's a mountain' (pointing at a mountain) (2007, p. 219). This point is made in a setting where it is clear that the justification is direct perception of the mountain. Williamson generalizes this point: in the right kind of setting, *any* claim can be described as 'intuitive' in informal metaphilosophical contexts. If this is right (and I think it is and Chalmers has given no reason to think it isn't), minimalism fails to capture philosophers' use of 'intuitive'.

I could go on (e.g. to talk about how it is improbable that the distinction between epistemic and dialectical justification is part of philosophers' 'informal' notion of the intuitive), but I think enough has been said to show that resting with a minimal notion is unacceptable.

More generally, it is tempting when replying to PWI to minimize what is meant by 'intuition' in Centrality. But we have now seen that (a) this doesn't make it easier to find positive support for Centrality (it makes the thesis more obscure, but provides no additional positive evidence), and (b) doing so moves us away from the way 'intuitive' is used in philosophical discourse. This last point is important for many reasons including this: one of Chalmers' goals is to vindicate "a version of the widespread view that philosophers rely on intuitions" (this vol.). But if what Chalmers means by 'intuitive' isn't what this word means in philosophical discourse, then he's bound to fail at his stated goal—he's in danger of discussing and defending a claim no one is endorsing (or even thinking about).

²³ In discussion Chalmers has said there is both: in effect the obviousness provides it. It is hard to assess that proposal without answers to the question in (3) above.

²⁴ This is one reason why F1, or the 'Seem True' feature, is added by a number of intuition-theorists: they say that the naïve comprehension axiom seems true (despite being false and having no justification).

4. Chalmers on primary vs. secondary sources

According to Chalmers, my selection of case studies is flawed since it relies on original sources. He thinks investigations of philosophical practice should primarily be focused on secondary sources since if there are discrepancies between primary and secondary sources, “it is presumably the arguments as represented in later texts and textbooks that are most influential and most central to the practice of philosophy” (this vol.). I simply disagree. We get summaries of e.g. Kant, Spinoza, Frege, Carnap, Quine and Chalmers in lots of brief, sloppy, simplified introductory texts. But those presentations are essentially parasitic. If they misrepresent the original, then it is part of our practice to consider it as that, i.e. as a misrepresentation. The sloppy presentation doesn’t get precedence. That said, I am happy with the idea that metaphilosophers engage in careful studies of secondary literature (and compare those presentations to those found in the original and track those developments and then compare the effects of potential discrepancies). Chalmers obviously didn’t have space to do that in a brief reply article, but as an area of future research, it’s promising.

5. Chalmers’ transcendental argument

Chalmers appeals to a transcendental-style argument for why philosophers have to rely on claims having noninferential justification. Roughly, the idea is that at the end of chains of justification, “there will plausibly be unargued premises without inferential support” (this vol.). This argument goes past very quickly and Chalmers is aware that it can be challenged on any number of points. What he does not mention is that PWI addresses this kind of objection (using ‘Rock’ roughly for ‘broadly noninferential’):

Objection: Surely some claims must have the Rock feature—otherwise we have an infinite chain of justifications (or it all goes in a circle). Your denial that judgments about cases have the Rock feature in the previous chapter seems to indicate that you think it’s arguments all the way down. (p. 196)

The reply I give still seems appropriate:

Reply: No, I’m not saying that. I’m just saying that paradigmatic philosophical cases don’t involve judgments that are rock-bottom. In order to make that claim I don’t need to take a stand on the larger question of how chains of justification eventually end. Maybe there are judgments with the Rock feature and maybe those are needed in order for chains of reasoning to be properly grounded. All I am saying is that the place to look for such starting points is not in philosophical appeal to cases—those judgments are, as we have seen, typically puzzling and rely on a range of empirical data embedded in theorizing. If there is a rock-bottom point of justification, philosophers who discuss cases don’t operate at that level. (p. 196)

Chalmers provides no reasons why the same reply shouldn’t apply to his attempted transcendental argument for intuitionistic minimalism.

An Enormous Mistake: Experimental Philosophy

Reply to Weinberg

Jonathan Weinberg is a leading advocate of so-called ‘experimental philosophy’—the movement that originated with Stephen Stich and his students.²⁵ One goal of PWI is to show that this movement is fundamentally misguided. X-phi practitioners assume that philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence. With this assumption in hand, they perform experiments with the goal of providing a deeper understanding of what intuitions people have, the source of those intuitions, and also their reliability. In PWI, I show that the starting assumption is false: we don’t do anything that’s properly described as ‘relying on intuitions as evidence’.²⁶ In Cappelen 2014b, I elaborate on my criticism and I will try not to go over the same terrain here. In my view, Weinberg’s reply to PWI in this volume underscores the foundational difficulties facing x-phi. Putting aside some of the heated rhetoric (and misrepresentations of my text), Weinberg and I agree on some important points. What we agree on suffices to show that experimental philosophy is a failed research program.

I address three parts of Weinberg’s reply: (i) his misrepresentation of Rock, as it is presented in PWI; (ii) our agreement about intuition escape clauses; and (iii) the

²⁵ The movement has an often unrecognized predecessor in the work of the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (see Næss 1938a, b).

²⁶ I no longer think this is exactly the right way to put the criticism of experimental philosophy. I say a bit about why in Cappelen forthcoming, where I describe what I call ‘the Knobe reply’. Weinberg does not endorse the Knobe reply, so I won’t pursue that issue here.

implications of our agreement about intuition escape clauses. I should mention right away that there is one part of Weinberg's reply that I will not address: Weinberg proposes a version of what Chalmers (this vol.) calls 'minimalism about intuitions'. My reply to Chalmers above exhausts what I have to say about minimalism for the purpose of this symposium and so I won't repeat those points here.

1. Weinberg's misrepresentation of Rock

Intuitions are often said to be 'unjustified justifiers': they justify, but need no justification. In PWI I call this feature 'Rock'. As far as I can tell, Weinberg and I more or less agree on how to characterize this feature. Nonetheless, Weinberg goes out of his way to make this a point of disagreement. However, the view Weinberg objects to is not one I've ever endorsed and in PWI, I go out of my way to avoid this misinterpretation. Weinberg says I think of Rock as follows:

It's a kind of justification so fundamental, unshakeable, indubitable, that an author's saying pretty much anything at all in defense of *p*, even expressing any hesitance about whether to endorse *p*, or about what *p*'s significance might be, is a clear sign that *p* lacks Rock. (this vol.)

Maybe the easiest thing here is simply to ask readers to read the relevant parts of PWI. Rock is introduced on p. 112 and, after a long discussion, I end up with what I call a "Rough Guide to Rock Detection": "*If in a context C, evidence and arguments are given for p and those arguments and that evidence play a significant argumentative role in C, that is evidence that p is not Rock relative to C*" (p. 121, italics added). I go on to say that the evidence is *defeasible*: *if there's evidence that in some other context, C', p can be asserted without evidence being given and that this fact about C' is important in C, then we have evidence against the presence of Rock in C*. I go on to say:

This is admittedly a rough diagnostic, but it will prove useful. Looking ahead: all the texts to be investigated, the philosophically significant claims are all extensively discussed and argued about. There is no evidence in any of those texts that the possibility of asserting p without evidential support is significant (so even if some of these claims have that property, it plays no effective role in the debates). (pp. 121-22, italics added)²⁷

So I don't think—and I don't say or assume—that Rock is "fundamental, unshakeable, indubitable", etc. Even putting aside the expectation that my readers be charitable, there simply is no responsible way to read the text in that way.

2. Points of agreement: Intuition escape clauses

²⁷ Note that I anticipate Weinberg's misreading throughout the book. See e.g. section 8.4.2 where I explicitly consider the objection that *arguments are given for p in a text doesn't show that p doesn't have Rock status*. I encourage readers to look at my reply there and consider whether Weinberg's characterization is correct.

In what follows, I focus on what Weinberg calls ‘intuition escape clauses’. He mentions three (where ‘ECG’ is short for ‘epistemic common ground’):

- (i) p is ECG, but in a way that is unproblematically explicable; or (ii) p is not ECG, because it is not taken as justified at all; or (iii) p is not ECG, because it is argued for directly in the text in a way that requires no appeal, even tacitly, to the functional epistemic role of the intuitive. (this vol.)

These are ‘intuition escape clauses’ in the following sense: if one of these are true about a text, then we have evidence against a reliance on the intuitive in that text. This is a point of agreement between Weinberg and me. We disagree about whether I have done a good enough job establishing the presence of these in my cases studies, but agree about their importance. With this element of agreement in place, I focus now on three important points of disagreement.

3. Intuition escape clauses as a challenge to x-phi

Weinberg thinks his account of how to discover the intuitive will provide help for those engaged in experimental philosophy. He says experimental philosophers “care about exactly this question of what might be the whatever-it-is that may, or may not, successfully license verdicts like those in the case studies as ECG” (this vol.) I see it differently: putting aside my own criticism for the moment, Weinberg’s own proposal shows that there’s a glaring gap where we’d expect to find x-phi’s foundations. If we go along with Weinberg’s proposal, work in x-phi assumes that the escape clauses are *not available*. So if you are an advocate of x-phi, you need to show that none of the escape clauses are present before starting experiments on a set of judgments (or argument or claim or whatever you call your target). *That has never been done—by any experimental philosopher—ever*. More generally: if someone says a group of people engage in activity *A* and that this activity has negative effects, they first have to present evidence that *A*-ing is going on. Weinberg (and other advocates of x-phi) owe us evidence that philosophers engage in the activity they target. In his reply to PWI, Weinberg now tells us a bit about how he thinks such evidence can be found, but no experimental philosopher had ever presented, looked for, or even recognized the need for, such evidence before.

4. Intuition escape clauses, the irrelevance of x-phi, and the psychologizing of evidence

Suppose for a particular claim in a text (e.g. Thomson’s claim *that it’s wrong to kidnap the subject and hook her up to the violinist*) we’re convinced that none of the intuition escape clauses are available. Here is the situation we, roughly, find ourselves in: Thomson assumes her claim is justified but it’s not justified in what Chalmers (this vol.) calls a ‘broadly inferential way’. So what do we do? We try to figure out if the claim is true. Lot of options present themselves: (i) maybe it’s a kind of insight we

can get through by ‘relying on nothing but conceptual competence’. If so, we need a theory of concepts, of competence, etc. and we need to show that it applies in this case; (ii) we could try out Gödel’s view according to which it is a kind of direct insight into moral reality; (iii) we explore the relevance of the view that moral claims don’t have truth conditions and that they instead express attitudes in some way or another; or (iv) we could conclude that the claim can’t be justified and our credence should be lowered.

Weinberg thinks that there’s another thing we can do: we can hand out questionnaires about vignettes (e.g. describing the Thompson scenario) to people. He thinks the responses will be of relevance to what we care about, i.e. whether Thompson was right. But how could that possibly help? How could those responses have any bearing on the question under discussion, i.e. *Is it true that it would be wrong to kidnap the person and hook her up to a violinist?* I can think of many diagnoses of how x-phi goes wrong, but given limitations of space, I’ll present only one here. Suppose you think that the evidence for a philosophical claim, *C*, is this: *that we think that C*. Then it might be really interesting to find out that lots of people in say, Uruguay, don’t think that *C* after they have eaten pizza. If it turns out that the psychological state of *thinking that C* depends on nationality and eating habits, then it looks like we shouldn’t use it as evidence. It could be that survey responses are one way to find that kind of bias. Here is, in a nutshell, the PWI objection to this line of thought: It is not *thinking that C* that’s the evidence for *C*.²⁸ In the Thompson case, the relevant piece of evidence is *It is wrong to kidnap the subject and hook her up to a violinist* (it is not *that we think it is wrong*). In Kripke’s Gödel-Schmidt case, the evidence is *that the subject refers to Gödel and not to Schmidt* (not *that we think it*). There are many ways in which one might get misled to psychologize evidence.²⁹ (i) We philosophers often qualify our claims with phrases like, *I think that C* (or *it seems that C* or *Intuitively C*) but, as I argue in Part I of PWI, those are hedges, not descriptions of evidential sources. (ii) It might be true that facts about e.g. reference or what we should do, in part, supervene on some kind of psychological state of the individuals speaking the language in question or endorsing the moral claims. If this is the case, it is much like the extremely complex ways in which e.g. currency fluctuations or voting systems do, and in none of those cases would anyone think that responses to vignettes are a way to gain insight (no more so than when we try to understand obviously psychological facts like beliefs or mental illness).

5. Socratic knowledge as intuition escape clause

I turn now to Weinberg’s claim that PWI does a poor job showing that the escape clauses are present in the case studies. I agree with this much: more work is needed.

²⁸ Nor is it: *I (or we) intuit that C*. This is how I make the point in PWI, ch. 11.

²⁹ See Williamson 2007, ch. 7.

As I say, “Philosophical methodology needs more studies of these kinds—maybe using alternative and more refined diagnostics” (PWI, p. 131). That said, I think PWI does a better job than Weinberg thinks it does and I know of no other investigation of this kind (so by default, there’s no better effort in print). In reply to Weatherson (this vol.), I sketched how Socratic knowledge is ubiquitous. This is relevant to Weinberg’s criticism of my discussion of e.g. Thomson’s violinist case. He says that my reading (that appeals to Socratic knowledge) is uncharitable and that I have failed to establish the presence of the third intuition escape clause. Two points in reply: first, we obviously rely on Socratic knowledge when we judge whether it’s okay to kidnap a person and put her in a hospital hooked up to a violinist. There is no way to exclude Socratic knowledge from judgments of those kinds. This point generalizes to many of the other case studies—I assumed (but didn’t make sufficiently clear) that Socratic knowledge of this kind helps justify what is in the common ground among the intended interlocutors. Second, Weinberg’s central criticism is that my reading ends up being uncharitable. Coming from Weinberg, this is such an astonishing objection that a reply to it deserves its own paragraph, see below.

6. Weinberg’s lack of charity

Chalmers (and also Bengson) defend Centrality because they think it is a good feature of philosophy. Weinberg, on the other hand, wants to defend the presence of the intuitive in order to criticize it. Note that this puts him in an awkward dialectical position: he can’t say that reading texts as relying on intuitions is an exercise in charity on his part. When Weinberg reads a text as relying on the intuitive, he does it in order to beat up on it so he is, in effect, being extremely uncharitable. It is peculiar therefore to read Weinberg criticizing e.g. the interpretation of Thomson’s violinist case in PWI as uncharitable. More generally, a strong case can be made that Weinberg (and other experimental philosophers) are guilty of the most spectacularly uncharitable readings of philosophical texts in the history of Western philosophy. The entire movement is based on reading 2000 years of philosophy as relying on (or presupposing) a ridiculous (and obscure) view about something called ‘intuitions’. If their reading is correct, then, as Stich is fond of emphasizing, philosophy as we know it might be dead. In the light of that, intuition-purged interpretations (such as those in PWI, and in Williamson 2007) are acts of charity. It is true that my reading of e.g. Thompson implies that the arguments in question are in need some additional support, but *every* interesting philosophical claim is in need of additional justification, so that’s is hardly a serious indictment of my reading of Thompson.

On the Interpretation of ‘Intuition’-Talk in *Naming and Necessity*

Reply to Bengson

Bengson’s reply is rich and touches on a wide range of issues, many of which I can’t do justice to here. I find myself in agreement with a great deal of what Bengson says, but in what follows I focus on two areas of disagreement: (i) the interpretation of Kripke’s use of ‘intuition’-vocabulary, and (ii) Bengson’s reconciliation strategy. Since much of what I have to say about the latter topic is covered in my earlier replies, most of what follows concerns Kripke interpretation.

Before moving to these issues, I’ll make some brief remarks about an important topic that Bengson brings up, but that I won’t pursue here. The idea of a *discriminative use of an expression* is helpfully developed in the first part of Bengson’s reply. There is one point in this vicinity we agree on and one we disagree on. We agree that the category of discriminative uses is important to understand and that the activity of discriminating (as Bengson describes it) plays a crucial role in philosophy. I was using ‘theoretical term’ somewhat loosely in PWI, and I meant to include such uses (they are still relevantly different from the non-discriminative ordinary use—most importantly, the ordinary-language use isn’t in the relevant respect discriminative).

There is another point in this vicinity where we disagree: I don’t think there’s a discriminative use where ‘intuitions’ denotes what Bengson calls ‘intellectual appearances’. I deny this because I don’t know what intellectual appearances are.

Chisholm talks of sensory appearances and I have a rough sense of what those are. Bengson seems to think the extension to the non-sensory is simple,³⁰ but when I take away the sensory part of sensory appearances and replace it with the intellectual, I'm left with nothing I can make sense of. Since the existence of intellectual appearances isn't argued for in Bengson in his reply to PWI, I will not pursue the topic here. I'll simply note that I still (even after reading Bengson and e.g. Chudnoff 2013) doubt there are such things—at least if they are different from dispositions to judge, inclinations to believe or other familiar states.

1. Kripke's use of 'intuition' vocabulary

According to Bengson, the use of 'intuitive' and cognate terms in Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* (hereafter, 'NN') provides support for the claim that philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence for their theories. Kripke characterizes key assumptions as 'intuitive', and even appears to endorse the view that intuitions are the strongest evidence there can be for anything. This again is inductive evidence for the general thesis that philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence, i.e. the thesis I call 'Centrality'. The rough thought is this: how can anyone deny the importance of intuitions in recent philosophy in the light of their central role in NN?

Part One of PWI contains a long discussion of Kripke's use of 'intuitive' and cognate terms in NN. I refer the reader to pp. 71-75. Here in summary form is the view I propose: 'intuitive' (etc.) as used by Kripke typically means something in the neighborhood of 'pre-theoretic'. To describe a thesis as pre-theoretic is not to describe a source of evidence for that thesis—it's simply to say that it's a view we hold prior to theorizing (see e.g. PWI, p. 81) and to say that philosophers make pre-theoretic assumptions is no support for the tradition in metaphilosophy that presupposes Centrality.

The background for the suggestion that Kripke (for the most part) means 'pre-theoretic' by 'intuitive' is this: there is a kind of anti-theoretical strand that runs through much (if not all) of NN. It is hard to read the book without getting the sense that Kripke continuously expresses a general skepticism about philosophical theories, culminating in statements like: "(It really is a nice theory. The only defect I think it has is probably common to all philosophical theories. It's wrong. You may suspect me of proposing another theory in its place; but I hope not, because I'm sure it's wrong too if it is a theory.)" (p. 64). His use of 'intuitive' should be understood in that light and the suggestion is that 'pre-theoretic' more or less captures what he has in mind (and so describing something as intuitive, is, for Kripke, to give it a positive

³⁰ He says: "nothing in their discussions of the noncomparative use of 'seem' implies that the term could not be so used to pick out *non-sensory* states or events, to describe how one is *intellectually* appeared to, or, perhaps better, how things are *presented* to one as being, when one *reflects* on them" (this vol.). Maybe nothing in their discussions prevents this, but it doesn't mean the attempt to refer succeeds.

spin since it is to describe it as not theoretical (and the theoretical is bad). Why the hostility towards philosophical theories? I'm not sure, but my hunch is that it has three sources: (i) Kripke is generally skeptical of the quality of philosophical theories—he thinks they are, for the most part, wrong (and he is of course right about that: in all cases where there is at most one right answer and there are many theories giving different answers, most theories will be wrong). (ii) Kripke (p. 94) cites with approval Bishop Butler's dictum that 'Everything is what it is and not another thing' and the 'anti-theory' rhetoric of NN can be understood as opposing various kinds of reductionism. (iii) Even though this goes far beyond anything we have direct evidence for reading into NN, I'm inclined to understand the emphasis put on the pre-theoretic in NN (indicated by the extensive use of 'intuitive') as an appeal to Socratic knowledge of the kind discussed above in reply to Weatherson.

That's the background, and then the hard work is to show that this interpretation (i.e., the reading of 'intuitive' as 'pre-theoretic') provides a good account of specific passages. That's what I tried to do on pp. 71-75 and I won't repeat the points here.³¹ Instead, I will look at some of the passages that Bengson discusses as potential trouble spots.³²

Bengson highlights a passage in which Kripke says:

If someone thinks that the notion of a necessary or contingent property...is a philosopher's notion with no intuitive content, he is wrong. Of course, some philosophers think that something's having intuitive content is very inconclusive evidence in favor of it. I think it is very heavy evidence in favor of anything, myself. I really don't know, in a way, what more conclusive evidence one can have about anything, ultimately speaking. (41-42)

Bengson quotes this passage as evidence that Kripke was committed to Centrality. I disagree. When read in context, it is in effect the strongest evidence in favor of my 'pre-theoretic' interpretation of Kripke's 'intuition'-talk. The quoted passage is preceded by text in which he more or less explicitly tells us that he means 'pre-theoretic' by 'intuitive'. Here are the sentences just preceding the above passage:

It is even suggested in the literature, that though a notion of necessity may have some sort of intuition behind it (we do think some things could have been otherwise; other things we don't think could have been otherwise), this notion [of a distinction between necessary and contingent properties] is just a doctrine made up by some bad philosopher, who (I guess) didn't realize that there are several ways of referring to the same thing. I don't know if some philosophers have not realized this; but at any rate it is very far from being true that this idea [that a property can meaningfully be held to be essential or accidental to an object independently of its description] *is a notion*

³¹ So when Bengson says about Kripke's use of 'intuitive' that "it is clear, I think, that he treats these also as epistemically significant: the weight he places on them is difficult to comprehend if we do not interpret his remarks about the connection between evidence and the intuitive as having fairly general application (cf. Hughes 2004, 110 and 113)" (this vol.). I disagree if this is supposed to be an alternative to the suggested 'pre-theoretic' interpretation that I defend on pp. 71-75. If Bengson disagrees, the disagreement is hard to engage with since he doesn't engage with my detailed textual exegesis of those various passages.

³² See also Boghossian's (2014) reply to PWI.

which has no intuitive content, which means nothing to the ordinary man. (p. 41, my italics)

I take “which means nothing to the ordinary man” to spell out what he means by saying that a notion has “no intuitive content”. To have intuitive content, for Kripke, is to have content to the non-theoretician, i.e., roughly speaking, to be pre-theoretically meaningful. In the light of this, I read the ‘very heavy evidence’ passage as follows: that a notion has pre-theoretic content is very heavy evidence in favor of it having content. It is, says Kripke, hard to see that there could be heavier evidence in favor of anything. Put another way: that a notion *N* has content pre-theoretically (i.e. that we take it to have content before theorizing) is very strong evidence in favor of *N* having content.³³ I don’t think this reading is perfect,³⁴ but it makes sense of what is going on, it fits the paragraph right above it, and it fits in with the general tenor of the book (its focus on the pre-theoretic, the anti-theory rhetoric, etc.). Equally important, it’s a more charitable interpretation than the alternative proposed by Bengson. According to my proposed reading, it expresses a thought in the neighborhood of this: *if we take N to have content, then N has content (maybe because illusions of content are impossible (or extremely implausible))*.³⁵ Bengson’s reading is deeply uncharitable. According to Bengson, Kripke is saying that there is no more conclusive evidence in favor of anything than an inclination to believe or a *sui generis* intellectual seeming. Even if you think that those things carry *some* kind of evidential weight, it would be the most extreme of views to hold that that no evidence could be stronger. Literally no one (not even the most intuition-friendly of philosophers) holds that view.

2. Kripke on “direct intuitions”

In some passages in the introduction to NN, Kripke talks about ‘direct intuitions’. He says, for example,

My main remark, then, is that we have a direct *intuition* of the rigidity of names, exhibited in our understanding of the truth conditions of particular sentences. In addition, ‘*what we would say*’ [about thought experiments] gives indirect *evidence* of rigidity. (1980, p. 14, emphases added)

About these passages, Bengson says:

The implication seems to be that, for Kripke, while an intuition regarding the correct

³³ Bengson says that to endorse this interpretation is to “endorse a substantial link between evidence and the intuitive” (this vol.). That’s misleading: the proposal is that having pre-theoretic content is evidence for being contentful. That is not what any proponent of Centrality (in the tradition I am addressing) means when they say that intuitions serve as evidence for philosophical theories.

³⁴ The sentence “I think it is very heavy evidence in favor of anything, myself” isn’t entirely naturally interpreted, but these are transcripts of spoken remarks (and the alternative interpretation is even more uncharitable).

³⁵ I should add that this isn’t an entirely charitable reading on my part since I think the underlying thought is wrong: illusions of thought are, I think, common (see Cappelen 2013). The view I attribute to Kripke is nonetheless very plausible and widely endorsed.

description of a scenario (i.e., what we would say about the scenario) “gives indirect evidence”, a “direct intuition” (presumably, an intuition regarding who/what is referred to, when, as in the Gödel passage) gives *direct* evidence.” (this vol.)

This, according to Bengson, is evidence that Kripke uses ‘intuition’ and cognitive terms to “denote something he relies on for positive epistemic status (indeed, ‘very heavy evidence’).”

In one important respect, I disagree: in summary form, pp. 11-14 of the introduction to NN is a response to the view that rigidity is simply a scope issue (i.e. the view that the claim that names are rigid is the claim that names should be read with wide scope over all modal operators). In response to this, Kripke points out that, pre-theoretically, we take names in simple sentences to exhibit rigidity as well, so rigidity can’t simply be a scope phenomenon. ‘Direct’ is used to denote pre-theoretic beliefs about simple, or non-embedded, occurrences, and ‘indirect’ is used to denote embedded occurrences. That distinction has no bearing on the issue of whether ‘intuitive’ can be accounted for as ‘pre-theoretic’.

There is a point of agreement: On my reading Kripke uses ‘intuitive’ in a way that has ‘positive’ epistemic status of a certain kind, but it isn’t of the kind that anyone defending Centrality in the metaphilosophical tradition has ever suggested. It goes roughly like this: Kripke thinks lots of philosophers are trapped in mistaken pictures (maybe that means they have lots of false beliefs and presuppositions). Kripke thinks progress can be made by reminding us of what we know about reference pre-theoretically. One way to spell out that thought is through the view about Socratic knowledge described in reply to Weatherson (this vol.).

The pre-theoretic shares none of the features assigned to the intuitive in the metaphilosophical tradition I oppose in PWI. The pre-theoretic isn’t characterized by a distinctive phenomenology, it isn’t a *sui generis* state, it isn’t default justified, it isn’t broadly noninferentially justified, it isn’t based solely conceptual competence, it doesn’t concern necessary truths, etc. Here’s a way to see what I have in mind: consider all the attempts to defend Centrality in the various replies to PWI. Note that not one of them has suggested that the intuitive is the pre-theoretic (this is neither necessary nor sufficient on any proposal—certainly not on Bengson’s positive view (see e.g. Bengson this vol.). To say that we have pre-theoretic knowledge of rigidity isn’t to describe a source of evidence—it’s simply to say that it’s something we know prior to theorizing (see e.g. PWI, p. 81). Kripke thinks it’s important to remind those trapped by philosophical theories of what they know pre-theoretically.

3. Bengson’s reconciliation strategy

According to Bengson, I’m denying that “the intuition that *p* and an argument for the selfsame *p* need not be competitors even in one and the same context” (this vol.). Bengson claims that I overlook the possibility that arguments can buttress intuitions,

diagnose intuitions, and guide us to intuitions. PWI also fails to take into account that intuitions can prompt further investigation and problematize further beliefs we have.

Much of what I have to say in reply to this, I say in reply to Chalmers and to Weinberg above. In summary form: I tried hard, but obviously not hard enough, to make sure readers wouldn't think that I assumed that if an argument is given for p , then p is not supported by an intuition. My view was this: we need evidence that the intuiting of p is doing work. None of my respondents provides such evidence. The dialectic, as I see it, is this. Bengson (and also Chalmers and Weinberg) point out that it is *compatible* with p being argued for that in a context C , that p also, in C , has positive epistemic status by virtue of its intuitiveness. I agree. It is possible. But is it actual? What evidence is there that this positive evidential status plays an effective role in philosophical debates? Again, I want to stress that all Bengson does is tell us that it is *possible that the intuitive performs the various functions he mentions*, but he provides no evidence. He has no diagnostics to help us distinguish the cases where the intuitive plays these roles from the cases where it plays no role. What would move the debate forward, at least as I see the debate, are proposals of the following form:

- (i) The intuitive can perform theoretical role R ;
- (ii) Diagnostics D help us determine whether R is being performed in a particular text (i.e. whether there's R -ing taking place in that text); and
- (iii) Here are some texts where we have D that tells us that that R -ing takes place.

But at least in this reply from Bengson, we don't get that. Instead get claims like the following:

I will not consider them in detail here, but in my view we find some such friendly interaction in, for example, Lehrer's Truetemp example, Gettier's refutation of JTB, Kripke's thought experiments in *Naming and Necessity*, Goldman's treatment of the fake barn case, and Chalmers' zombie argument against materialism. (Bengson, this vol.)

I know that lots of people believe this, but I'm still waiting for the evidence.

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