

Metaphilosophy

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Introduction

Often philosophers have reason to ask fundamental questions about the aims, methods, nature, or value, of their own discipline. When philosophers systematically examine such questions the resulting work is sometimes referred to as “metaphilosophy”. Metaphilosophy, it should be said, is not a well-established, or clearly demarcated, field of philosophical inquiry like, say, epistemology or the philosophy of art. However, in the last couple of decades there has been a great deal of metaphilosophical work on issues concerning the methodology of philosophy in the analytic tradition. This entry focuses on that work.

Overviews

There is a lack of very general overviews of metaphilosophy or philosophical methodology. However, there are a number of good overviews of more narrowly defined topics within these areas. Braddon-Mitchell & Nola (2009a) outlines the influential ‘Canberra Plan’ project in philosophical methodology. Manley (2009) provides a very useful overview of the recent literature on metametaphysics, as does Eklund (2006). Nagel (2007) provides an excellent overview of the literature on epistemic intuitions. Daniels (2009) gives a good overview of work in moral philosophy on the method of reflective equilibrium. Gutting (2009) is a book on philosophical knowledge that closely examines the methods of a number of famous philosophers. Alexander and Weinberg (2007) give a good introduction to the experimental philosophy movement and some of the most important works in that literature—see also Knobe and Nichols (2008b) listed under **Experimental Philosophy: The Positive Program**.

Alexander, J. and Weinberg, J. (2007). ‘Analytic Epistemology and Experimental Philosophy’, *Philosophy Compass* 2/1, 56-80.

[A good survey article on experimental philosophy. Distinguishes two importantly different views of the relationship between experimental philosophy and traditional philosophy, responds to criticisms of experimental philosophy, and suggests future directions for work in experimental philosophy.](#)

Braddon-Mitchell, D. & Nola, R. (2009a). ‘Introducing the Canberra Plan’, In *Conceptual Analysis and Philosophical Naturalism*, (eds.) D. Braddon-Mitchell & R. Nola, 1–20, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

[A useful introduction to the project in philosophical methodology and conceptual analysis known as the “Canberra Plan”, associated most closely with the work of Frank Jackson and David Lewis. Describes the origins of the Canberra Plan in work by Ramsey, Carnap, and Lewis on theoretical terms.](#)

Daniels, N. (2009). 'Reflective Equilibrium', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (eds.) E. Zalta.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/reflective-equilibrium/>

A good introduction to the method of reflective equilibrium, focused primarily on the extensive literature on this subject in moral philosophy.

Eklund, M. (2006). 'Metaontology', *Philosophy Compass* 1/3, 317–334.

A good survey article of some of the central issues in recent metametaphysical debates about the status and methodology of disputes in ontology.

Gutting, G. (2009). *What Philosophers Know*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A book arguing that analytic philosophy as a discipline has achieved a great deal of knowledge over the last fifty years. Unlike many discussions of philosophical methodology, this book has the important virtue of basing its conclusions on a series of detailed case studies of the methods and arguments of important works in analytic philosophy.

Manley, D. (2009). 'Introduction: A Guided Tour of Metametaphysics', *Metametaphysics*, (eds.) D. J. Chalmers, D. Manley & R. Wasserman, 1–37, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

An excellent first introduction to debates in metametaphysics on the question of what, if any, metaphysical disputes are trivial, or merely verbal, disputes.

Nagel, J. (2007). 'Epistemic Intuitions', *Philosophy Compass* 2/6, 792-819.

A very good overview of metaphilosophical debates about the status and nature of epistemic intuitions, also show how empirical evidence from linguistics and psychology connects with these debates.

Papineau, D. (2009a). 'Naturalism', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (eds.) E. Zalta.

This article contains a very good introduction to methodological naturalism, clearly explaining the difference between methodological and ontological versions of naturalism. Also argues for certain views on the relation of methodological naturalism to both conceptual analysis and the use of intuitions in philosophy.

Anthologies and Collections

There are a growing number of collections on topics related to philosophical methodology. Braddon-Mitchell and Nola (2009b) is a collection of papers on the influential 'Canberra Plan' approach to philosophical methodology, associated most closely with the work of Frank Jackson and David Lewis. Ravenscroft (2009) is a collection of critical papers on Jackson's work, and many of these papers address his influential views on conceptual analysis and philosophical methodology. Knobe and Nichols (2008) is a collection of papers developing or examining the program of experimental philosophy. DePaul and Ramsey (1998) is a collection of papers of intuitions that predates, but is still relevant to, more recent debates about experimental philosophy and the practice of appealing to intuitions in philosophy. Manley, Chalmers and Wasserman (eds.) (2009) is a collection of new papers on metametaphysics.

Beyer C. & Burri, A. (eds.). (2007). *Grazer Philosophische Studien 74*.

A special issue on philosophical knowledge, which contains a number of papers dealing with questions about methodology and the role of intuitions in philosophy.

Braddon-Mitchell, D. & Nola, R. (2009b). *Conceptual Analysis and Philosophical Naturalism* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

An excellent collection of papers on the 'Canberra Plan' project in philosophical methodology, many of which examine foundational questions about how this project should be interpreted and developed.

Chalmers, D. J., Manley D., & Wasserman R. (eds.). (2009). *Metametaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A collection of new papers on metametaphysics by leading figures in the field. Essential reading for anyone working in this area.

DePaul, M. R. and Ramsey, W. (eds.). (1997). *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

A collection of papers on intuitions many of which criticize or defend the role of intuitions in the method of cases and/or the method of reflective equilibrium. Contains a number of works arguing that the psychological literature on intuitions has skeptical implications for the philosophical practice of appealing to intuitions. This

collection predates the experimental philosophy movement but many of the papers in it are still widely cited in work by both experimental philosophers and their critics.

Knobe, J. & Nichols, S. (eds.). (2008a). *Experimental Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press.

A volume on experimental philosophy that collects together a number of important existing papers, as well as a few new papers. Overall an excellent volume, although note that it does not contain many works from the growing literature devoted to debating the alleged skeptical implications of experimental philosophy for the methods of traditional philosophy—the contribution from Sosa being the most notable exception.

Knobe, J. & Lombrozo, T. & Machery, E. (eds.). (2010). *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, Special Issue: Psychology and Experimental Philosophy Parts I and II.

A special issue (in two parts) of this new interdisciplinary journal is devoted to work on experimental philosophy and contain a number of interesting papers.

Ravenscroft, I. (ed.). (2009). *Minds, Ethics, and Conditionals: Themes from the Philosophy of Frank Jackson*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A collection of papers on the work of Frank Jackson, many of which critique his views on philosophical methodology and conceptual analysis—see especially the papers by Blackburn, Horgan and Timmins, Hornsby, Lycan, Price, and Schroeter & Bigelow, as well as Jackson’s replies to these critics.

The Method of Cases and Conceptual Analysis

The method of cases is a practice of testing, and then refining, philosophical theories by seeing whether or not they conflict with our intuitions or judgments about particular cases—where these cases are often purely hypothetical cases or “thought experiments”. The method of cases is often closely associated, or even identified, with the philosophical project of conceptual analysis—although a number of philosophers argue that this is a mistake. This section is divided into four subsections: **Defenses** lists works that defend (more or less) traditional accounts of the method of cases and/or conceptual analysis; **Criticisms** lists works that question the method of cases and/or conceptual analysis; **Revisionary Accounts** lists works that develop or examine revisionary accounts of the method of cases and/or conceptual analysis; and **Background** lists some central works in the philosophy of language and meaning that regularly inform contemporary discussions of conceptual analysis.

Defenses

This section lists works that defend or develop (more or less) orthodox accounts of the method of cases and/or conceptual analysis. Bealer (1998) is an important defense of the use in philosophy of intuitions about cases as evidence for or against philosophical theories. Pust (2000) argues that intuitions play a crucial evidential role in philosophy and responds to skeptical challenges to this practice. Jackson (1998) is a very prominent defense of the role of conceptual analysis in solving metaphysical questions found not only in philosophy but also in the natural sciences. Jackson and Chalmers (2001) is an important defense of the claim that conceptual analysis is required for reductive explanation. Mckeown-Green and Kingsbury (2009) defend Jackson’s account of the role of conceptual analysis in metaphysics against various criticisms. Ludwig (2007) offers a detailed account of the project of constructing conceptual analyses by the method of cases, and defends this project against challenges to it made by experimental philosophers. Sosa (2007) develops virtue-theoretic account of rational intuitions and defends their role in philosophy. Other defenses of the method of cases and/or conceptual analysis can be found under **Experimental Philosophy: The Negative Program**.

Bealer, G. (1998). ‘Intuition and the Autonomy of Philosophy’, In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. R. DePaul & W. Ramsey, 201–239, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Claims that it is a standard justificatory practice in philosophy to use intuitions about cases as evidence for or against philosophical claims and theories. Argues that the methods of philosophy are, in principle, autonomous from the methods of the sciences, and that philosophy has authority over science with respect to answering the central questions of philosophy.

Chalmers, D. and Jackson, F. (2001). ‘Conceptual Analysis and Reductive Explanation’, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 110, No. 3, 315–360.

Defends the view that conceptual analysis is required for reductive explanation against criticisms of it by Block and Stalnaker (1999)—listed below under **Criticisms**. Argues that if the phenomenal is reductively explainable in terms of the physical then there has to be an *a priori* entailment from the conjunction of all the physical and indexical truths, plus a “that’s all” statement, to any given phenomenal truth.

Jackson, F. (1998). *From Metaphysics To Ethics: A Defense of Conceptual Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.

A highly influential account of conceptual analysis and its role in philosophy. Claims that conceptual analysis is essential to solving “location problems” in metaphysics—for example, the problem of whether one can locate folk psychological kinds in the theories of the mind given by the cognitive sciences. Argues that conceptual analysis is not undermined by either Quine’s arguments against analyticity, or by Putnam and Kripke’s arguments for semantic externalism.

Ludwig, K. (2007). ‘The Epistemology of Thought Experiments: First Person versus Third Person Approaches’, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 31, 128-159.

Offers a detailed and nuanced account of the philosophical project of constructing conceptual analyses by a “first person” use of the method of cases. Defends this project against criticisms of it made by experimental philosophers.

Mckeown-Green, J. & Kingsbury, J. (2009). ‘Jackson’s Armchair: The Only Chair in Town?’, In *Conceptual Analysis and Philosophical Naturalism*, (eds.) D. Braddon-Mitchell & R. Nola, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

A defense and examination of Jackson’s view that conceptual analysis must play a central role in solving location problems in metaphysics. Defends Jackson’s view against various criticisms, including the criticism that the history of conceptual analyses in philosophy is one long list of dismal failures. Argues that Jackson is wrong to equate conceptual analysis with semantic analysis.

Pust, Joel. (2000). *Intuitions as Evidence*. New York: Garland.

A book devoted to articulating and defending the practice of using intuitions as evidence in philosophy. Argues that intuitions play a crucial evidential role in both the method of cases and the method of reflective equilibrium.

Sosa, Ernest. (2007). *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge Volume 1*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 3 develops the most recent statement of Sosa’s important virtue-theoretic account of rational intuitions. Also defends the use of intuitions in philosophy against objections given by Cummins (1998), Stich (1988)—listed under **Reflective Equilibrium**—and Weinberg et al (2001)—listed under **Experimental Philosophy: The Negative Program**.

Criticisms

This section lists works that develop objections to the method of cases and/or the project of conceptual analysis. Hintikka (1999) criticizes the contemporary practice of appealing to intuitions. Block and Stalnaker (1999) dispute the idea that conceptual analysis has a crucial role to play in establishing reductive explanations of the phenomenal in terms of the physical. Hornsby (2009) argues that one can be a physicalist about the mind whilst denying that one can give a reductive explanation of it. Laurence and Margolis (2003) argue that insights from Quine, Putnam and Kripke, still undermine contemporary attempts to revive conceptual analysis. Schroeter (2004) appeals to semantic externalism to argue against “modern philosophical analysts” like Bealer and Jackson. Williamson (2004) criticizes the idea that philosophy is particularly concerned with questions about concepts or language. Williamson (2006) is a critique of the notion of epistemic analyticity—versions of which are often appealed to by proponents of conceptual analysis. For other criticisms of the method of cases and/or conceptual analysis see **Experimental Philosophy: The Negative Program**, and the works by Cummins (1998) and Stich (1988) listed under **The Method of Reflective Equilibrium**.

Block, N. and Stalnaker, R. (1999). ‘Conceptual Analysis, Dualism and the Explanatory Gap’, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 108, No. 1, 1–46.

An important critique of the idea that conceptual analysis is required for reductive explanation. Argues that dualism does not follow from the assumption that consciousness cannot be given a functional or physical analysis. See Chalmers and Jackson (2001)—listed above under **Defenses**—for a response.

Hintikka, J. (1999). ‘The Emperor’s New Intuitions’, *The Journal of Philosophy* 96, 127-47.

Argues that appeals to intuitions in contemporary philosophy are deeply flawed because they are not supported by any theoretical attempts to justify this use of intuitions. Claims that the current prevalence of appeals to intuitions in philosophy is due to the influence of Chomsky's work in linguistics.

Hornsby, J. (2009). 'Physicalism, Conceptual Analysis, and Acts of Faith', In *Minds, Ethics, and Conditionals: Themes from the Philosophy of Frank Jackson*. (eds.) I. Ravenscroft, 43–60, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Argues against Jackson's assumption that a commitment to physicalism is a commitment to the idea that a complete account of what our world is like can, in principle, be told in terms of the fundamental physical properties, relations and particulars. Claims that anti-reductionist physicalists can deny this assumption. See also Jackson's reply in the same volume.

Laurence, S. & Margolis, E. (2003). 'Concepts and Conceptual Analysis', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LXVII, No. 2, 253–282.

A critique of recent attempts to revive conceptual analysis focusing on Jackson's work. Argues that Jackson's account of conceptual analysis is still undermined by worries about conceptual revisability raised by Quine and Putnam, and Putnam and Kripke's arguments showing that one can possess concepts even when one has radically mistaken beliefs about the kinds picked out by one's concepts.

Soames, S. (2005). *Reference and Description*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Contains an important critique of Jackson and Chalmers' respective accounts of two-dimensional semantics. Jackson and Chalmers' views on two-dimensional semantics play a crucial role in their arguments for the significance of conceptual analysis to metaphysical inquiry.

Schroeter, L. (2004). 'The Limits of Conceptual Analysis', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 85, 425–453.

A critique of "modern philosophical analysis", a view attributed to Bealer and Jackson, amongst others. In response to the semantic externalism of Kripke, Putnam and Burge, the modern analyst grants that we do not have armchair access to the precise applicability conditions of our concepts. But the modern analyst holds that we do have armchair access to conditions that fix the reference of our concepts. However, Schroeter argues that externalist considerations also undermine the case for us possessing not only the former, but also the latter, kind of armchair knowledge.

Williamson, T. (2004). 'Past the Linguistic Turn?', In *The Future for Philosophy*, Edited by B. Leiter, 106–128, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A critique of the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. Argues against the idea that all philosophical questions are about language or concepts. See also Chapters 1–2 of Williamson (2007) under **Revisionary Accounts**.

Williamson, T. (2006). 'Conceptual Truth', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 80, 1–41.

Argues against epistemological conceptions of analyticity or conceptual truth according to which the mere understanding of such truths is sufficient for knowing or justifiably believing them to be true. See also Chapters 3–4 of Williamson (2007) under **Revisionary Accounts**.

Revisionary Accounts

This section lists works that develop or examine revisionary views of the method of cases and/or conceptual analysis. Gendler (2007) examines the persuasive role of thought experiments and the method of cases. Haslanger (2006) argues that analyses of social concepts should be sensitive to the role of those concepts in constructing our social lives. Levin (2004). Weatherson (2003) argues that a philosophical theory may be true even if there are intuitive counterexamples to it. Williamson (2007) offers an account of the method of cases in terms of our ability to reason with counterfactuals, and criticizes views according to which philosophy is essentially concerned with linguistic or conceptual matters. Other revisionary accounts of the method of cases are offered by Devitt (1996), Kornblith (2002) and Papineau (2009b)—under **Methodological Naturalism**—and Prinz (2008)—under **Experimental Philosophy: The Positive Program**.

Gendler, T. (2007). 'Philosophical Thought Experiments, Intuitions, and Cognitive Equilibrium', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 31, 68–89.

An investigation of the psychology of thought experiments and their role as devices of persuasion. Suggests that two thought experiments can evoke conflicting responses to the same (or relevantly similar) contents, if one presents that content in a more "abstract" way and the other presents it in a more "concrete" way. Appeals to psychological research, and examples from philosophy, to support this claim and examine its implications.

Haslanger, S. (2006). 'What Good Are Our Intuitions: Philosophical Analysis and Social Kinds', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 89-118.

Distinguishes three projects of philosophical analysis that one might be engaged in when addressing a question of the form 'What is X?'. For example, suppose the question 'What is knowledge?'. On 'the conceptual approach' one is asking what our concept of knowledge is. On 'the descriptive approach' one is asking what objective types, if any, our epistemic vocabulary tracks. On 'the ameliorative approach' one is asking what purposes are served by our concept of knowledge. Appeals to semantic externalism to argue that analyses of social categories, like race and gender, could be highly counterintuitive and yet correct analyses of our concepts of race and gender.

Kornblith, H. (1998). 'The Role of Intuition in Philosophical Inquiry'. In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*. (eds.) M. R. DePaul & W. Ramsey, 201–239, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Disputes Bealer's claim—for example, see Bealer (1992) under **Methodological Naturalism**—that naturalists who endorse empiricism rely on, but cannot consistently endorse, the standard justificatory practice in philosophy of using intuitions as evidence. Offers a 'naturalistic' account of this practice according to which the intuitions relied upon in philosophy are theory-mediated and corrigible beliefs, and when these beliefs constitute knowledge that knowledge is *a posteriori* and empirical. For similar arguments see Chapter 1 of Kornblith (2002) under **Methodological Naturalism**.

Levin, Janet. (2004). 'The Evidential Status of Philosophical Intuition', *Philosophical Studies* 121: 193-224.

Examines "neo-traditionalist" accounts of the role of intuitions in philosophy (focusing mainly on Bealer's work), and criticisms of such accounts by methodological naturalists like Kornblith. Offers an alternative account of the evidential role of intuitions that incorporates elements of both traditionalism and naturalism.

Weatherson, B. (2003). 'What Good Are Counterexamples?', *Philosophical Studies* 115: 1-31.

Argues against the practice of taking the existence of intuitive counterexamples to a theory to be a decisive reason for rejecting that theory. Appeals to David Lewis' idea that meaning is determined by both 'use' and 'naturalness' to support the claim that a theory according to which all *F*s are *G*s could still be correct even if there are cases where have a strong intuition that some *F* is not a *G*.

Williamson, T. (2007). *The Philosophy of Philosophy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Press.

A recent but already central work on philosophical methodology. Defends, in principle, the armchair methods of philosophy but rejects views of these methods according to which philosophical inquiry is distinctively concerned with conceptual analysis or relies on a special faculty of intuition, and emphasizes the continuity of philosophy with other forms of inquiry. Amongst other things, Williamson also: criticizes psychologistic views of philosophical evidence which he claims encourages skepticism about the armchair judgments relied upon in philosophy; offers an account of modal epistemology and the method of cases in terms of our ability to reason with counterfactuals; and questions the significance of the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge.

Background to the Contemporary Debates

This sections lists a few central works in the philosophy of language and meaning that debates about conceptual analysis often return to. It is usually assumed that to defend conceptual analysis is to be committed to the existence of conceptual or analytic truths. For this reason debates about conceptual analysis often discuss Quine's famous (1951) criticisms of the analytic-synthetic distinction, as well as Strawson and Grice's (1956) response to Quine. Arguments by Kripke (1971) and Putnam (1975) for semantic externalism are relevant to debates about conceptual analysis because externalism is thought to be inconsistent with the idea that we have *a priori* access to what falls into the extension of our linguistic or conceptual representations. Kripke's (1971) arguments for the necessary *a posteriori*, and Putnam's (1975) famous "Twin Earth" example, play a central role in debates about whether *a priori* conceptual analysis is required to establish reductive explanations in metaphysics. See, for example, the debate between Chalmers and Jackson (2001)—listed under **Defenses**—and Block and Stalnaker (1999)—listed under **Criticisms**.

Kripke, S. (1972). *Naming and Necessity*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Kripke's arguments against descriptivism, and for the existence of necessary *a posteriori* truths, often play a central role in contemporary discussions of conceptual analysis.

Putnam, H. (1975). 'The Meaning of Meaning', In *Language, Mind and Knowledge: Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science VII*, (eds.) K. Gunderson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

The paper in which Putnam appeals to his famous “Twin Earth” thought experiment to argue for semantic externalism, and to illustrate Kripke’s insight that there are statements—like ‘Water is H₂O’—that are necessarily true yet can only be known *a posteriori*.

Quine, W. V. O. 1951. ‘Two Dogmas of Empiricism’, *Philosophical Review* 60, 20–43.

It is usually assumed that to defend conceptual analysis is to be committed to the analytic-synthetic distinction. Debates about conceptual analysis often return then to Quine’s famous critique of the analytic-synthetic distinction. It is often also claimed that Quine’s article also has skeptical implications for the notion of a priori knowledge or justification.

Strawson, P.F. and Grice, H. P. (1956). ‘In Defense of a Dogma’, *Philosophical Review* 65 (2), 141–158.

An early but still important response to Quine’s critique of the analytic-synthetic distinction. Argues that an analytic-synthetic distinction is consistent with Quine’s claims that any statement can be held true come what may, and that no statement is immune from revision.

The Method of Reflective Equilibrium

The method of reflective equilibrium is a procedure for forming beliefs or theories. The method of *narrow* reflective equilibrium is a process of making mutual adjustments to one’s initial set of particular case judgments about some target domain, and an initial set of judgments about what general principles govern that domain, until the remaining judgments are brought into a state of balance or “reflective equilibrium”. On the method of *wide* reflective equilibrium relevant judgments about subjects outside of the target domain also enter into this refining and balancing process. The method of reflective equilibrium is most frequently discussed in moral philosophy. However, it is often also claimed that it is the primary method used for forming and evaluating philosophical theories in general. This section consists of a selection of important works from the ethics literature, as well as works addressing the more general application of this method in philosophy. Rawls (1971) is a famous work in political philosophy where the term ‘reflective equilibrium’ was first introduced. Goodman (1954) outlines a method for assessing rules of inference that is sometimes identified as being the first articulation of a version of the method of reflective equilibrium. Rawls (1974) and Daniels (1979) appeal to the distinction between narrow and wide reflective equilibrium in responding to criticisms of reflective equilibrium. Hare (1973) is an important early critique of Rawls (1971), and Holmgren (1987) responds to Rawls (1974). DePaul (1998) defends reflective equilibrium on the grounds that it would be irrational to adopt any other method when forming philosophical theories. Cummins (1998) and Stich (1988) both criticize the use of reflective equilibrium in philosophy because of its reliance on intuitions. Sosa (1991) defends reflective equilibrium against Stich’s criticisms. Pust (2000) argues that intuitions play a foundational role in the method of reflective equilibrium. The papers by Cummins and Stich are closely related to some of the criticisms of armchair philosophy made by experimental philosophers—see **Experimental Philosophy: The Negative Program**.

Cummins, R. (1998). ‘Reflections on Reflective Equilibrium’, In *Rethinking Intuition*, (eds.) M. R. DePaul & W. Ramsey, 113–141, Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Claims that what is called “reflective equilibrium” in philosophy is a standard methodology used in the natural sciences, where intuitions are assigned the role played by observations in science. However, argues that intuitions, unlike observations, are epistemologically useless because they are never calibrated, that is, their presumed reliability as a guide to truths about their targets is never confirmed by independent means.

Daniels, N. (1979). ‘Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics’, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 76, No. 5, 256–82.

An influential defense of reflective equilibrium against the charge that reflective equilibrium is a disguised form of subjective intuitionism. Concedes that narrow reflective equilibrium can be regarded as a sophisticated form of intuitionism equilibrium. However, argues that wide reflective equilibrium is not a form of intuitionism as it allows extensive revisions of our moral judgments, about both particular cases and general principles in light of our background theories, and so does not assign a foundational role to moral intuitions.

DePaul, M. R. 1998. ‘Why Bother With Reflective Equilibrium?’, In *Rethinking Intuition*, (eds.) M. R. DePaul & W. Ramsey, 293–309, Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Concedes that the method of reflective equilibrium does not reliably lead inquirers to either true or justified beliefs. However, reflective equilibrium is defended on the grounds that any alternative method of philosophical inquiry would be irrational.

Goodman, N. (1954). *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*. University of London: Athlone Press.

Offers an account of how rules of inference are justified that is often cited as the first statement of an account of reflective equilibrium. Argues that rules of inference are justified by their accordance with our valid judgments about the acceptability of particular inferences, and that judgments about the acceptability of particular inferences are justified by their accordance with valid rules of inference. Claims that this circularity here is virtuous, rather than vicious, because the process of justification is one of making mutual adjustments between rules and accepted inferences.

Hare, R.M. (1973). 'Rawls' Theory of Justice—I', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 23, No 91, 144-55.

An important early critique of Rawls' (1971) claim that the method of reflective equilibrium is the correct method for testing moral theories. Argues that reflective equilibrium is a form of intuitionism and subjectivism.

Holmgren, M. (1987). 'Wide Reflective Equilibrium'. *Metaphilosophy*, Vol 18, No. 2, 108–124.

A critique of Rawls' (1974) claim that moral theory is largely independent of epistemology because the method of wide reflective equilibrium does not presuppose the existence of objective moral truths.

Lewis, D. (1973). *Counterfactuals*. Oxford: Blackwell.

In Chapter 4 p. 88, Lewis gives a short but illuminating description of his influential approach to philosophical questions, outlining what is essentially a version of the method of reflective equilibrium.

Pust, J. (2000). *Intuitions as Evidence*. New York: Routledge.

Argues (in chapter 1) that a number of important statements of the method of reflective equilibrium all clearly assign an evidential role to intuitions (both particular case intuitions and intuitions about general principles). Argues, against Daniels (1979), that not only narrow but also wide reflective equilibrium assigns a foundational role to intuitions.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*, 2nd Edition 1999, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rawls' famous work in political philosophy where he first introduced the term "reflective equilibrium", and where he uses this method to both construct and justify his theory of justice as fairness. Suggests that the aim of moral theory is to describe our moral capacity, and the particular aim of a theory of justice is to describe our conception of justice. The best account of a person's conception of justice is one which would match the judgments that this person would make after they had gone through an idealized procedure of examining different proposed principles of justice, and making mutual adjustments between these principles and their "considered judgments" about what particular things are just or unjust, until the remaining principles and judgments are in a state of reflective equilibrium.

Rawls, J. (1974). 'The Independence of Moral Theory', *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 48: 5–22.

In this paper Rawls explicitly distinguishes narrow from wide equilibrium for the first time. Suggests that concerns about the conservativeness of the method of reflective equilibrium do not apply if the aim is to reach a wide, rather than merely narrow, reflective equilibrium. Argues that moral theory is, to a large degree, independent from other areas of philosophy, and does not presuppose the existence of objective moral truths.

Sosa, E. (1991). 'Equilibrium in Coherence', Chapter 15 of his *Knowledge in Perspective: Selected Essays in Epistemology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Defends reflective equilibrium against the criticisms of Stich (1998). Distinguishes an individual from a social version of reflective equilibrium. Argues that Stich's critique only undermines the social version of reflective equilibrium, and that the individual version of this method is the one most apt for pursuing the aims of analytic epistemology.

Stich, S. (1988). 'Reflective Equilibrium, Analytic Epistemology and the Problem of Cognitive Diversity', *Synthese* 74, 391–413. Reprinted in *Rethinking Intuition*, (eds.). M. R. DePaul & Ramsey, W, 95–112, Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Claims that we should expect different cultures to employ different cognitive and reasoning processes. This leads to the epistemological question: Which of these different ways of reasoning *should* we use? Argues that reflective equilibrium cannot be used as a criterion for evaluating different cognitive processes because of the possibility that reasoning systems containing unjustified inferential rules could still be brought into reflective

equilibrium. Also argues that similar problems undermine any epistemological project that holds that the choice between competing justificational rules is a matter that can be resolved by conceptual analysis.

Williamson, T. (2007). 'Evidence in Philosophy', Chapter 7 of his *The Philosophy of Philosophy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Press.

In Section 7 of Chapter 7, Williamson offers some brief but interesting critical remarks about reflective equilibrium related to his broader critique of 'psychologistic' conceptions of the evidence used in philosophy.

Methodological Naturalism

Methodological naturalism is the view that the methods of philosophy are, or should be, continuous with the methods of the natural sciences. (Note the term 'methodological naturalism' is also used in the philosophy of religion to name an unrelated view.) Often, but not always, philosophers who endorse this continuity thesis take themselves to be thereby rejecting conceptual analysis, analyticity, and the *a priori*. This reflects the pervasive influence of Quine's work on many contemporary philosophers who endorse methodological naturalism—in particular, Quine's (1969) vision of a naturalistic approach to epistemology. As well as Quine (1969), this section lists works that develop, apply, or examine, different forms of methodological naturalism. Bealer (1992) argues that Quinean empiricism is incoherent. Kim (1998) argues that Quine's naturalized epistemology is not really a form of epistemology at all. Devitt (1996) is a book length development and application of a naturalistic methodology for semantics. Haack (1993a) distinguishes a moderate from a more radical interpretation of Quine's naturalized epistemology. Kornblith (2002) is a book length development of a form of naturalized epistemology according to which knowledge is a natural kind. Maddy (2007) is a book length development and application of a naturalistic approach to philosophy which she calls 'Second Philosophy'. Papineau (2009b) argues that philosophy is like science in three important ways. See also Prinz (2008) for an interesting argument for the continuity of traditional conceptual analysis with the methods of the natural sciences—listed under **Experimental Philosophy: the Positive Program**. More generally, the 'positive' program of experimental philosophy can be seen as a variant of methodological naturalism.

Bealer, G. (1992). The Incoherence of Empiricism, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume* 66: 99-138.

Offers three different arguments for the conclusion that Quinean empiricism is incoherent which all allege, in different ways, that the Quinean position is incoherent because of its commitment to the claim that intuitions are not evidence. Argues that we should replace Quinean empiricism with "moderate rationalism" according to which intuitions, like experiences, are a basic source of evidence.

Devitt, M. (1996). *Coming to Our Senses: A Naturalistic Program for Semantic Localism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Develops a naturalistic methodology for semantics that is then used to argue against various views in semantics, including semantic holism and direct reference theories of the meaning of names. Also offers a naturalistic account of the role of armchair intuitions and thought experiments in philosophy.

Haack, S. (1993). 'The Two Faces of Quine's Naturalism', *Synthese* 94: 335–356.

Argues that Quine's naturalized epistemology is ambivalent between two very different methodological projects, what Haack calls 'modest naturalism' and 'scientific naturalism'. Modest naturalism views epistemology as an *a posteriori* and empirical discipline. Scientific naturalism goes further and views epistemology as simply part of empirical psychology. Scientific naturalism is at odds with the traditional aims of epistemology but modest naturalism is not. Also argues that scientific naturalism faces serious problems not faced by modest naturalism.

Kim, J. (1998). 'What is "Naturalized Epistemology?"', *Philosophical Perspectives*, Vol. 2 Epistemology: 381–405.

Claims that epistemology is essentially a normative discipline, given its central concern with the normative concept of justification. Argues that Quine's (1969) "naturalized epistemology" is not actually a kind of

epistemology at all, as it is committed to replacing the normative aims of epistemology with purely descriptive aims. Also rejects the idea that “naturalized epistemology” and traditional epistemology at least share a common subject, namely, that they both concern beliefs. This idea is rejected on the grounds that the concept of belief is itself a normative concept.

Kornblith, H. (2002). *Knowledge and its Place in Nature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Argues that epistemology should proceed by trying to directly examine knowledge itself, as opposed to examining our concept of knowledge or our intuitions about knowledge. Appeals to evidence from cognitive ecology to support the claim that knowledge is a natural kind. As knowledge is a natural kind, the proper way to investigate its nature is by the kind of empirical means we would use to investigate other natural kinds. Offers a naturalistic account of the role of appeals to intuition in the construction of empirical theories.

Maddy, P. (2007). *Second Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Develops a form of naturalism called ‘Second Philosophy’. Second Philosophy is meant to be a way of conducting philosophical inquiry, rather than a theory. This way is illustrated using the device of an idealized figure called ‘the Second Philosopher’. The Second Philosopher is perfectly at home in all the natural sciences, and uses the methods of the natural sciences whenever she attempts to answer philosophical questions. Second Philosophy is inspired by Quine’s naturalism, but the Second Philosopher rejects his confirmational holism. Second Philosophy is also contrasted with the views of other major figures in the history of philosophy, and is applied to philosophical issues concerning truth, reference, logic, and mathematics.

Papineau, D. (2009b). ‘The Poverty of Analysis’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume LXXXIII*, 1–30.

Argues that the methods of philosophical inquiry (including the method of cases) are continuous with the methods of scientific inquiry. Philosophy—as it is currently practiced—is like science in the following three ways: (i) the claims made by philosophy are synthetic; (ii) philosophical knowledge is *a posteriori*; and (iii) the central questions of philosophy concern actuality rather than necessity. Criticises alternative conceptions of philosophical methodology that reject either of (i), (ii), or (iii).

Quine, W. V. O. (1969). ‘Epistemology Naturalized’, in his *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Criticizes empiricist attempts to provide an epistemological foundation for science by showing how any statements about the external world can be derived from, or translated into, statements about sense data or sensations. Argues that we should abandon such projects and instead study the psychological and causal relations between our sensations and our beliefs or theories about the external world. Epistemology, on this view, is a chapter of psychology.

Experimental Philosophy

Experimental philosophy is a recent but already highly active, and controversial, movement in philosophical methodology. Experimental philosophers often appeal to empirical results gathered by professional scientists. But what distinguishes this movement is that experimental philosophers also run their own experiments—sometimes in collaboration with scientists—that are designed to address philosophical and metaphilosophical questions. The movement is particularly known for its use of survey methods as a means of collecting data on people’s intuitions. Following a, rough but useful, distinction made in the literature, we can distinguish a “negative” from a “positive” program of experimental philosophy. Negative experimental philosophers argue that their experimental results have important skeptical implications for the armchair methods of traditional philosophy—in particular, for the method of cases and/or the method of reflective equilibrium. See **The Method of Cases and Conceptual Analysis** and **The Method of Reflective Equilibrium**. Positive experimental philosophers argue that their results support certain conclusions about the nature of folk concepts, or the mechanisms that underlie our intuitions about the extension of these concepts. Sometimes

positive experimental philosophers also argue that such conclusions provide (indirect) support for certain philosophical positions concerning the entities picked out by our concepts. This section is divided into two subsections: **The Negative Program** lists works that develop, criticize or defend the program of negative experimental philosophy; and **The Positive Program** lists works that develop, criticize or defend the program of positive experimental philosophy.

The Negative Program

This section lists works that develop, criticize, or defend, the negative program of experimental philosophy. Weinberg et al (2001) and Machery et al (2004) present data indicating that there is cross-cultural variation in intuitions about key thought experiments in epistemology and the philosophy of language, respectively. Swain et al (2008) present data in support of the claim that intuitions about key thought experiments in epistemology are subject to certain order effects. All of these authors argue that their results constitute a serious challenge to the use of intuitions in armchair philosophy. Paul (2010) argues that results from experimental philosophy are still relevant to philosophy that rejects the aims of conceptual analysis in favor of a more direct investigation of the world. Weinberg (2007) and (2009) defends and develops the theoretical views behind the experimentalist's critique of armchair philosophy. Williamson (2009), in response to Weinberg (2009), argues that the psychological literature on expertise does not undermine the "expertise response" to negative experimental philosophy. Deutsch (2010) argues that Weinberg et al (2001) and Machery et al (2004) are wrong to claim that certain famous philosophical arguments depend on the use of intuitions as evidence. Kauppinen (2007) argues that experimental philosophers make mistaken assumptions about what philosophers are committing themselves to when they appeal to intuitions. Levin (2009) defends the practice of using intuitions in philosophy by arguing that this practice is best understood as a form of reflective equilibrium. See also Ludwig (2007)—listed under **The Method of Cases and Conceptual Analysis: Defenses**—who defends conceptual analysis against criticisms of this project made by experimental philosophers.

Deutsch, M. (2010). 'Intuitions, Counter-Examples, and Experimental Philosophy', *Review on Philosophy and Psychology*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 447–460.

A defense of armchair philosophy against the negative program of experimental philosophy—focusing on Weinberg et al (2001) and Machery et al (2004). Denies the assumption that Gettier and Kripke's respective arguments against the JTB theory of knowledge and descriptivism, depended on the use of intuitions as evidence.

Kauppinen, A. (2007). 'The Rise and Fall of Experimental Philosophy', *Philosophical Explorations* 10, 95–118.

Takes the canonical form of philosophical appeals to intuitions to be claims of the form 'In S we would (not) say that X is C'—where S is a description of a case, X an element of the case, and C is the concept that applies, or fails to apply, to X. Claims that experimental philosophers wrongly assume that in making claims of this form philosophers are thereby committing themselves to the empirical prediction that most ordinary folk will (not) say that X is C when presented with S. Argues that philosophical appeals to intuition are best interpreted as being elliptical for a claim about how competent users of C would respond if they considered S in sufficiently ideal conditions and their answer was influenced only by semantic considerations. Suggests that the survey methods used by experimental philosophers are a poor way of evaluating such claims.

Levin, J. (2009). 'Experimental Philosophy', *Analysis* Vol 69, No. 4, 761–769.

A critical review of Knobe & Nichols (2008)—listed under **Anthologies and Collections**. Argues that experimental philosophers should attempt to devise methods to elicit "considered judgments" that genuinely reflect conceptual competence rather than performance errors. Suggests that experimental philosophers could do this by using the armchair method of reflective equilibrium as a model and that, if they did this, the resulting experimental results would then most likely match the results of 'experiments' conducted found from the armchair.

Machery, M., Mallon, R., Nichols, S., and Stich, S. (2004). 'Semantics, Cross-Cultural Style', *Cognition* 92: B1-B12.

Presents data showing cross-cultural variation in intuitions about cases modeled on Kripke's "Gödel/Schmid" and "Jonah" cases. East Asians are more likely to have "descriptivist" intuitions with respect to these cases and Westerners are more likely to have "Kripkean" intuitions. Machery et al suggest that philosophers of reference assume that Kripkean intuitions about these cases are universal, but that their data shows this assumption to be mistaken. Furthermore, they claim that their results indicate that the armchair methods of philosophy must be radically revised.

Paul, L. A. (2010). 'New Roles for Experimental Work in Metaphysics', *Review on Philosophy and Psychology*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 461–476.

Argues that experimental philosophy is relevant to philosophy that aims to directly investigate things, properties, or other entities in the world, as opposed to only being relevant for philosophy that aims to investigate our concepts of such phenomena. Philosophers engaged in the former project still rely on ordinary judgments, therefore, they need to be sensitive to results in the cognitive science of ordinary judgments. Uses debates about the nature of causation as a case study.

Sosa, E. (2008). 'Experimental Philosophy & Philosophical Intuition', In *Experimental Philosophy*, (eds.) J. Knobe & S. Nichols, 231–240, New York: Oxford University Press.

A defense of the practice of using armchair intuitions in philosophy based on the idea that when experimental philosophers discover disagreements in intuitive responses, these could reflect merely verbal, rather than substantive, disagreements.

Swain, S., Alexander, J., and Weinberg, J. (2008). 'The Instability of Philosophical Intuitions: Running Hot and Cold on Truetemp', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 76, 138-55.

Presents data showing that intuitions about Keith Lehrer's "Truetemp Case"—a case which is meant to be a counterexample to reliabilism—vary depending on whether, and what, other kinds of cases are presented before it. Argues that these results question the legitimacy of using intuitions about Truetemp cases in arguments against reliabilism, and that they also support a skeptical attitude towards the general use of intuitions in philosophy.

Weinberg, J. (2007). 'How to Challenge Intuitions Empirically without Risking Skepticism', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 31, 318-43.

An important articulation and defense of the program of negative experimental philosophy. Distinguishes the experimentalist's critique of armchair philosophy from general skepticism. Argues that the practice of appealing to intuitions in philosophy is "hopeless", that is, it is a practice based on a fallible source of evidence—namely, intuition—but which lacks any means of detecting, or correcting for, the mistaken outputs of this source.

Weinberg, J. (2009). 'On Doing Better Experimental Style', *Philosophical Studies* 145, 455–464.

Claims that results from experimental philosophy and psychology constitute a strong *prima facie* challenge to armchair philosophy. Argues that the experimentalist's skeptical challenge is importantly different from the "judgment skepticism" criticized by Williamson (2007; Chapter 7)—listed under **The Method of Cases and Conceptual Analysis: Revisionary Accounts**.

Weinberg, J., Nichols, S., and Stich, S. (2001). 'Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions. *Philosophical Topics*, 29: 429–459.

Presents survey data suggesting cultural variation with respect to intuitions about important thought experiments in epistemology—including Gettier cases. Argues that this data undermines "Intuition-Driven Romanticism"—a family of theoretical methods in epistemology that take intuitions as inputs and produce, as outputs, normative claims about matters epistemic. Versions of the method of reflective equilibrium are cited as paradigmatic examples of Intuition-Driven Romanticism.

Williamson, T. (2009). 'Replies to Ichikawa, Martin, and Weinberg', *Philosophical Studies* 145: 465–476.

Williamson, in his response to Weinberg (2009), argues that the psychological literature on expertise cited by Weinberg does not constitute even a *prima facie* challenge to the assumption that there is real expertise in armchair philosophy. Suggests that critiques of armchair philosophy based on the evidence of order and framing effects on philosophical judgments would, if sound, threaten to undermine not only philosophy but also science.

The Positive Program

This section lists a few examples of positive experimental philosophy—to give just a glimpse of the diverse range of issues to which this kind of methodology is being applied—as well as works that criticize or defend this research program. Knobe (2003) presents survey results that have stimulated a great deal of investigation into the relationship between attributions of folk psychological concepts and moral judgments. Bengson et al (2009) appeal to survey results to argue both for and against certain accounts of knowledge-how. Nahmias et al (2006) present survey results in support of the conclusion that incompatibilists are wrong when they claim that their position is more intuitive than compatibilist alternatives. Knobe et al (2008) and Nadelhoffer et al (2007) distinguish and defend a number of different projects pursued by experimental philosophers. Alexander et al (2010) argue that the negative program of experimental philosophy poses a serious challenge not only to armchair philosophy but also to positive experimental philosophy. Sommers (2010) critically examines work by experimental philosophers on free will and moral responsibility. Prinz (2008) distinguishes experimental philosophy from what he calls “empirical philosophy”, and discusses how these two research programs can both supplement the armchair methods of traditional philosophy.

Alexander, J. Mallon, R. Weinberg, J. (2010). ‘Accentuate the Negative’, *Review on Philosophy and Psychology*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 297–314.

Distinguishes different four different versions of the positive program of experimental philosophy. Claims that all of these versions are committed to the idea that intuitions are reliable evidence and that they are, by and large, stable and shared. Argues that, given these commitments, the results of negative experimental philosophy present almost as serious a challenge to positive experimental philosophy as they do to traditional philosophy.

Bengson, J. Moffett, M. and Wright, Jennifer C. (2009). ‘The Folk On Knowing How’, *Philosophical Studies*, 142, 387–401.

Presents survey results in support of the claim that folk judgments about knowledge-how conflict with a “neo-Rylean” view of knowledge-how according to which one knows how to F iff one possesses a certain sort of ability to F. Argues that these results constitute a strong prima facie case against neo-Ryleanism and for an “intellectualist” view of knowledge-how according to which one knows how to F iff one possess a certain sort of propositional knowledge regarding F.

Knobe, J. (2003). ‘Intentional Action and Side Effects in Ordinary Language’, *Analysis*, 63, 190-193.

The paper where the author first reported survey results in support of the claim that attributions of intentional action are influenced by moral considerations. These results have subsequently been the subject of a great deal of discussion and debate, and have lead to a number of other related survey experiments.

Knobe, J. and Nichols, S. (2008). ‘An Experimental Philosophy Manifesto’, In *Experimental Philosophy*, (eds.) J. Knobe & S. Nichols, 3–16, New York: Oxford University Press.

Identifies and defends a number of different aims pursued by experimental philosophers. Emphasizes the continuity of experimental philosophy with the aims of traditional philosophy.

Nadelhoffer, T. & Nahmias, E. (2007). ‘The Past and Future of Experimental Philosophy’, *Philosophical Explorations*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 123–149.

Distinguishes two ‘positive’ projects of experimental philosophy from one ‘negative’ project: “Experimental Analysis” seeks to examine folk intuitions in a systematic and controlled way; “Experimental Descriptivism” is concerned with examining the mechanisms that generate folk intuitions; and “Experimental Restrictionism” is the ‘negative’ project of showing how practices of appealing to intuitions in traditional armchair philosophy are deeply flawed. Responds to criticisms of experimental philosophy and suggests directions for future research.

Nahmias, E., Morris, S.G., Nadelhoffer, T., & Turner, J. (2006). ‘Is Incompatibilism Intuitive?’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 73, 28–53.

Argues that it is important for incompatibilists that their view of free will is the intuitive or default position for ordinary people, as their position is more metaphysically demanding than compatibilist alternatives. Contests this assumption by presenting survey data in support of the claim that ordinary people do not have incompatibilist intuitions. As with Knobe (2003), this paper has generated a great deal of discussion, and has led to a number of other survey experiments dealing with related issues.

Prinz, J. J. 2008. 'Empirical and Experimental Philosophy', In *Experimental Philosophy*, (eds.) J. Knobe & S. Nichols, 189–208, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Distinguishes experimental philosophy from “empirical philosophy”—which is philosophy informed by empirical results gathered by professional scientists rather than philosophers. Claims that philosophy is often centrally concerned with investigating conceptual matters by way of armchair reflection and the use of intuitions. Argues, however, that we only discover what our intuitions are by employing a form of observation, namely, introspection. In which case, the armchair methods of philosophy should be viewed as continuous with the methods of the natural sciences. But while armchair methods are a way of answering conceptual questions, they are by no means the best or the only way of doing so. In addressing philosophical questions we will often need to look to both experimental philosophy and empirical philosophy.

Sommers, T. (2010). 'Experimental Philosophy and Free Will', *Philosophy Compass* 5/2, 199–212.

Develops a sympathetic critique of the experimental philosophy work done on freedom and moral responsibility, and gives a good overview of the literature. Argues that while the work of experimental philosophers has increased our understanding of the factors that influence judgments about freedom and moral responsibility, their approach also faces significant practical and philosophical difficulties.

Metametaphysics

Metametaphysics examines foundational questions about metaphysics. Recently, there has been a lot of work in metametaphysics on the question of what, if any, debates in ontology are merely verbal or trivial, as opposed to substantive, disputes. As mentioned earlier, Chalmers et al (2009)—listed under **Collections**—is an excellent volume of new papers, all of which are of a high quality. This section lists a selection of papers from that volume as well as works from this literature. Carnap (1950) and Quine (1948) are two historical works that exert a very strong influence over the contemporary literature. Philosophers that argue for a deflationary or anti-realist view of ontological disputes often align their views with those of Carnap (1950); whereas philosophers who favor a more substantive and realist view of metaphysical typically do the same with respect to Quine (1948). Quine's (1951) critique of Carnap (1950) is also included here. Hirsch (2002), Putnam (1987), Thomasson (2007), and Yablo all defend different deflationary stances towards various ontological questions. Sider (2009) and Van Inwagen (2002) each defend strongly realist attitudes towards ontological questions. Bennett (2009) and Wilson (forthcoming) both question the focus in metametaphysics on linguistic or conceptual questions. Schaffer (2009) rejects Quine's famous claim that the central question in ontology is the question of what exists, and offers an alternative Aristotelian view of metaphysics. Discussions of metametaphysics often consider the role of conceptual analysis in metaphysics, and the continuity of the methods of philosophy and science—see **The Method of Cases and Conceptual Analysis** and **Methodological Naturalism**. See also Paul (2010) for an argument for the relevance of experimental philosophy to metaphysics, and Chalmers (2010) for a link to an important manuscript on verbal disputes—listed respectively under **Experimental Philosophy: The Negative Program** and **Internet Resources**.

Bennett, K. (2009). 'Composition, Colocation, and Metaontology', In *Metametaphysics*, (eds.) D. J. Chalmers, D. Manley & R. Wasserman, 38–76, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Identifies a form of 'dismissivism'—where this is a label for the view that there is something deeply wrong with metaphysical disputes—that is epistemological in nature. Criticizes the standard semantic forms of dismissivism. Argues that the epistemic form of dismissivism may be the right attitude towards debates about constitution and composition.

Carnap, R. (1950). 'Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 4, 20–40.

The paper in which Carnap famously distinguishes 'internal' from 'external' existence questions. Internal questions are made within a linguistic framework and concern the existence of entities of the kind that framework was constructed to speak about. External questions are made from the outside of a framework, and

concern the reality of the framework's system of entities as a whole. An answer to an internal question is typically either true or false, whereas an answer to an external question is neither true nor false. This is because on Carnap's view the choice between different linguistic frameworks can only be settled on pragmatic grounds.

Chalmers, D. (2009). 'Ontological Anti-Realism', In *Metametaphysics*, (eds.) D. J. Chalmers, D. Manley & R. Wasserman, 77–129, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Distinguishes three positions relating to the question of whether there are objective answers to ontological disputes. Heavyweight and lightweight ontological realists agree that "ontological existence assertions" have objective and determinate truth-values, while ontological anti-realists deny this. But lightweight realists, unlike heavyweight realists, claim that such assertions are still somehow trivial or non-substantial. Presents arguments against both forms of ontological realism, and responds to objections to ontological anti-realism.

Hirsch, E. (2002). 'Quantifier Variance and Realism', *Philosophical Issues* 12, 51–73.

Defends the doctrine of "quantifier variance"—according to which expressions like "there exists something" can be legitimately interpreted both in a way such that they are true, and in a way such that they are false—against the charge that it conflicts with realism. Argues that the acceptance of this doctrine supports a deflationary attitude towards existence questions. Identifies the doctrine of quantifier variance with Putnam's doctrine of "conceptual relativity".

Putnam, H. (1987). *The Many Faces of Realism*, LaSalle, IL: Open Court.

In Lecture 1, Putnam outlines the doctrine of "conceptual relativity" according to which the notions of object and existence are ambiguous, and appeals to this doctrine to support a deflationary attitude to questions about the total number of objects in the world.

Quine, W. V. O. (1948). 'On What There Is', *Review of Metaphysics* 2, 21–38.

A paper that is often credited with almost singlehandedly reviving the reputation of substantial metaphysics in analytic philosophy. Quine takes 'the ontological question' to be the question of what exists. The way to answer this question is to accept the existence of only those entities that our best scientific theories are committed to.

Quine, W. V. O. (1951). 'On Carnap's Views on Ontology', *Philosophical Studies* 2, 65–72.

A critique of Carnap (1950). Claims that Carnap's distinction between internal and external questions rests on the analytic/synthetic distinction which Quine famously rejects.

Schaffer, J. (2009). 'On What Grounds What', In *Metametaphysics*, (eds.) D. J. Chalmers, D. Manley & R. Wasserman, 347–383, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rejects the Quinean view that the task of metaphysics is to say what exists. Advocates a neo-Aristotelian view according to which the task of metaphysics is to say what grounds what. On this view existence claims are trivially true (but still non-analytic), and the important question for metaphysics is not what exists but *how* do things exist.

Sider, T. (2009). 'Ontological Realism', In *Metametaphysics*, (eds.) D. J. Chalmers, D. Manley & R. Wasserman, 384–423, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Defends a realist attitude towards ontological questions, and argues against deflationary attitudes based on the doctrine of quantifier variance. Claims that everyone should agree that there are multiple interpretations of quantifiers. The central issue for metaontology is whether any of these quantifier meanings carves nature at the joints better than any of the others. Argues that there is a single best quantifier meaning that carves nature at its joints.

Thomasson, A. L. (2007). *Ordinary Objects*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A defense of a commonsense ontology that rests on a realist but deflationary view of existence questions. The question of whether ordinary objects like tables exist is to be solved by analysing the application-conditions of the word 'table', and such analysis reveals that it is a trivial truth that tables exist.

Van Inwagen, P. (2002) 'The Number of Things', *Philosophical Issues* 12, 176–196

A critique of Putnam's (1987) view that it is non-sensical to speak of the number of objects, as well as similar ideas in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

Wilson, J. (forthcoming). 'Much Ado About 'Something?'. *Analysis*.

A critical notice of Chalmers, Manley, and Wasserman (2009) that criticizes the assumption—made by many of the authors in that volume—that questions in metametaphysics are best advanced by addressing semantic questions about quantification. Suggests that the actual source of, and possible solution to, such debates is to be found in epistemology and not semantics.

Yablo, S. (1998). 'Does Ontology Rest on a Mistake?', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Suppl. Vol. 72, 229–261.

Recasts Carnap's distinction between answers to internal and external question as a distinction between statements made within make-believe games and statements made outside them. Argues that, recast in this way, the internal/external distinction does not depend on the analytic/synthetic distinction.

Internet Resources

The following are some online resources that are useful for research on metaphilosophy.

Arché Philosophical Methodology Project Weblog:

<http://www.standrews.ac.uk/~armeth/>

A weblog devoted to discussing issues concerning philosophical methodology, also has links to papers and conference announcements.

Certain Doubts Weblog: http://el-prod.baylor.edu/certain_doubts/

An epistemology weblog that often has posts related to issues in metaepistemology, including a number of interesting posts discussing the import of results from experimental philosophy for debates between contextualists, interest-relative invariantists, and traditional invariantists.

Chalmers, David. (2010). The 2010 John Locke Lectures.

http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/lectures/john_locke_lectures

In these lectures Chalmers addresses a number of issues that are important for philosophical methodology including the debates between Carnap and Quine over the analytic-synthetic distinction. The website has handouts, slides, and audio files from the lectures and a link to another webpage (<http://consc.net/oxford/>) where you can download chapters of a draft book on which the lectures are based. Chapter 9 is an already influential discussion of verbal disputes.

Experimental Philosophy Page: <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~jk762/ExperimentalPhilosophy.html>

A webpage with links to almost all of the published papers in experimental philosophy, and also has link to forthcoming papers.

Experimental Philosophy Weblog:

http://experimentalphilosophy.typepad.com/experimental_philosophy/

This weblog has regular posts on experimental philosophy by leading figures in the field, as well as links to new papers and conference announcements etc.

Philpapers: <http://philpapers.org/>

An online dictionary of philosophical articles and books. This is a fantastic resource for research in any area of philosophy including metaphilosophy.

Thoughts Arguments and Rants Weblog

<http://tar.weatherson.org/>

A leading philosophy weblog that regularly has good posts on metaphilosophical issues.