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ON THE POSSIBILITY OF PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE

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Science can answer a multitude of questions that are beyond the reach of philosophy. Are there questions that philosophy can answer that are beyond the reach of science? And of the questions that science attempts to answer, are there any that philosophy can answer with greater authority? In either case, if there are such questions, they set what we may call philosophical limits of science.

I wish to recommend two theses.

The Autonomy of Philosophy
Among the central questions of philosophy that can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another, most can in principle be answered by philosophical investigation and argument without relying substantively on the sciences.

The Authority of Philosophy
Insofar as science and philosophy purport to answer the same central philosophical questions, in most cases the support that science could in principle provide for those answers is not as strong as that which philosophy could in principle provide for its answers. So, should there be conflicts, the authority of philosophy in most cases can be greater in principle.

Taken together, the Autonomy of Philosophy and the Authority of Philosophy establish significant philosophical limits of science.

These two theses are hardly new: it is safe to say that throughout most of our intellectual history they have constituted the dominant view. In contemporary thought, however, this traditional view has lost ground, perhaps reflecting the general scientism prevalent in contemporary culture.

There are two largely independent defenses of the Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy—the Argument from Evidence and the Argument from Concepts. The Argument from Concepts consists of a series of examples and subsidiary arguments leading up to an analysis of what it is to possess a concept determinately. According to the analysis, it is constitutive of determinate concept possession that a person have a certain kind of capacity for intuitions regarding the behavior of the concept. Given that most philosophically central concepts can be possessed determinately, the associated intuitional capacities are sufficient to underwrite the Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy. In this paper I will explain and defend (all too briefly, I am afraid) the Argument from Evidence. It has the following form:

(1) Intuitions are evidence.
(2) Modal reliabilism is the correct explanation of why intuitions are evidence.
(3) Modal reliabilism implies the Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy as long as scientific essentialism is no barrier.
(4) Scientific essentialism is no barrier.
∴ The Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy hold.

In our context, reliabilism is understood to be a theory of evidence rather than a theory of justification or knowledge, as is more familiar. Reliabilist theories of evidence posit a reliable tie between sources of evidence and the truth. Modal reliabilism differs from contingent reliabilism in that, for basic sources (intuition and phenomenal experience), it deems that tie to be a strong modal one rather than a contingent one (causal or nomological). This strong modal tie does not have a mysterious source; rather, it is simply a consequence of determinately possessing the concepts involved in the deliverances of our basic sources of evidence. If correct, modal reliabilism leads to a general account of *a priori* knowledge. The latter, however, lies beyond the scope of this paper.

Notice that Autonomy and Authority posit only the *possibility* of philosophical knowledge, perhaps on the part of creatures in superior cognitive conditions; it is another question whether human beings are ever able to achieve these conditions fully. Although I do not wish to defend an answer to this question here, my personal belief is that collectively, over historical time, undertaking philosophy as a civilization-wide project we can approximate these cognitive conditions closely enough to obtain authoritative answers to a variety of central philosophical questions.

Before beginning, I should indicate what I mean by the central questions of philosophy. Nearly all philosophers seek answers to such questions as the nature of substance, mind, intelligence, consciousness, sensation, perception, knowledge, wisdom, truth, identity, infinity, divinity, time, explanation, causation, freedom, purpose, goodness, duty, the virtues, love,

life, happiness, and so forth. When we think of the sorts of things that would qualify as answers to questions of this sort, three features stand out—universality, generality, and necessity.

The questions of philosophy are *universal* in the sense that, regardless of the biological, psychological, sociological, or historical context, they (and their answers) would be of significant interest to most any philosopher, in his or her role as philosopher, at least once he or she had been introduced to the underlying concepts and their basic relations to one another.

These questions are *general* in the sense that they (and their answers) do not pertain to this or that individual, species, or historical event. Typically, the central questions of philosophy (and their answers) are phrased in quite general terms without mention of particular individuals, species, etc.

These questions are *necessary* in the sense that they call for answers that hold necessarily. In being interested in such things as the nature of mind, intelligence, the virtues, and life, philosophers do not want to know what those things just happen to be, but rather what those things *must* be, what they *are* in a strong sense. It is not enough that the virtue of piety happened to be what Euthyphro exhibited: a philosopher wants to know what piety must be.

Many philosophical questions that are of pressing *importance* to humanity lack one or more of the three features—universality, generality, and necessity. Nevertheless, the relation between central philosophical propositions (truths, questions) of philosophy and noncentral philosophical propositions (truths, questions) may, I believe, be understood on analogy with the distinction between pure mathematics and applied mathematics. In most if not all cases, noncentral philosophical propositions are immediate consequences of central philosophical propositions plus auxiliary empirical propositions that have little philosophical content in and of themselves. In actual practice, of course, various philosophical questions do not fit so neatly into this picture, but I think that in principle, at least, they can be made to fit. Or so I will assume.

1. Intuitions Are Evidence

1.1 *Our Standard Justificatory Procedure.* I begin by reviewing some plain truths about the procedure we standardly use to justify our beliefs and theories generally. The first point is that we standardly use various items—for example, experiences,[1] observations, testimony—as evidence.

At one time many people accepted the traditional doctrine that knowledge is justified true belief. But today we have good evidence that this is mistaken. Suppose someone has been driving for miles past what look like herds of sheep. At various points along the journey, our person *believes* that a sheep is in the pasture. Since the situation appears to be perfectly

normal in all relevant respects, certainly the person would be *justified* in believing that there is a sheep in the pasture. Suppose that it is indeed *true* that there is a sheep in the pasture. Is this enough for knowledge? No. For suppose that the thousands of sheep-looking things the person has been seeing are a breed of white poodle that from that distance look just like sheep and that, by pure chance, there happens to be a solitary sheep hidden in the middle of the acres of poodles. Clearly, the person does not know that there is a sheep in the pasture.[2] Examples like this provide good evidence that the traditional theory is mistaken. We find it intuitively obvious that there could be such a situation like that described and in such a situation the person would not know that there is a sheep in the pasture despite having a justified true belief. This intuition—that there could be such a situation and in it the person would not know—and other intuitions like it are used as evidence that the traditional theory is mistaken.

This and countless other examples show that, according to our standard justificatory procedure, intuitions are *used* as evidence (or as reasons). (The question whether intuitions truly *are* evidence is addressed later in this section.) The evidential use of intuitions is ubiquitous in philosophy; recall just a few further examples: Chisholm's perceptual-relativity refutation of phenomenalism, Putnam's perfect-pretender refutation of behaviorism, all the various twin-earth examples, Burge's arthritis example, multiple-realizability, etc., etc. Each of these involves the evidential use of intuitions about certain possibilities and about whether relevant concepts apply to those possibilities. As these examples illustrate, it is intuitions about concrete cases that are accorded primary evidential weight by our standard justificatory procedure; theoretical intuitions are by comparison given far less evidential weight.

Among our various theoretical beliefs, some are deemed by the standard justificatory procedure to be justified *a priori*. This occurs for beliefs arrived at by a procedure that suitably approximates the following idealization: (1) canvassing intuitions; (2) subjecting those intuitions to dialectical critique; (3) constructing theories that systematize the surviving intuitions; (4) testing those theories against further intuitions; (5) repeating the process until equilibrium is approached.[3] The method philosophers standardly use to establish answers to central philosophical questions closely resembles this procedure of *a priori* justification. Perhaps the most important difference is that philosophers sometimes make use of empirical evidence—specifically, we sometimes invoke actual "real-life" examples and actual examples from (the history of) science. In virtually all cases, however, use of such examples can be "modalized away."[4] That is, such examples can, at least in principle, be dropped and in their place one can use *a priori* intuitions affirming corresponding (not to say identical) *possibilities* which have equivalent philosophical force. (I will return to this point in section 4.)

1.2 *Phenomenology of Intuitions*. My next step is to say something

about what is meant by intuition in this context. By intuition, we do not mean a magical power or a mysterious inner voice or anything of the sort. For you to have an intuition that A is just for it to *seem* to you that A. Here 'seems' is understood, not in its use as a cautionary or "hedging" term, but in its use as a term for a genuine kind of conscious episode. For example, when you first consider one of de Morgan's laws, often it neither seems to be true nor seems to be false. After a moment's reflection, however, something happens: it now seems true; you suddenly "just see" that it is true. Of course, this is *intellectual* seeming, not sensory or introspective seeming. For example, when it seems to you that, if P, then not not P, this is a purely intellectual episode; it is not a sensation or a reflection. There is, accordingly, a sharp distinction between intuition and imagination. Typically, if it is possible for someone to have the intuition that A (i.e., if it is possible for it to seem intellectually to someone that A), then it is possible for someone (perhaps the same person) to have the intuition that A in the absence of any particular sensory (imaginative) or introspective experiences that are relevant to the truth or falsity of the proposition that A. For this reason, intuitions are counted as "data of reason" not "data of experience."

When we speak of intuition here, we mean "*a priori* intuition." This is distinguished from what physicists call "physical intuition." We have a physical intuition that, when a house is undermined, it will fall. This does not count as an *a priori* intuition, for it does not present itself as necessary: it does not seem that a house undermined *must* fall; plainly, it is *possible* for a house undermined to remain in its original position or, indeed, to rise up. By contrast, when we have an *a priori* intuition, say, that if P then not not P, this presents itself as necessary: it seems that things could not be otherwise; it must be that if P then not not P. (I am unsure how to analyze what is meant by saying that an *a priori* intuition presents itself as necessary. Perhaps something like this: necessarily, if x intuits that P, it seems to x that P and also that necessarily P. But I wish to take no stand on this.)

The distinction between *a priori* intuition and physical intuition is related to a terminological point. In recent philosophy there has been an unfortunate blurring of traditional terminology. *A priori* intuitions about hypothetical cases are often being erroneously called *thought experiments*. This deviates from traditional use, and it blurs an important distinction which we should be kept vividly in mind. Traditionally, in a thought experiment one usually elicits a physical intuition (not an *a priori* intuition) about what would happen in a hypothetical situation in which physical, or natural, laws (whatever they happen to be) are held constant but in which physical conditions are in various other respects nonactual and often highly idealized (e.g., so that it would be physically impossible for observers to be present or it would be physically impossible for anyone to conduct the experiment).

Intuition must be distinguished from belief: belief is not a seeming;

intuition is. For example, there are many mathematical theorems that I believe (because I have seen the proofs) but that do not *seem* to me to be true and that do not *seem* to me to be false; I do not have intuitions about them either way. Conversely, I have an intuition—it still *seems* to me—that the naive comprehension axiom of set theory is true; this is so despite the fact that I do not believe that it is true (because I know of the set-theoretical paradoxes).[5] This shows that intuition is not even a species of belief. There is a rather similar phenomenon in sensory (vs. intellectual) seeming. In the Müller-Lyer illusion, it still *seems* to me that one of the arrows is longer than the other; this is so despite the fact that I do not believe that it is (because I have measured them). In each case, the seeming (intellectual or sensory) persists in spite of the countervailing belief.[6]

This brings up a closely related distinction between belief and intuition. Belief is highly plastic; not so for intuition. Consider any proposition about which you have intuitions. In most cases authority, cajoling, intimidation, etc. fairly readily insinuate at least some doubt and thereby diminish to some extent, perhaps only briefly, the strength of your associated beliefs. But seldom, if ever, do these things so readily diminish the strength of your intuitions. Although there is disagreement about the degree of plasticity of intuitions (some people believe they are rather plastic; I do not), it is clear that, as a family, they are inherently more resistant to such influences than associated beliefs. This difference is important epistemically. Intuitions are also distinct from judgments, guesses, and hunches. There are significant restrictions on the propositions concerning which one has intuitions; by contrast, there are virtually no restrictions on the propositions concerning which one makes judgments or guesses or has hunches. For similar reasons, intuition is also distinct from common sense.

Many philosophers identify all intuitions with linguistic intuitions. But this is plainly wrong if by 'linguistic intuition' they mean intuitions about words (e.g., English words) and their application. A moment's reflection reveals what is wrong with this idea: most of our intuitions simply do not have any linguistic content. In a similar vein, some philosophers think of intuitions, not as linguistic intuitions, but instead as conceptual intuitions. Nothing is wrong with this if 'conceptual intuition' is understood broadly enough. But there is a common construal—originating in Hume's notion of relations of ideas and popular with logical positivists—according to which conceptual intuitions are all analytic (in the traditional sense of conceptual containment or truth by definition plus logic or convertibility into a logical truth by substitution of synonyms). But countless intuitions are not analytic (on these traditional contruals of that term). For example, the intuition that the part/whole relation is transitive over the field of regions. Possibility intuitions are also not analytic: for example, the intuition that your favorite Gettier situation is possible, etc. True, some philosophers have claimed

that possibility intuitions are just intuitions of consistency. But, as is well known, this view is mistaken on several counts.

Like sense perceptions, intuitions can be mistaken. For example, our intuitions regarding the naive comprehension axiom and classical logic lead to contradiction; at least one of these intuitions is mistaken. So the (classical modern) infallibilist theory of intuition is incorrect. I believe that, despite their fallibility, intuitions nevertheless have a strong modal tie to the truth. (That there is such a tie is a consequence of the Argument from Evidence, which I am in the midst of presenting, and also of the theory of what it is to possess concepts determinately, which forms the core of the Argument from Concepts.) But this tie is not "local": individual intuitions can be mistaken. Nor is the tie an ordinary holistic tie: we can entertain the possibility that some hypothetical subject's best efforts at the theoretical systematization of his or her intuitions might be mistaken. The strong modal tie between intuitions and the truth holds relative to theoretical systematizations arrived at in cognitive conditions that are of a relevantly high quality. Such conditions might be beyond what individual human beings can achieve in isolation. It is plausible that we approximate such cognitive conditions only in sustained cooperation with others, perhaps over generations. And even here, it is an open question whether we will ever approximate them sufficiently closely.

Many philosophers enjoy the pastime of "intuition bashing," and in support of it they are fond of invoking the empirical findings of cognitive psychologists such as Wason, Johnson-Laird, Rosh, Nisbett, Kahneman and Tversky. Although these studies evidently bear on "intuition" in an indiscriminate use of the term (e.g., for uncritical belief), they seem to tell us little about intuition in the restricted use of the term isolated above. As far as I have been able to determine, empirical investigators simply have not been concerned with intuitions in this sense. They evidently have not attempted to test empirically whether subjects are even having intuitions in the relevant sense; they surely have not been testing whether the subjects' intellectual episodes satisfy the criteria isolated above. And it will prove delicate to do so.

Suppose empirical cognitive psychology someday turns its attention to intuition in the relevant sense. It will be no surprise if empirical studies should reveal that a subject's intuitions can be fallible locally. From the paradoxes, we already knew that they were. Nor will it be a great surprise if empirical studies should reveal that a subject's intuitions can be fallible holistically. Countless works taken from the history of logic, mathematics, and philosophy already give some indication that this might be possible. Will empirical studies reveal that intuitions lack the strong modal tie to the truth which I described a moment ago? Surely this is out of reach. Human beings only approximate the relevant cognitive conditions, and they do this only by working collectively over historical time. This quest is something

we are living through as an intellectual culture. Our efforts have not even reached equilibrium, and perhaps they never will. The very idea of an empirical test for its eventual tie to the truth is misconceived. Moreover, even if our intellectual culture were always to fail, that would not refute the thesis of a strong modal tie. The cognitive conditions of human beings working collectively over historical time might fall short. The thesis that intuitions have the indicated strong modal tie to the truth is a philosophical (conceptual) thesis not open to empirical confirmation or refutation. The defense of it is philosophical, ultimately resting on intuitions.[7]

1.3 *The Argument from Epistemic Norms.* Granted that our standard justificatory practice presently *uses* intuitions as evidence, why should this move radicals who just boldly deny that intuitions *are* evidence? In "The Incoherence of Empiricism"[8] I argued that denying that intuitions have evidential weight leads to epistemic self-defeat. An advantage of this style of argument is that it promises to be persuasive even for those under the spell of radicalism. To give a feel for this style of argument I will now sketch one of three such arguments against radical empiricism, the view that *only* (phenomenal) experiences and/or observations have genuine evidential weight. (Of course, it is the *contents* of one's experiences and observations that are held to be evidential. Note that there is a more moderate empiricism which, like Hume's, deems the contents of intuitions of relations of ideas—that is, intuitions of analyticities—to be evidence but which excludes as evidence all intuitions of nonanalyticities. On the traditional construal of 'analytic'—conceptual containment or truth by definition plus logic or convertibility into a logical truth by substitution of synonyms—this view is also self-defeating, but for somewhat different reasons. Another view which is self-defeating is radical coherentism, according to which there is no such thing as evidence at all and justification is nothing but arranging one's beliefs into a certain kind of coherent whole. I do not, however, have space to explain how these views are self-defeating.)

Radical empiricists are confronted by a "hermeneutical" problem produced by their departure from the standard justificatory procedure.[9] They would have us circumscribe our evidence by just excluding intuition. But there are other exclusionary views. For example, *visualism*, the view that only visual experience provides evidence; tactile, auditory, olfactory experiences are just arbitrarily excluded. Plainly, we would not be justified in accepting this departure from the standard procedure. How is radical empiricism relevantly different? To avoid begging the question, radical empiricists have no choice but to try to answer *from within* the standard justificatory procedure.[10] Specifically, they must employ the standard justificatory procedure *critically*: they must employ the standard procedure's mechanism of self-criticism in an effort to show that a component of it (namely, the admission of intuitions as evidence) is defective. Suppose that the radical empiricists' attempt to employ the standard procedure

critically succeeds, and suppose that analogous efforts on behalf of the competing deviant procedures (visualism, etc.) are not successful. Then, a relevant difference between radical empiricism and its competitors will have been found. Unlike its competitors, radical empiricism would not be an *arbitrary* departure from our epistemic norms. The question to consider, therefore, is this: when we implement the standard justificatory procedure's mechanism of self-criticism, does intuition get excluded as a source of evidence? (In our discussion we will confine ourselves to concrete-case intuitions, for as indicated earlier it is to these intuitions that the standard justificatory procedure assigns primary evidential weight.)

In relation to the "three *c*s"—*consistency, corroboration,* and *confirmation*—intuition is quite unlike spurious sources of evidence such as tea leaves, tarot, oracles, the stars, birds, and the like. First, a person's concrete-case intuitions are largely consistent with one another. To be sure, a given person's concrete-case intuitions occasionally appear to be inconsistent with one another, but so do our observations and even our pure sense experiences. This is hardly enough to throw out observation and sense experience as sources of evidence.[11] Moreover, for each of these sources—including intuition—most apparent conflicts can be reconciled by standard rephrasal techniques. For example, rephrasals providing more complete specification of the details of a case in the absence of which false presuppositions are likely; rephrasals which make clear that semantic meaning rather than conversational implicature is at stake; rephrasals that foreground philosophically important distinctions blurred in the original report (e.g., the distinction between metaphysical possibility and mere epistemic possibility); etc. (The last example is crucial to our larger discussion; see section 4.) Second, although different people have conflicting intuitions from time to time, there is an impressive corroboration by others of one's elementary logical, mathematical, conceptual, and modal intuitions.[12] The situation is much the same with observation: different people have conflicting observations from time to time, but this is hardly enough to throw out observation as a source of evidence. Third, unlike tea-leaf reading, intuition is seldom, if ever, disconfirmed by our experiences and observations. The primary reason is that the contents of our intuitions—whether conceptual, logical, mathematical, or modal—are by and large independent of the contents of our observations and experiences. The one potential exception involves our modal intuitions, but virtually no conflicts arise here because our intuitions about what experiences and observations are logically (metaphysically) possible are so liberal. In summary, intuition does not run into any trouble with the three *c*s.[13] To my mind, this is one of the most impressive facts about human cognition.

There is another kind of conflict we must consider, namely, conflicts between certain *theories* and certain intuitions (e.g., intuitions about simultaneity and Euclidean geometry). Do such conflicts call intuition into

question as a source of evidence? No. For there are analogous conflicts between certain theories and certain observations (e.g., observations that the sun is about the same size as the moon and that it moves across the sky). Likewise, experience and testimony come into conflict with certain theories. None of these conflicts suffice to overturn observation, experience, or testimony as a source of evidence. The same holds for intuition. Like the deliverances of these other standard sources, most of our intuitions are consistent with our empirical theories. Indeed, most of our elementary conceptual, logical, and numerical intuitions are actually affirmed by our empirical theories. And modal and higher mathematical intuitions, while not affirmed by our empirical theories, are for the most part not inconsistent with them. Moreover, our best comprehensive theory based on *all* standard sources of evidence, *including intuition*, affirms most of our modal and higher mathematical intuitions. The reason is twofold: first, these intuitions are largely consistent with one another and with our empirical theories (at least, our intuitions can be made largely consistent with one another when carefully reported); second, they admit of theoretical systematization to a significant degree. So it is no surprise that a comprehensive theory that begins by including intuitions as evidence should affirm most of them.

If radical empiricists are to try to overthrow intuition by means of the standard justificatory procedure's mechanism for self-criticism, they have only one alternative. They must invoke the comprehensive theory that one would formulate if one admitted only those sources of evidence *other than* intuition. Characterized more abstractly, this method of challenging standard sources of evidence goes as follows. One formulates one's best comprehensive theory on the basis of the standard sources of evidence that one is not challenging. If the resulting theory does not deem the omitted sources to be reliable, then they are discounted as sources of evidence.

This method is appropriate in some cases, for example, to challenge as a source of evidence the hitherto uncritically accepted pronouncements of an established political authority (reminiscent of the Wizard of Oz). However, there are cases in which this method does not work. For example, it may not be used by "visualists" to challenge other modes of experience (tactile, auditory, etc.) as sources of evidence. Neither vision nor touch may be used in this way to override the other as a source of evidence. To be a source of evidence, neither requires affirmation by the best comprehensive theory based on other sources of evidence.

The difference between the political-authority case and the visualism case is plain. The political authority is *intuitively not as basic* a source of evidence as the sources of evidence that are being used to eliminate it (i.e., experience, observation, etc.). By contrast, vision and touch are *intuitively equally basic* sources of evidence. The standard justificatory procedure permits us to apply the present method against a currently

accepted source of evidence if and only if *intuitively* that source is not as basic as the sources of evidence being used to challenge it. (See section 3 for further discussion of basic sources of evidence.) Someone might think that, rather than consulting intuition on the question of relative basicness, one should consult the simplest overall theory that takes as its evidence the deliverances of one's currently accepted sources of evidence. But this approach yields the wrong results. For example, according to it, the political authority, with just a bit of cleverness, would be as immune to challenge as, say, sense experience. (E.g., the political authority could carefully restrict itself to empirically untestable pronouncements that suggest that it has a special new cognitive power; it could deem itself to be a maximally basic source of evidence; etc.) But despite this, it still would be appropriate to reject the political authority as a special source of evidence. The way we would do this, according to the standard procedure, would be to fall back on our intuitions about relative basicness: intuitively, a political authority's pronouncements are not as basic as, say, one's sense experiences. The overall theory one would formulate on the basis of the sources of evidence that are intuitively more basic would not deem the political authority to be reliable.

So in the radical empiricists' effort to eliminate intuition as a source of evidence, the standard justificatory procedure would warrant this move only if we had intuitions to the effect that intuition is a less basic source of evidence than experience and/or observation.[14] But when we consider relevant cases, we see that we do not have such intuitions. For example, suppose a person has an intuition, say, that if P then not not P; or in your favorite Gettier example that the person in question would not know; or that a good theory must take into account all the evidence; and so forth. Nothing more is needed. Intuitively, these intuitions are evidentially as basic as evidence gets. They are intuitively as basic as experiences, much as tactile experiences are intuitively as basic as visual experiences. In consequence, the present method for challenging a source of evidence cannot be used against intuition, any more than it can be used against, say, touch or vision.

In reply to this someone might hold that being intuitively basic is necessary but not sufficient for a candidate source to withstand critique. For sufficiency, something additional is required, namely, that our best explanation of the candidate source should entail that its deliverances (tend to) be true. Using this idea, radical empiricists might hold that our best explanation of our (reports of) experiences and/or observations entail that they (tend to) be true but that this is not so for our best explanation of our intuitions. From this, the radical empiricist might conclude that, although experience and/or observation withstand critique, intuition does not. This, however, is question-begging. For advocates of intuitions may counter that the best explanation of intuition must invoke the analysis (mentioned ear-

lier) of what it takes to possess concepts determinately, and, according to that analysis, it is constitutive of determinate concept possession that intuitions involving the concept (tend to) be true. Why accept this theory? Well, if (certain compelling) intuitions are admitted as evidence, its superiority over competing theories can be shown. Given this prospect, it would be question-begging for radical empiricists to reject this style of explanation in favor of their own candidate: their candidate could be defended only by disregarding a significant body of evidence (or at least what is counted as evidence according to our epistemic norms). Their candidate would be justified only if they had *already* (i.e., independently of their candidate) shown intuition not to be a source of evidence. As we have shown, they are unable to do this.[15]

The upshot is that intuition survives as a genuine source of evidence when one applies the standard justificatory procedure's mechanism for self-criticism. We have not been able to find a relevant difference between radical empiricism, which excludes intuition as a source of evidence, and various preposterous theories (e.g., visualism) that arbitrarily exclude other standard sources of evidence (e.g., touch). But, surely, these preposterous theories are not justified. So radical empiricism is not justified, either.

There is a way to strengthen this argument. Suppose that in our justificatory practices we were to make an arbitrary departure from our epistemic norms. There would then be *prima facie* reason to doubt that the theories we would formulate by following the non-standard procedure are justified. Since radical empiricists make an arbitrary departure from our epistemic norms, what can they do to overcome this reasonable doubt in their own case? They are caught in a fatal dilemma. On the one hand, they could invoke theories arrived at by following the standard justificatory procedure, with its inclusion of intuitions as evidence. But, by the radical empiricists' own standards, these theories are not justified. So this avenue is of no help to them. On the other hand, they could invoke theories arrived at by following their radical empiricist procedure. But this would be of no help, either. For, as we have seen, there is reasonable doubt that, by following that procedure, one obtains justified theories. To overcome this doubt, one may not invoke the very theories about whose justification there is already reasonable doubt. That would only beg the question. Either way, therefore, radical empiricists are unable to overcome the reasonable doubt that their procedure leads to justified theories. So the reasonable doubt stands.

Our epistemic situation is in this sense "hermeneutical": when one makes an arbitrary departure from it, reasonable doubts are generated, and there is in principle no way to overcome them. This is the fate of radical empiricism. Only the standard justificatory procedure escapes this problem: because it conforms to—and, indeed, constitutes—the epistemic

norm, there is no *prima facie* reason to doubt that the theories it yields are justified; so the problem never arises.

2. Explanation of Why Intuitions Are Evidence

What explains why intuitions are evidence? In "Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism"[16] I argued that the only adequate explanation is some kind of truth-based, or reliabilist, explanation. In *Philosophical Limits of Science* I develop this argument in greater detail, dealing there with various alternative explanations—pragmatist, coherentist, conventionalist, and practice-based. I show that these explanations are based on principles that are open to straightforward counterexamples: if the principles were accepted, clear cases of nonevidence would have to be admitted as evidence in the situations envisaged in the examples. There is also a rule-of-evidence theory (reminiscent of Roderick Chisholm). But this theory does not offer an *explanation* of why the sources of evidence described in the rules are sources of evidence: the rules merely *describe*; they do not *explain*. In the present context, I will assume that the case against each of these non-truth–based approaches is telling and that we must turn to a truth-based, or reliabilist, explanation. This assumption will appeal to many readers independently of the indicated arguments.

Reliabilism has been associated with analyses of knowledge and justification. Our topic, however, is not knowledge or justification but rather evidence. This difference is salutary, for here reliabilism promises to be easier to defend. But not as a *general* theory of evidence: sources of evidence traditionally classified as derived sources are subject to counterexamples much like those often used against reliabilist theories of justification. For example, testimony would still provide a person with evidence (reasons to believe) even if it were really just systematic undetectable lying. So reliability is not a necessary condition for something's qualifying as a source of evidence.[17] (The same problem would beset observational beliefs in a world in which all epistemic agents suffer systematic hallucination as a matter of nomological necessity.) Nor is reliability a sufficient condition for something's qualifying as a source of evidence: as in the case of justification, such things as nomologically reliable clairvoyance, telepathy, dreams, hunches, etc. are *prima facie* counterexamples.

The natural response to these counterexamples is to demand only that *basic* sources of evidence be reliable.[18] Then, derived sources of evidence would be dealt with (roughly) as follows: something is a derived source of evidence relative to a given subject iff it is deemed (perhaps unreliably) to have a reliable tie to the truth by the best comprehensive theory based on the subject's basic sources of evidence.[19] Let us suppose that experience and intuition are our basic sources[20] and that all other sources are derived. The above counterexamples would not then fault

this analysis of derived sources of evidence. In the case of undetectable lying, testimony would now rightly be counted as a source of evidence, for the subject's best comprehensive theory based on basic sources (experience and intuition) would deem it to have a reliable tie to the truth (even if it in fact does not because of the envisaged lying). In the case of spurious derived sources (reliable clairvoyance, telepathy, dreams, hunches, etc.), if their reliability is not affirmed by best comprehensive theory based on one's basic sources, their deliverances would rightly not qualify as evidence.

In this setting, reliabilism is restricted to basic sources of evidence: something is a basic source of evidence iff it has an appropriate kind of reliable tie to the truth. The fundamental question then concerns the character of this tie. Is it a contingent (nomological or causal) tie? Or is it some kind of strong necessary tie?

Contingent reliabilism. On this account, something counts as a basic source of evidence iff there is a nomologically necessary, but nevertheless contingent, tie between its deliverances and the truth. This account, however, is subject to counterexamples of the sort which faulted the original sufficiency condition above (nomologically reliable telepathy, clairvoyance, guesses, hunches, etc.). Consider a creature who has a capacity for making reliable telepathically generated guesses. Phenomenologically, these guesses resemble those which people make in blind-sight experiments. The guesses at issue concern necessary truths of some very high degree of difficulty. These truths are known to the beings on a distant planet who have arrived at them by ordinary *a priori* means (theoretical systematization of intuitions, proof of consequences therefrom, etc.). These beings have intelligence far exceeding that of our creature or anyone else coinhabiting his planet. Indeed, the creature and his coinhabitants will never be able to establish any of these necessary truths (or even assess their consistency) by ordinary *a priori* means. Finally, suppose that the following holds as a matter of nomological necessity: the creature guesses that p is true iff p is a necessary truth of the indicated kind and the creature is guessing as to whether p is true or false. But, plainly, guessing would not qualify as a basic source of evidence for the creature, contrary to contingent reliabilism. Of course, it is easy to produce many other counterexamples of this general sort, e.g., a counterexample constructed around "hardwired" (vs. telepathically generated) dispositions to guess.

One way of trying to rule out the counterexamples would be to add to contingent reliabilism a further requirement involving *evolutionary psychology*: in the course of the evolution of the species, a cognitive mechanism's contingent tie to the truth must have been the more advantageous to the survival of the species than alternative sources which would not have had a tie to the truth. But this additional requirement does not help. Each of examples can be adapted to yield a counterexample to the revised analysis.

Specifically, we need only make the examples about a hypothetical species in whom the extraordinary powers for making true guesses have played a positive (but always undetected role) in the species' evolution. Certainly this would be possible. But there would be no temptation to say that guessing would in the circumstance be a basic source of evidence. Thus, the revised analysis does not provide a sufficient condition.[21]

There is another point to make against contingent-reliabilist analyses (both the original and revised versions). They make an (otherwise avoidable) mystery of the fact that our intuitions actually have a reliable tie to the truth. If contingent reliabilism were correct, it would be a contingent fact that our intuitions have such a tie. How could this (allegedly) contingent fact be explained? The most promising explanation would be one provided by an *evolutionary psychology*: just as evolutionary pressures selected in favor of perceptual mechanisms that track the truth rather than ones that do not, so also evolutionary pressures select in favor of intuitional mechanisms that track the truth rather than ones that do not.

This style of explanation makes the Panglossian assumption that evolutionary pressures did (to the extent possible) select in favor of truth-tracking mechanisms rather than competing non-truth-tracking mechanisms. There are well-known reasons to question this assumption. But let us accept it for the sake of argument. There would still be a problem. Assume (for *reductio*) that contingent reliabilism is correct. Then it would be possible for intuitions—specifically, modal intuitions—to have been systematically in error. It is easy to describe a possible species like this whose biological fitness would be wholly equal to ours. Their modal intuitions would in content be just like ours except that the modality would be systematically shifted in such a way that these intuitions would usually be mistaken; nonetheless, because of the systematicity of the shift, it would make no difference in the creatures' practical (means/ends) reasoning. (When the particular shift is spelled out in detail, this last claim can pretty much be proved.) Suppose this presumed possibility had been actualized and that these creatures lived at the same time as *Homo sapiens*. In that case, these creatures would have been just as well suited to survive as our actual ancestors were: their decisions to perform biologically significant actions would have been the same as those made by our actual ancestors. If contingent reliabilism were true, there would have been no evolutionary pressure against the envisaged beings and in favor of our actual ancestors; biological fitness would be too coarse a mechanism to select against (beings whose modal intuitions have a tie to) modal falsehood. From an evolutionary point of view, it would be a mystery why these alternative beings did not also flourish, and why, instead, only beings like ourselves flourished, beings who have modal intuitions that are tied to the truth. So, on the assumption that the evolutionary explanation is the best that contingent reliabilists can do, they would be forced to admit that there is no satisfac-

tory explanation and that the reliability of our modal intuitions is an unexplainable mystery.

Modal Reliabilism. Given that some form of reliabilist theory is needed to explain our basic sources of evidence and given that contingent reliabilism fails to do this, we are left with modal reliabilism, according to which something counts as a basic source iff there is an appropriate kind of strong modal tie between its deliverances and the truth. Each of the above problems confronting contingent reliabilism is traceable to the fact that contingent reliabilism posits only a contingent tie between the deliverances of a basic source and the truth. For example, the reliability of (evolutionarily advantageous) telepathically generated guesses is only contingent; likewise, for the reliability of (evolutionarily advantageous) hardwiring-generated guesses. Furthermore, by holding that the reliability of intuition is only contingent, contingent reliabilists are committed to the possibility of systematically erroneous modal intuitions and the creation of an associated inexplicable mystery. These problems do not arise if we require basic sources of evidence to have a strong modal tie to the truth and if, in particular, we commit ourselves to holding that intuition has such a tie. This is precisely what modal reliabilism says. These diagnostic facts thus provide further support for the thesis that modal reliabilism is correct.

There is, however, a preliminary problem which must be dispensed with, namely, the so-called "generality problem."[22] Consider the relation holding between x and p such that x believes p and p is the proposition that there is no largest prime. For the sake of argument, let us count this relation as a propositional attitude. Then the deliverances of this propositional attitude will have a strong modal tie to the truth: *necessarily*, whenever this propositional attitude holds between a subject and a proposition, that proposition will be true. But surely it is not the case that the mere belief that there is no largest prime is to count as basic evidence that there is no largest prime. For all we know, the belief might have been induced by hypnosis! Does this case count as a counterexample to modal reliabilism? No. The reason is that this propositional attitude is not even a candidate for a basic source of evidence. Something can be a candidate basic source only if it is a natural (i.e., non-Cambridge-like) propositional attitude. Intuition, appearance, belief, desire, guessing, wondering, etc.—these all qualify. Contrast these with the relation holding between x and p such that x believes p and p is the proposition that there is no largest prime. The range of this relation is artificially restricted, in this case to a single necessary proposition. The relation is Cambridge-like, not a natural propositional attitude (indeed, not even a genuine *species* of belief). The advantage of a theory like modal reliabilism, which offers a free-standing analysis of what it is to be a basic source of evidence, is that it can avail itself of this plausible solution to the "generality problem" in terms of natural propositional attitudes. This is possible only if intuition is a natural propositional attitude.

That is why the earlier phenomenological points about intellectual seeming are so important.

To avoid the problems besetting contingent reliabilism, we arrived at a *general scheme* for analyzing what it takes for a candidate source of evidence to be basic: a candidate source is basic iff its deliverances have an appropriate kind of strong modal tie to the truth. This biconditional is not itself an analysis: it is not intended that *just any* strong modal tie be sufficient for something's being a basic source of evidence. Rather, this scheme provides us with an *invitation* to find the weakest modal tie that does the job—i.e., the weakest modal tie which lets in the right sources and excludes the wrong ones. The explanation of why intuition is a basic source of evidence then goes as follows. By definition, a candidate source of evidence is basic iff it has *that* sort of modal tie; intuition does have that sort of modal tie; therefore, intuition is a basic source of evidence. Likewise for phenomenal experience: it too has that sort of modal tie; therefore, it is a basic source of evidence. And we have an explanation of why other candidate sources (observation, testimony, etc.) are nonbasic: they are nonbasic because they lack that sort of modal tie.

We thus have an invitation to find the weakest modal tie that does the job. One candidate is the kind of modal tie posited by traditional infallibilists. The resulting analysis would be: a candidate source is basic iff, necessarily, all deliverances of the source are true. But this is not satisfactory for two reasons. First, we have good reasons to reject infallibilism both in the case of intuition (e.g., the paradoxes) and in the case of phenomenal experience (e.g., Russell's uniform color example), so the infallibilist analysis would wrongly exclude intuition and phenomenal experience as basic sources of evidence. Second, as we will see, there are weaker modal ties that do the job.

One of them is an infallibilist tie relativized to ideal cognitive conditions. On the resulting analysis, a candidate source is basic iff, necessarily, for anyone in ideal cognitive conditions, the deliverances of that source would be true. Accordingly, for anyone in ideal cognitive conditions, basic sources provide a guaranteed pathway to the truth regarding the deliverances of the source. Of course, we humans are not in ideal cognitive conditions, so there is no guarantee that the deliverances of our basic sources are true. But, if we limit ourselves to suitably elementary propositions, then relative to them we *approximate* ideal cognitive conditions. For suitably elementary propositions, therefore, deliverances of our basic sources would provide in an approximate way the kind of pathway to the truth they would have generally in ideal conditions. For those of us capable of real theorizing—that is, subjects whose cognitive conditions (intelligence, memory, attentiveness, constancy, etc.) are good enough to enable them to process theoretically the deliverances of their basic sources—the size of the class of relevantly elementary propositions would not be inconsiderable.[23]

While this relativized infallibilist analysis does the job, it too posits a very strong modal tie. Our larger analytical strategy, however, invited us only to posit the weakest modal tie that does the job, and there is indeed a weaker one. It is a tie which is holistic in character and which holds, not with absolute universality, but as Aristotle would say *for-the-most-part*. To wit, a candidate source is basic iff for cognitive conditions of some suitably high quality, necessarily, if someone in those cognitive conditions were to process theoretically the deliverances of the candidate source, the resulting theory would provide a correct assessment as to the truth of most of those deliverances. Whereas the previous analysis required that the deliverances of a basic source themselves be true, this weaker analysis requires only that most of the theoretical assessments as to the truth of those deliverances be true.[24] The previous remarks about approximations then carry over *mutatis mutandis*. For subjects (like ourselves) capable of processing their basic sources theoretically, the result of that processing would, for elementary deliverances, provide in an approximate way the kind of pathway to the truth it would provide generally in the indicated high quality cognitive conditions, a pathway whose reliability increases the more elementary those deliverances are.

This analysis does the job. It tells us in a natural and non-*ad-hoc* way what is common to our basic sources—intuition and phenomenal experience. And it tells us what is lacking in all other candidate sources—those which are nonbasic and those which are not even sources of evidence, basic or nonbasic. Moreover, I can think of no weaker modal tie that does the job. (If there should happen to be a weaker tie that does the job, I expect that it too would be sufficiently strong to underwrite the application I make in the next section.) Finally, there is nothing mysterious about this sort of modal tie; indeed, it is implied by the analysis of concept possession (alluded to at various points above).

Some further features of the proposed analysis might be worth pointing out. Consider again some subjects who are in cognitive conditions like ours and who, like ourselves, are capable of processing their basic sources theoretically. We have seen that, when such a subject processes the deliverances of its basic sources, the pronouncements which resulting theory makes on those deliverances are increasingly reliable the more elementary those deliverances are. It does not *follow* from this that any of these deliverances, even maximally elementary deliverances, would be utterly demon-proof. But the more and more elementary the deliverances are, the fewer the potential sources of error. At the limit, the only surviving potential source of error would be a Cartesian evil demon or something on a par with one. If skeptical prospects like this are indeed genuine metaphysical possibilities (I need not take a stand on whether they are), then they would if realized undermine one's quest for the truth regarding even the most elementary deliverances. Faced with this worry, one could simply give up. But if one gives up, one is

bound not to succeed. The way to keep open the possibility of success is to proceed as if this sort of skeptical prospect is not realized. In this case, one would succeed as long as the skeptical prospect is not realized. And if it is realized, one would be epistemically no worse off for having tried. Relying on maximally elementary deliverances of basic sources is thus the best possible *general* strategy theorizers could have for obtaining a class of reliable beliefs regardless of the context they find themselves in: these deliverances are reliable in every possible context which is demon-free.[25] The situation is analogous when theorizers seek to enlarge this class at the risk of corresponding reductions in reliability: basic sources provide theorizers with the best possible general strategy for getting to such substantial classes of truths. This strategy is "context-free" (or "world-independent") in that it works for any subject capable of real theorizing no matter how the rest of the world is. One's basic sources may in turn be used as a yardstick for assessing whether candidate (nonbasic) sources qualify as genuine sources of evidence. Basic sources are thus by nature ideally suited to be "regress stoppers": they have their authority intrinsically, and it is an authority exceeded by no other. These features are precisely what one would want from basic sources of evidence.[26]

My claim is that something like the above analysis is right. Of course, the analysis (and others like it) would be vacuous if it were not possible for some subjects to be in cognitive conditions of the high quality indicated in the analysis and to arrive at the indicated sort of theory of the deliverances of their intuitions. This possibility, and the modal tie to the truth which such a theory would have, will be important in what follows next.

3. Derivation of the Authority and Autonomy of Philosophy

It is thus *necessary* that in cognitive conditions of the indicated quality the indicated sort of theory would pronounce correctly on the truth or falsity of most of the subject's intuitions. For this to be so, those cognitive conditions would plainly have to be of very high quality. In such cognitive conditions, however, the subject's intuitions would range very widely—over theoretical as well as non-theoretical propositions; they would venture liberally into all areas of modal space. Given that, there is no credible way in which the resulting theory could *necessarily* give true pronouncements on most of those intuitions and yet fail to give mostly true pronouncements generally. After all, these pronouncements would not pertain to any contingent matters; they would pertain solely to L-determinate matters.

We thus reach this conclusion: it is *necessary* that the theoretical systematization of a subject's intuitions in cognitive conditions of the indicated quality is true for the most part (i.e., most of the propositions derivable from it are true). No such necessity ever holds for science. No matter how good the cognitive conditions, it is always *possible* that scientific theories

arrived at in those conditions are largely mistaken. Why? For all the standard reasons—undetectably unrepresentative samples, nonsimple natural laws, distorting perceptual media—not to mention too few or malfunctioning sense organs, ill-suited bodies, etc. Because of this, a theoretical systematization of intuitions in the indicated cognitive conditions would have an in principle greater epistemic authority.[27] But the methods by which that theoretical systematization would have been arrived at are just the standard methods of philosophy (described in section 1.1); they include no substantive reliance on science. Now suppose that the indicated theoretical systematization of intuitions would include answers to most of the central questions of philosophy that can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another. Then, given that the epistemic support for this theoretical systematization is greater in principle than anything science could achieve in support of its theories, the thesis of the Authority of Philosophy would hold.

This argument is based on the supposition that the indicated theoretical systematization of intuitions would include answers to most of the central questions of philosophy which can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another. This supposition is basically the thesis of the Autonomy of Philosophy. The Argument from Concepts will provide perhaps the most conclusive defense of this thesis. But we are able to mount an independent defense right now.

Consider the intuitions that are the inputs when a subject engages in the indicated process of theoretical systematization. They include a wide range of intuitions about matters bearing on central questions of philosophy. What level of cognitive conditions would be required to insure the strong modal tie—that is, to insure that, *necessarily*, most of the propositions derivable from the resulting theoretical systematization would be true? Presumably, it would be a very high level. But as cognitive conditions (notably, attentiveness and intelligence) improve, the scope of one's intuitions increases. As a result, at the indicated very high level of cognitive conditions, the scope of the intuitions that would be the inputs for the process would be very wide. It is extremely plausible that they would have implications for most central questions of philosophy. (In fact, in our present cognitive conditions, our intuitions already do have such implications.) What, then, could prevent the resulting theoretical systematization from giving answers to these questions? I know of nothing that could. But there is a nagging worry that inevitable limitations on intelligence and/or scientific essentialism might somehow constitute barriers.

Consider limitations on intelligence. Most of the central questions of philosophy do not seem to be the sort of questions requiring infinitary intelligence (e.g., for doing infinitary proofs, infinitary computations, etc.); some finite level (perhaps well beyond ours) ought to suffice. (In the Argument from Concepts, I give a positive theoretical argument which

insures that, no matter how high it is required to be, the requisite level of intelligence must be possible, so this finiteness point is not essential.) If this is right, the issue comes down to the question of what level of finitary intelligence would be required (for having a sufficiently wide range of intuitions) to yield Autonomy. Is the level of intelligence needed to underwrite the Authority of Philosophy enough for this? Since the intelligence needed for Authority is very high, it seems to me that it ought to be easily enough. But suppose not; suppose some higher but nevertheless finite level of intelligence is needed. Intuitively, however, for any finite level of intelligence, it is possible for some being to be that intelligent. So if there were a barrier to Autonomy, it would have to be something other than intelligence. Someone might respond that this intuition ought not be honored. But on what ground? There is no even faintly credible ground besides one associated with scientific essentialism, namely, that this intuition is really only an intuition of the kind of epistemic possibility which is so central to the defense of scientific essentialism. But this intuition is expressed in semantically stable terms, so scientific essentialists are committed to accepting it at face value, as I will argue in the next section.

This leaves us with the general scientific essentialist worry. Perhaps, as cognitive conditions (intelligence, attentiveness, constancy, etc.) improve, the scope of intuitions reaches a limit (or even narrows). Questions beyond that limit are scientific questions epistemically on a par with the question of the chemical composition of water, the analysis of heat, etc. In the next section I will argue that this is completely mistaken. If the argument is successful, we will be entitled to conclude that there is no barrier to having intuitions of sufficiently wide scope to underwrite the Autonomy of Philosophy.

4. Scientific Essentialism Is No Barrier

Scientific essentialism (SE) is the doctrine that there are necessities (e.g., that water = H_2O) that are knowable only with the aid of empirical science. The arguments supporting SE rely on intuitions; without them SE would be unjustified. (I defend this claim in detail in "Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism.") Consider the famous twin-earth intuition: if all and only samples of water here on earth are composed predominantly of H_2O and if, traveling to another planet, we were to find samples of a stuff that is macroscopically like water but composed of XYZ ($\neq H_2O$), those samples would, intuitively, not be water. Suppose that this and kindred intuitions are correct, and suppose that all and only samples of water are as described. Then, we may conclude that in all actual and counterfactual situations something would be composed of water if and only if it were composed predominantly of H_2O. In turn, we may conclude that, necessarily, water = H_2O.

But there is a problem. Before the advent of SE, we had a host of anti-SE intuitions, for example, the intuition that it could have turned out that some samples of water contained no hydrogen. What are we to make of the conflict between pro- and anti-SE intuitions?

Rephrasal Strategies. Proponents of SE have two responses. First, they could simply declare that anti-SE intuitions are mistaken whereas their own pro-SE intuitions are correct. But critics of SE could simply meet this response by stating that things are the other way around. The result would be a stalemate. To avoid it, proponents of SE must turn to the second response. According to it, widespread conflict among our intuitions is only an appearance. All, or most, of our intuitions are correct. Despite their correctness, however, many are *misreported.* When we try carefully to rephrase our (apparently) anti-SE intuitions to make them consistent with our pro-SE intuitions, we succeed. But when we rephrase the latter to make them consistent with the former, we fail. So unless there is a competing general rephrasal strategy which has this sort of asymmetry but which favors anti-SE, the stalemate is broken in favor of SE.

Kripke and his followers have used two rephrasal strategies to defend SE. In my paper "Mental Properties"[28] I argue that one of the rephrasal strategies, which features replacing names with definite descriptions, is flawed in various ways. The other rephrasal strategy, however, seems to succeed. This strategy turns on an alleged pragmatic equivocation in the kind of possibilities at issue. When we report our pro-SE intuitions (e.g., twin-earth intuitions), what we say is strictly and literally true, and we are reporting ordinary possibilities. But when we report our apparently anti-SE intuitions, we confuse ordinary possibility with the possibility of a certain kind of epistemic situation. For example, when we say 'It could have turned out that some samples of water contained no hydrogen', what we say is strictly and literally false. The intuition is true but incorrectly reported. The correct report would be something like this: 'It is possible for there to be a population of speakers in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours and they use the expression "water" to refer to something other than water and/or they use the term "hydrogen" to refer to something other than hydrogen'. As Kripke remarks in connection with the Hesperus/Phosphorus case:

> Now this seems very strange because in advance, we are inclined to say, the answer to the question whether Hesperus is Phosphorus might have turned out either way.
>
> And so it's true that given the evidence that someone has antecedent to his empirical investigation, he can be placed in a sense in exactly the same situation, that is a qualitatively identical epistemic situation [to ours], and call two

> heavenly bodies 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus', without their being identical. So in that sense we can say that it might have turned out either way.[29]

Generalizing from these examples, one arrives at the following schema for applying this rephrasal strategy: ⌜It could have turned out that A⌝ is to be rephrased as ⌜It is possible that a population of speakers in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours would make a true statement by asserting ⌜A⌝ with normal literal intent⌝. Consider our intuition that it could have turned out that there were samples of water containing no hydrogen. The rephrasal comes out true because in the envisaged population of speakers 'water' might not name water but rather XYZ or 'hydrogen' might not name hydrogen but rather X. When rephrased thus, the original apparently anti-SE intuition is plainly consistent with the SE thesis that, necessarily, water = H_2O. Likewise, for other anti-SE intuitions. At the same time, when anti-scientific-essentialists try to use this rephrasal strategy to deflate pro-scientific-essentialist intuitions (e.g., the twin-earth intuition), they fail, and there seems to be no competing general strategy which has this sort of asymmetry and which favors anti-SE. Accordingly, the stalemate is broken in favor of the SE thesis. (This matter is discussed at length in my "Mental Properties.")

Semantic Stability. The rephrasal strategy suggests a distinction between *semantically stable* and *semantically unstable* expressions. An expression is semantically stable iff, necessarily, in any language group in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours, the expression would mean the same thing. An expression is semantically unstable iff it is possible for it to mean something different in some language group whose epistemic situation is qualitatively identical to ours. Of course, 'qualitatively identical epistemic situation' must be understood in the intended way.[30] Note furthermore that by defining semantic stability in terms of whole language groups, rather than particular individuals, Burge-like phenomena alone cannot render an expression semantically unstable.[31]

Semantic instability has to do with the effects of the external environment. An expression is semantically unstable iff the external environment makes some contribution to its meaning. Natural kind terms are paradigmatic—'water', 'gold', 'heat', 'beech', 'elm', etc. Logical, mathematical, and a great many philosophical terms, by contrast, are semantically stable: the external environment makes no such contribution. For example, 'some', 'all', 'and', 'if', 'is identical to', 'is', 'necessarily', 'possibly', 'true', 'valid'; '0', '1', '+', '÷', '∈'; 'property', 'quality', 'quantity', 'relation', 'proposition', 'state of affairs', 'object', 'category', etc. It seems clear that all these are semantically stable: any language group in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours would mean what we mean by these "formal" expressions.

How is the list to be continued? My hypothesis is that most, if not all,

of the central terms of philosophy are semantically stable: 'conscious', 'sensation', 'pleasure', 'pain', 'emotion', 'think', 'believe', 'desire', 'decide', 'know', 'reason', 'evidence', 'justify', 'understand', 'explain', 'purpose', 'good', 'fair', 'ought'.[32] Case by case, each of these is intuitively semantically stable. Consider 'pain', for example. If there were a language group in an epistemic situation *qualitatively identical* to ours, they would use 'pain' to mean pain. 'Pain' is a term for a certain felt quality; our counterparts in a language group whose epistemic situation is *qualitatively identical* would have to be using 'pain' for the *identical quality*.

Notice that I did not say that *all* central philosophical terms are semantically stable. It might be held that there are uses of 'time', 'space', 'probable', 'cause', and 'matter' which are semantically unstable. Even if there are, however, there exist other uses—seen in expressions like 'a kind of time', 'a kind of space', etc.—which are semantically stable. These *generic* uses occur in sentences such as 'Euclidean space is a possible kind of space', 'Newtonian time is a possible kind of time', etc. which are semantically stable sentences. In any language group in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours, these sentences would mean the same as they mean for us and presumably would be true, just as they are for us. These generic uses are sufficient, I believe, to underwrite a general philosophy of space and time, probability, etc. This is what matters for the Autonomy of Philosophy.

With this qualification in mind, we can state my hypothesis thus: most of the central terms of philosophy are semantically stable or else have generic uses which are semantically stable. Case by case, intuitions support this hypothesis. To deny it would be *ad hoc* unless accompanied by argument; I know of none which is not tendentious or question-begging. Unless and until a successful argument is found, we should accept the hypothesis.

Limits of Scientific Essentialism. This hypothesis is coupled with a second, namely, that scientific essentialism holds only for semantically unstable expressions. There are several arguments for the second hypothesis. The first, which I will now sketch, is a generalization on the argument from "Mental Properties" and has to do with the way one argues for SE in the case of particular expressions. (Another argument is that the most plausible explanation of certain puzzling patterns in our intuitions, including in particular pro- and anti-SE intuitions, implies the hypothesis. A third is that the analysis of what it is to possess a concept determinately implies the hypothesis. I discuss these two lines of defense in "Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism.")

Consider how one argues for SE in a particular case, for example, the cogent SE argument that, necessarily, water = H_2O. The argument consists of two steps. First, pro-SE intuitions supporting the identity are elicited: in all known cases, these intuitions either are or can be reworked into twin-earth style intuitions. Second, it is shown that the rephrasal strategy can be

used to deflate the force of our anti-SE intuitions but that, when anti-scientific-essentialists attempt to use it to deflate the force of our pro-SE intuitions (i.e., the intuitions elicited in step one), they fail. Both steps evidently succeed, so one may conclude that SE holds for 'water'.

Now consider some semantically stable term t. To show that SE holds for t, one would need to go through both steps. The problem is that *both steps fail* for all semantically stable terms t. In connection with the first step, consider the t-analogue of the twin-earth argument for 'water'. We are to contemplate the possibility of another planet (or possible world) macroscopically like earth but microscopically different. We are to consider items here to which t applies, and we are then to ask whether, intuitively, t would fail to apply to the corresponding items on the hypothetical planet (in the possible world). The question is outlandish if t is a "formal" term, that is, an expression of the following sort: 'is identical to', 'is', 'necessarily', 'possibly', 'true', 'property', 'quality', 'quantity', 'relation', 'proposition', 'state of affairs', 'substance', 'event', 'category', etc. For example, there are properties here; could there fail to be properties there?!

What about semantically stable expressions that are not "formal" but rather "contentful"? Consider 'conscious', for example. The following would be the 'conscious'-analogue of the original twin-earth argument for 'water'. Suppose that on earth all and only things that are conscious have a certain microstructure, say, "Con-fibers" (which are composed ultimately of hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, etc.). Consider a twin earth on which our Doppelgängers display "consciousness"-behavior exactly like ours. It turns out, however, that, whereas our consciousness—and our associated "consciousness"-behavior—co-occurs with firing Con-fibers, the "consciousness"-behavior of our Doppelgängers co-occurs instead with firing Con_{te}-fibers (composed ultimately of X, Y, Z, etc.). Would we say that these creatures are conscious? To be sure, we would not be *certain* that they are conscious; macroscopic behavioral criteria never entail that a mental predicate applies. But this is not the point. The point is that *it would not be counterintuitive to say that they are conscious.* Note the contrast with water. It would be counterintuitive to say that samples of XYZ on twin earth are samples of water. This intuition is the essential first step of the SE argument concerning 'water'. The analogous intuition concerning 'conscious' is simply *missing*! Accordingly, the essential first step of the argument that SE applies to 'conscious' cannot even get off the ground.[33]

I come now to the second step in the SE argument, namely, that anti-SE intuitions would be neutralized if the rephrasal strategy were applied. My argument against this has two stages.

First, suppose that the intuitions in question are expressed using *only* semantically stable terms. Then they will retain their original force even upon rephrasal. Suppose, for example, that an intuition is originally re-

ported with a sentence ⌜It is possible that S⌝ consisting entirely of semantically stable expressions. Then (by the definition of semantic stability) any language group in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours would mean what we mean by ⌜S⌝. Therefore, the rephrasal ⌜It is possible for there to be a language group in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours who would make a true statement by asserting ⌜S⌝⌝ would imply ⌜It is possible that S⌝. So the force of the original intuition is not deflated.

Second, suppose that the intuitions in question are "mixed"—that is, expressed with a combination of semantically stable and unstable terms. Because of the semantically unstable terms, the force of these intuitions shifts upon rephrasal. But for the purpose of investigating central philosophical questions, there is a strategy for dealing with this. The idea is to find a new intuition with the philosophical import of the original but expressed entirely in semantically stable terms. To do this, we construct an appropriate semantically stable "counterpart" for each of the semantically unstable terms. In some cases, there may be no exact (i.e., necessarily equivalent) counterpart. But we can always find a counterpart which is as close to the semantically unstable original as is philosophically important. (This is pretty much a direct consequence of the universality criterion—and perhaps the generality criterion as well—in my informal characterization of the central questions of philosophy at the outset of the paper.)

To illustrate this strategy, consider the chauvinistic identity-thesis that being conscious = having firing Con-fibers. A multiple-realizability argument against this thesis might invoke the intuition that it is possible for something to be conscious and not have Con-fibers. This intuition is "mixed": even though the expressions 'something', 'have', 'not', and 'conscious' are semantically stable, 'Con-fibers' is not. (And presumably 'Con-fibers' has no exact semantically stable counterpart, for there is evidently no semantically stable way to capture, e.g., relevant matters of scale.) The intuition therefore would not retain its original force upon rephrasal. The philosophical import of the intuition, however, is that it is possible for there to be consciousness in the absence of a certain highly specific nested complex of interrelated nonmental parts (ultimately hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, etc.). We can get as close as we want to this notion using expressions from pure mathematics and other semantically stable expressions such as 'part', 'relation', 'non', and 'mental'. Even though what is "left over" might be of scientific interest, it would not be relevant to the philosophical point (i.e., refuting the chauvinistic identity thesis). Because the new counterpart intuition is expressed with semantically stable expressions, it will (by the considerations of the previous paragraph) retain its original force upon rephrasal.

Although this is only an illustration, it points to a general procedure

for dealing with "mixed" intuitions. First, find an appropriate semantically stable "counterpart" for each semantically unstable expression in the sentence reporting the "mixed" intuition. As indicated, there may be no exact (i.e., necessarily equivalent) counterpart, but we can always find a counterpart which is as close to the semantically unstable original as is philosophically interesting. Second, in the sentence reporting the original intuition, do the following: replace the semantically unstable expression with a predicate variable; use the semantically stable "counterpart" to restrict the range of that variable; and, depending on the context, supply an appropriate quantifier (universal or existential) with appropriate scope (wide or narrow, respectively) for that restricted variable. The resulting sentence will be semantically stable. So it will retain its force upon rephrasal. Moreover, the difference in meaning between this sentence and the original semantically unstable sentence will not be of any central philosophical importance. Finally, if the semantically stable counterparts are fine-grained enough, the resulting semantically stable sentence will be intuitive if the original semantically unstable one was.[34]

These considerations show that the second step in the SE argument also fails in the case of "mixed" intuitions. The general conclusion, therefore, is that both steps in the SE argument fail for all semantically stable expressions. Hence, there is no reason whatsoever to think that SE generalizes from semantically unstable expressions to semantically stable expressions and, in turn, to think that SE is any barrier to the Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy.

Concluding Remark

In this paper I have presented the Argument from Evidence. First, I argued that intuitions really are evidence (reasons). Then, I argued that modal reliabilism provides the correct explanation of this fact. Following that, I showed that modal reliabilism implies the Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy as long as scientific essentialism is no barrier. Finally, I argued that scientific essentialism is no barrier. From these four points, the Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy follow directly. Along the way I have alluded to a second argument—the Argument from Concepts—which also yields these two theses, but for that additional support we must await another occasion.

It is of course another matter whether human beings are able to have sufficiently good cognitive conditions to achieve autonomy and authority. Whether we are is a question on which I take no stand here. My personal belief, however, is that collectively, over historical time, undertaking philosophy as a civilization-wide project, we can do so closely enough to obtain authoritative answers to a number of central philosophical questions without substantive reliance on the sciences.[35]

Notes

1. In this paper I will use 'experience' for phenomenal experience—either sensory (sensing red, etc.) or reflective (feeling sad, thinking p, etc.). I will use 'observation' for perception of physical objects.
2. This example is adapted from Alvin Goldman, "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 73 (1976): 771–791.
3. This procedure resembles the procedure of seeking "reflective equilibrium" but differs from it crucially. In the latter procedure, an equilibrium among all beliefs—including empirical beliefs—is sought. In the *a priori* process, an equilibrium based exclusively on *a priori* intuitions is sought. Empirical beliefs—and the experiences and observations upon which they are based—are sometimes used to raise and to resolve doubts about the quality of the background cognitive conditions (intelligence, etc.). But these empirical resources play no role in the procedure of *a priori* justification itself. *A priori* intuitions—not empirical beliefs—constitute the grist for its mill. When I speak of not needing to rely *substantively* on empirical science, this is one of the points I have in mind.

   As indicated, this description is an idealization. In real life, various stages are pursued at once, and they are performed only partially. The results are usually provisional and are used as "feedback" to guide subsequent efforts. These efforts are typically collective, and the results of past efforts—including those of past generations—are used liberally. The fact that speech and writing are used does not disqualify these collective efforts as *a priori*, at least not according to the central use of the term '*a priori*' I am employing. Experience and/or observation can be used to raise—and also to resolve—doubts about the quality of the communication conditions (speaker and author sincerity, reliability of the medium of transmission, accuracy of interpretation, etc.). But these empirical resources play no role in the procedure of *a priori* justification itself. When I speak of not needing to rely substantively on empirical science, this is another one of the points I have in mind.
4. For certain phenomenal possibilities (e.g., certain Gestalt phenomena), perhaps the actual experience is required in order to know that that kind of experience is possible. This would not upset my main theses, for such use of experience would differ markedly from the use science makes of experience. When I say that philosophy need not rely substantively on science, another one of my intentions is to allow the use of experience to establish mere phenomenal possibilities. Despite this, I will sometimes talk as if the method of answering central philosophical questions is purely *a priori*. As just indicated, this is perhaps not quite right, and appropriate adjustments might need to be made.
5. I am indebted to George Myro for this example and for the point it illustrates, namely, that it is possible to have an intuition without having the corresponding belief.
6. Similar considerations can be used to show that intuition is not an inclination-to-believe or an inclination-to-believe accompanied by a "glow" or some other "positive" quality. On my view, intuition is a *sui generis*, irreducible, natural

propositional attitude which occurs episodically—no special "glow" or other "positive" quality.

7. Is this defense viciously circular? No, see note 15 and note 26.
8. George Bealer, "The Incoherence of Empiricism," *The Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume*, 66 (1992): 99–138.
9. One might wonder in what way I am relying on the fact that this procedure is *standard*. This is a good question. Note that we can easily construct a *direct* argument against radical empiricism, one which is logically valid and which has true and evident premises. The premises would be provided by our intuitions about concrete cases in which intuitions are evidence (reasons). In a way, this is the end of the matter—radical empiricism is refuted. But this sort of direct argument, albeit sound and evident, does not persuade radical empiricists. The argument in the text, by contrast, is designed to have a persuasive force for radical empiricists which these direct arguments lack. This argument falls into a class of arguments which is not well-understood today (although it was by Aristotle in, e.g., the *Topics*). It serves to persuade people who are in the grips of an extreme view which interferes with the effectiveness of ordinary, direct arguments. Question: for whom is the standard justificatory procedure *standard*? Answer: radical empiricists *themselves*. It thus provides a *common ground* from which we are able to get them to see that they are in an epistemically self-defeating position. This is not to say that this common ground is more than contingent. At this early stage, I have given no reason to think that this style of argument will have a *general* power to persuade. This brings up the question of whether the standard justificatory procedure is necessary or contingent. My view—which is a corollary of the theory of concept possession—is that the *core* of the procedure is necessary for any subjects whose cognitive conditions are of appropriately high quality. Subjects capable of difficult theoretical work (including "end-game" self-approving theorizing) at least approximate those cognitive conditions in relevant respects; to that extent the core of their justificatory procedure must approximate that necessary core procedure. We may therefore expect the argument to work for almost any subjects who (like ourselves) are capable of difficult theoretical work. Consequently, the argument has a *general* effectiveness after all. But this is something that can be made persuasive only late in the dialectic.
10. It would do no good for radical empiricists to try to answer the question by relying on their best overall theory. For advocates of the other deviant procedures might themselves do the same thing, yielding a stalemate.
11. Is it *possible* for contradictory concrete-case intuitions to become the norm for us? This is a theoretical question. When it is suitably qualified, I believe its answer is negative. More to the point, I certainly do not have concrete-case intuitions that support an affirmative answer. In any case, this question is not relevant to the question in the text, namely, whether intuition should *now* be thrown out as a source of evidence because of *actual* widespread inconsistencies. The answer to that question is negative.

    This distinction between possible and actual defects in our intuitions will be relevant at various points below. For the purpose of our dialectic, all that is

needed is the fact that our intuitions are not actually flawed in the relevant respect.

12. Andrew Jeffrey has noted that, if our attribution of mental contents to others is guided by a principle of charity, we shall inevitably find a significant degree of corroboration between our intuitions and those of others.
13. In the case of intuition, no one yet knows how far the elimination of apparent conflict goes. At this point we cannot rule out *with certainty* that it does not go all the way. For example, perhaps even the apparently inconsistent intuitions that lead to Russell's Paradox or to the Liar Paradox can be resolved by redescription in terms of subtle distinctions that have yet to be isolated by logical theory.

    It is often claimed that there are widespread conflicts among moral intuitions and among aesthetic intuitions. Two comments are in order. First, people making this claim usually make no effort to distinguish between genuine intuitions and other cognitive states. It is far from clear that there is widespread conflict among genuine intuitions about moral and aesthetic matters. For example, I have a vivid intuition that it is possible that not every p is such that it ought to be that p and also it ought to be that not p. It is less clear that we truly have intuitions about categorical evaluative propositions. (Recall that we are only discussing *a priori* intuitions.) But the supposed conflict is almost always traceable to "evaluative intuitions" that are categorical. Second, suppose, however, that there really are widespread conflicts among genuine evaluative intuitions. This would not show that a stable systematization of evaluative intuitions is impossible. Even if a stable systematization happened to be out of reach for human beings (or other beings in our cognitive circumstances), it still might possible for beings in superior cognitive circumstances. Whether this is possible depends on two preliminary questions—whether there are genuine evaluative concepts; and, if there are, whether they really are possessed determinately. (Analogy 1: perhaps there are conflicting intuitions about what counts as big; one explanation is that there is not really a genuine concept of being big. Analogy 2: there are differing intuitions about set theory; one explanation is that we do not express a single determinate concept with 'is an element of'.) Neither of these preliminary questions about evaluative concepts has an obvious answer. If need be, one or both questions can be answered in the negative. Doing so would be consistent with the larger theory of concept possession and *a priori* knowledge which we are examining. The issue of evaluative intuitions thus does not create a fundamental problem for the theory.
14. Note that intuitions are not being used here as evidence but merely as a component of the standard procedure for critically assessing candidate sources of evidence.
15. Is it question-begging for advocates of intuitions to invoke intuitions in support of their theory of determinate concept possession? No. It is standard justificatory practice to use intuitions evidentially. Unless and until a reason for departing from this standard practice is produced, we are entitled—indeed, obligated—to continue using intuitions as evidence. The considerations in the text show that no such reason is forthcoming.

16. George Bealer, "Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism," *Philosophical Perspectives*, 1 (1987): pp. 289-365.
17. Testimony-based justification thus seems to be a problem for the sophisticated ("normal worlds") theory proposed by Alvin Goldman (section 5.5 "Reliabilism," in *Epistemology and Cognition*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), at least as I understand his theory. The reason is that our telling of systematic lies to an isolated individual is compatible with a world's being "normal" in Goldman's sense.
18. The notion of a basic source of evidence is an intuitive notion which can be picked out with the aid of examples and rough-and-ready general principles. The following examples are typical. Depending on one's epistemic situation, calculators can serve as a source of evidence for arithmetic questions; tree-rings, as evidence for the age of trees; etc. It is natural to say that these sources are not as basic as phenomenal experience, intuition, observation, and testimony. By the same token, it is natural to say that testimony is not as basic as observation, and likewise that observation is not as basic as phenomenal experience. Phenomenal experience, however, is as basic as evidence can get. Likewise for intuition. Here are some typical rough-and-ready principles. A source is basic iff it has its status as a source of evidence intrinsically, not by virtue of its relation to other sources of evidence. A source is basic iff no other source has more authority. A source is basic iff its deliverances, as a group, play the role of "regress stoppers." Although examples and principles like these serve to fix our attention on a salient intuitive notion, they do not constitute a noncicurlar analysis. This is where a reliabilism restricted to basic sources of evidence comes in.
19. This account of derived sources should be viewed as an idealization. See Christopher Peacocke ("Rationality Requirements, Knowledge and Content," in *Thoughts: An Essay on Content*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) for a suggestive discussion of how idealizations might work in epistemology. Note that I need not commit myself to the idealization in the text. What is important is that there be some account of derived sources which is consistent with a reliabilist account of basic sources.
20. Might intuition be a derived source? No. First, intuitively, intuition is as basic as experience (or any source of evidence). Second, as Quine has shown us, our simplest overall purely empirical theory does not affirm that our modal intuitions have a reliable tie to the truth and, hence, would not explain their evidential status. Within the general explanatory strategy under discussion in the text, there is no alternative but to identify intuition as a basic source of evidence. (This point is developed in greater detail in section 6, pp. 323–328, of my "Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism.")
21. Anti-Panglossian examples and also Swamp-Man examples show that it does not provide a necessary condition, either. But I will not go into that matter here.
22. In this and the succeeding paragraphs I benefited from a critical exchange with Ernest Sosa.
23. For the sort of theorizers who are able to engage in end-game self-approving theorizing, these cognitive conditions would perhaps need to be even higher, and so in turn the class of relevantly elementary propositions would be larger.

Of course, what counts as "elementary" and "approximate" is vague. Although the lines are fuzzy, the larger explanatory point is clear.

24. I require only that *most* derivable consequences of the indicated *a priori* theory be true. I do not say *all*, for I do not want to rule out unresolvable logical and philosophical antinomies. Nor do I want to rule out the possibility that Burge-like incomplete understanding might contaminate selected intuitions. What is ruled out is that this sort of thing could be the norm.

25. Maximally elementary deliverances of basic sources thus have the following characteristic: either they are demon-proof and so necessarily reliable; or else they are the next best thing—reliable in every possible context which is demon-free.

    Incidentally, I provisionally defined one's nonbasic sources of evidence to be those deemed reliable by the best theory based on one's basic sources. There is an alternative approach. Just now, when I tried to explain the role basic sources play, I reasoned thus: if there were an evil demon, I could have no success in my quest for the truth, so I might as well suppose that there are no demons; that way I maximize my chances for succeeding in my quest. Perhaps this style of reasoning could be applied a series of times, once for each kind of relative basicness. First, for completely basic sources, where the only sort of threat would be an evil demon (or something on a par with one). Second, for observation, where besides evil demons there is a threat from bad observation conditions. Third, for testimony, where besides demons and bad observation conditions, there is a threat from liars. And so forth.

26. And these features are precisely those given by the general principles invoked in note 18 to help single out the intuitive concept of a basic source of evidence. Notice that the above discussion is itself context-free in the sense just isolated: regardless of context anyone engaged in real theorizing (especially end-game self-approving theorizing) cannot but feel its intuitive pull.

    Incidentally, William Alston worries that all efforts to show that observation has a tie to the truth are guilty of "epistemic circularity" in the sense that they must appeal to observation as evidence right in the course of the argument. But this is not so, for we can show the reliability of observation using our basic sources of evidence—phenomenal experience and intuition. Can we show without an analogous "epistemic circularity" that phenomenal experience has a tie to the truth? Yes, intuition-based arguments show it. Can we show without "epistemic circularity" that intuitions themselves have a tie to the truth? No, any argument to that effect must, I believe, use intuitions as evidence. (For example, the sort of argument in the text did.) But there is nothing vicious about this "circle." For, by the argument of section 1 and other arguments in that vein, denying that intuitions are evidence leads to epistemic self-defeat; it is impossible to have a coherent epistemology without admitting intuitions as evidence. (We can also show it is impossible to have a coherent epistemology without admitting phenomenal experience as evidence.) When one does admit intuitions as evidence, the kind of tie to the truth one is able to show for intuitions and phenomenal experience is a strong *modal* tie. (Note that phenomenal experience cannot show this even for phenomenal experience.) The fact that this is a strong *modal* tie to the truth entitles these basic

sources to serve as the general touchstone for evaluating the reliability of candidate sources of evidence.

27. Incidentally, in cognitive conditions of sufficiently high quality, the subject would, independently of scientific theories, have significant internal confirmation of the quality of its own cognitive conditions. For example, the subject would have intuitions regarding very difficult questions that are affirmed by the theory founded on just its elementary intuitions. E.g., its intuitions about very difficult questions in number theory might be affirmed by proofs from Peano's postulates, which may be founded just on elementary intuitions.
28. George Bealer, "Mental Properties," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 91 (1994): 185–208.
29. Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1980), pp. 103–4. Incidentally, Kripke tells us, "[*I*]*t could have turned out that P* entails that P could have been the case" (pp. 141–2). For ease of exposition, I will slide between ⌜It could have turned out that P⌝, ⌜That P could have been the case⌝, and ⌜Possibly P⌝. No question will be begged, for I could always revert to the first form.
30. As Kripke intended it (*ibid.*, p. 103), this expression must be so understood that the rephrasal strategy can be successfully applied to 'It could have turned out that water had no hydrogen in it' but not to 'It could have turned out that the four color theorem is false'. Other points of clarification: By saying that semantically stable expressions must mean the same in the indicated language group, I mean that they must make the same contribution to the propositions expressed by sentences in which they occur. This is meant to rule out indexicals as semantically stable. Note also that these definitions are relativized to *our* language group. Corresponding absolute notions can be defined. The resulting absolute notions mesh neatly with the Autonomy and Authority of Philosophy since these are modal theses concerning the possibility of autonomous, authoritative philosophical theories. At a few points my discussion will need the absolute notion; it should be clear when it is in effect. Of course, it is an expression *in one of its senses* that is semantically stable or unstable: there could be an ambiguous expression which is stable in one of its senses and unstable in another. Finally, as defined, the notion of semantic stability applies to expressions; there is a corresponding object-language notion of a semantically stable concept. In a finished formulation this object-language notion might be preferable.
31. Consider the two speech communities envisaged by Burge—the community of English speakers and the hypothetical community of speakers otherwise just like them except that they have different conventions for the use of 'arthritis'. The epistemic situations of these two speech communities are *not* qualitatively identical in the intended sense; in particular, the speaker intentions of respective experts differ over the conventions governing the use of 'arthritis'. I define semantic stability in terms of whole speech communities, rather than in terms of single individuals, precisely to rule out this kind of divergence in conventions.
32. I believe that 'alive' belongs on this list, but I think it is less clear-cut than the others and, therefore, is best left off, at least for now.

33. The failure of the first step in the SE argument to apply to philosophically central expressions allows us to make a general methodological point. We have seen that in the case of terms like 'water' there is a pending stalemate between pro- and anti-SE intuitions and breaking the stalemate in favor of SE requires that one apply the rephrasal strategy to reconcile the apparently conflicting intuitions. But in the absence of a pending stalemate, there is no requirement to subject our intuitions to the rephrasal strategy; absent a pending stalemate, the presumption is that our intuitions are correct as reported. However, pro-SE intuitions concerning most philosophically central expressions are simply missing. So, for our remaining intuitions expressed with such expressions, the sort of pending stalemate that threatens in the case of intuitions concerning expressions like 'water' will be absent. Therefore, the presumption is that our intuitions reported with philosophically central expressions are correct as reported and, hence, need not be subjected to rephrasal. The evidential use of these philosophical intuitions may thus proceed unhampered by SE worries.
34. To illustrate how this works in a more complicated case, consider a (somewhat silly) behavioristic theory according to which a certain empirically discovered dispositional polygraphic property B is necessarily a sufficient condition for consciousness. It is understood that B is specified with semantically unstable expressions such as 'electrostatic charge', 'skin', etc. Most of us have the intuition that it is possible for some being to have disposition B and not be conscious. To employ the procedure, we first find a semantically stable counterpart for B, for example: 'disposition to exhibit modifications in the intrinsic properties of one's surface'. Then the new semantically stable counterpart of the original sentence would be the following wide-scope universally quantified sentence: for every property F which is a disposition to exhibit modifications in the intrinsic properties of one's surface, it is possible for some being to have F and not be conscious. This sentence captures the philosophical import of the original. Because it is semantically stable, it retains its force upon rephrasal. And it is intuitive.
35. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at Brandeis University, CUNY Graduate Center, University of Miami, and in an APA Symposium on *A Priori* Knowledge. The latter talk, together with comments by William Lycan and Ernest Sosa and my replies to them, is published in *Philosophical Studies* 81, 1996, 121–42 and 163–74. In the course of the present paper I refer to three preliminary papers and a forthcoming book—"Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism," "The Incoherence of Empiricism," "Mental Properties," and *Philosophical Limits of Science* (forthcoming)—which also address my topic. I should like to take this occasion to draw attention to an important and elegant paper by Eli Hirsch, "Metaphysical Necessity and Conceptual Truth," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 11 (1986): 243–56. His views and mine are very congenial.

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