Conclusion
Fiona Cowie

in What's Within?: Nativism Reconsidered
Published in print: 2003 Published Online: October 2011

This book has been able to provide a thorough examination of certain aspects of nativism about the mind, such as its development throughout history and the modern advances in psychology and other fields that can be attributed to such. Part I was able to investigate historical debates regarding innateness, misconceptions and clarifications about this, and how we have been able to develop a novel explanation as to what nativism is. It explores the several nativist claims that involve psychological processes, as well as certain general views that some nativists may adopt. While Parts II and III accounted for innate ideas set in this context, and the author still asserts that we should still consider and examine empiricists' accounts of learning and not automatically embrace the promises attributed to nativism.

Perfectionism and the Common Good
David O. Brink

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: April 2004

This book presents a study of T. H. Green's classic Prolegomena to Ethics (1883) and its role in his philosophical thought. Green is one of the two most important figures in the British idealist tradition, and his political writings and activities had a profound influence on the development of Liberal politics in Britain. The Prolegomena is his major philosophical work. It begins with his idealist attack on empiricist metaphysics and epistemology and develops a perfectionist ethical theory that aims to bring together the best elements in the ancient and modern traditions, and that provides the moral foundations for Green's own distinctive
brand of liberalism. This book tries to restore the Prolegomena to its rightful place in the history of philosophy by providing a prolegomenon to the Prolegomena — one that situates the work in its intellectual context, sympathetically but critically engages its main themes, and explains Green's enduring significance for the history of ethics and contemporary ethical theory. The book examines Green's life and work, his idealist attack on empiricism, his conception of agency, his perfectionist ethics of self-realization, the connections he draws between perfectionism and the common good, his conception of the differences between perfectionism and utilitarianism, and the connections between his perfectionism and his defence of a new form of political liberalism.

THE ATTACK ON EMPIRICISM AND ATOMISM

David O. Brink

in Perfectionism and the Common Good: Themes in the Philosophy of T. H. Green

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: April 2004
DOI: 10.1093/0199266409.003.0004
Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on Green's attack on the empiricist programme that sees all knowledge as resting on the deliverances of the senses. In this view, knowledge is built up from a foundation of simple discrete sensory experiences. He believes that this empiricist programme suffers rot at the foundations, because simple sensory experience that is not relational and in which the mind plays a purely passive role is impossible. For Green, it is hard to see how there could be any mere or pure sensation that was not at least implicitly relational and, hence, the product of the understanding.

The Supporting Arguments

Albert Casullo

in A Priori Justification

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: May 2006
DOI: 10.1093/0195115058.003.0005
Item type: chapter

The leading arguments supporting the existence of a priori knowledge fall into three broad categories: conceptual arguments, which offer an analysis of the concept of a priori knowledge and maintain that some knowledge satisfies the conditions in the analysis; criterial arguments,
which identify criteria of the a priori, such as necessity, certainty, and irrefutability, and maintain that some knowledge satisfies the criteria; and deficiency arguments, which allege that radical empiricist theories of knowledge are deficient in some respect, and that the only remedy for the deficiency is to embrace the a priori. This chapter contends that these arguments fail: the conceptual arguments involve implausible conceptions of a priori knowledge; the criterial arguments involve false epistemic premises; and the deficiency arguments fail because theories endorsing the a priori suffer from the same deficiencies alleged to plague radical empiricism.

The Opposing Arguments
Albert Casullo

in A Priori Justification

The leading arguments against the existence of a priori knowledge are addressed. The opposing arguments fall into three broad categories: conceptual arguments, which offer an analysis of the concept of a priori knowledge and allege that no cases of knowledge satisfy the conditions in the analysis; radical empiricist arguments, which offer radical empiricist accounts of knowledge of propositions alleged to be knowable only a priori; and incompatibility arguments, which maintain that a priori knowledge is incompatible with epistemic naturalism. This chapter contends that the negative arguments fail: the conceptual arguments impose implausible conditions on a priori knowledge; the radical empiricist accounts do not establish that the propositions in question are not also known a priori; and the incompatibility arguments fail to show that a priori knowledge is incompatible with either of the two leading forms of epistemic naturalism: philosophical and scientific.

The Different Spiritualities of the Students We Teach
Robert J. Nash and DeMethra LaSha Bradley

in The American University in a Postsecular Age: Religion and the Academy

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Nash and Bradley offer an empirically-based typology of student spirituality that includes orthodox believers, mainline believers, existential humanists, scientific empiricists, and skeptics. They assume that student spirituality is intertwined with student learning. Consequently, faculty must take student spiritualities into account in order to facilitate constructive and appropriate classroom dialogue.

Foundations of Mind
Jean Matter Mandler

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: September 2007
Item type: book

This book presents a new theory of cognitive development in infancy, focusing on the processes through which perceptual information is transformed into concepts. Drawing on extensive research, the book explores preverbal conceptualization and shows how it forms the basis for both thought and language. It also emphasizes the importance of distinguishing automatic perceptual processes from attentive conceptualization, and argues that these two kinds of learning follow different principles, so it is crucial to specify the processes required by a given task. Countering both strong nativist and empiricist views, the book provides a markedly different perspective on early cognitive development, painting a new picture of the abilities and accomplishments of infants and the development of the mind.

Historical background
Ian P. Howard and Brian J. Rogers

in Seeing in Depth: Volume 1: Basic Mechanics/ Volume 2: Depth Perception 2-Volume Set

Published in print: 2008 Published Online: May 2009
Item type: chapter

This chapter reviews the history of the subject to the early twentieth century. The chapter is organized as follows. Section 2.1 discusses the history of visual science, covering the Greeks; the Arabs; Europe to the eighteenth century; the microscopic structure of the visual system; the discovery of cortical visual areas; the discovery of perspective; the advent of instruments; and the empiricist-nativist controversy. Section 2.2 deals with the history of binocular vision, covering Ptolemy on binocular vision; Alhazen on binocular vision; Europe to the eighteenth
century; the horopter; and the physiology of stereopsis. Section 2.3
discusses the history of visual display systems, covering early display
systems; the advent of the stereoscope; stereophotography; and
stereoscopic movies.

Attitudes and Approaches to Representation
Allan Paivio

in Mental Representations: A dual coding approach
Published in print: 1990 Published Online: September 2008
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195066661.003.0003
Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses sceptical, empirical, and rational views regarding
mental representations. It begins with scepticism because the concerns
of the sceptics must be understood if representational theorists
are to avoid serious theoretical and empirical errors. Empiricism
follows because modern rationalism arose as a reaction to perceived
shortcomings in the empiricists' approach and is understandable only
against that background. It is shown that the three approaches contact
each other in rather curious and surprising ways.

Underdetermination and Evidence
Alexander Bird

in Images of Empiricism: Essays on Science and Stances, with a Reply from Bas
C. van Fraassen
Published in print: 2007 Published Online: January 2008
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199218844.003.0005
Item type: chapter

This chapter shows that the sceptical empiricist argument, and by
extension any argument like it, fails. It considers the concept of
evidence, endorsing Williamson's view that all and only knowledge is
evidence, (E=K). In particular, it considers the alternative view that only
observational knowledge is evidence. Bas van Fraassen's constructive
empiricism is then studied. Some commentators employ a caricature
of constructive empiricism that takes the same argument. In fact, van
Fraassen is careful to distance himself from scepticism about theories
and to take constructive empiricism to be a view about the aim of
science. It is argued that van Fraassen ought to be committed to the
sceptical conclusion, and that constructive empiricism is implicitly
committed to the above argument.
The Dilemma of Empiricist Belief
Chad Mohler

in Images of Empiricism: Essays on Science and Stances, with a Reply from Bas C. van Fraassen

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: January 2008
Item type: chapter

This chapter evaluates van Fraassen's rejection of naïve empiricism. For example a naïve empiricist holds that to be an empiricist is to believe some thesis E. Van Fraassen argues that the naïve empiricist faces a dilemma. Suppose the naïve empiricist holds that E is not open to debate: this violates the empiricist idea that disagreement with any admissible factual hypothesis is admissible. Suppose instead that the naïve empiricist holds that E is open to debate: this prevents the empiricist from using E to challenge metaphysical claims. It is argued that that van Fraassen's stance empiricism also faces this same dilemma. The empiricist can consistently maintain that the beliefs necessary to empiricism are subject to empirical confirmation/disconfirmation, while also using those beliefs as the basis of a critique of metaphysics.

From a View of Science to a New Empiricism
Bas C. van Fraassen

in Images of Empiricism: Essays on Science and Stances, with a Reply from Bas C. van Fraassen

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: January 2008
Item type: chapter

This chapter presents Bas van Fraassen's responses to the critique of his works. He mentions the ways he has changed his mind in the years since The Scientific Image. He highlights two themes as especially important. The first is the role of values in epistemology. The second is the turn in the empiricist tradition, which leaves many 'central' problems of traditional epistemology behind.
In contrast to the empiricist view, which states how all learning involves general strategies that can be applied in various fields and learning from experience, the nativist view explains how the acquisition of some knowledge cannot be associated with the domain-neutral empiricist model. In 1960, Noam Chomsky made his claims regarding how human beings are innately bestowed of knowledge of natural languages. This chapter attempts to provide an overview of Chomsky's explanation of language acquisition and how this has once again gained the attention of both American Structuralist linguistics and psychological behaviorism. Looking into such would allow the establishment of a taxonomic framework for a better examination of linguistic nativism.

Islam
JOHN BOWKER
in The Religious Imagination and the Sense of God

This chapter discusses the influence of alGhazali's theology in the history of Islam. He was one of the earliest in the western tradition to understand the empiricist challenge to theology, and the one who explored the possibility of realigning theology with an empiricist theory of knowledge. This chapter also examines how alGhazali came to form his philosophical and religious opinions. It points out that alGhazali was well aware of the diverse ways in which a sense of God arises in human consciousness — as a consequence of the social contexts in which we are born, through a fideastic acceptance of what we are told, and through rational argument.
The Normativity of Instrumental Reason
Christine M. Korsgaard

in The Constitution of Agency: Essays on Practical Reason and Moral Psychology

Most philosophers think it uncontroversial that practical reason requires us to take the means to our ends, but have been silent about the normative foundation of this requirement. The interesting question, almost everyone agrees, is whether practical reason requires anything more, such as a principle of morality or prudence. This chapter examines the question what makes instrumental reason normative. It articulates the answers implicit in the rationalist and empiricist traditions, criticizing the former for its inability to explain how we can be motivated by the instrumental principle, and the latter for its inability to explain how we can be guided by it. It argues that the normativity of instrumental reason, like that of moral reason, must be grounded in the agent's autonomy, and also that there can be no requirement to take the means to our ends unless there are also required ends.

The Myth of Egoism
Christine M. Korsgaard

in The Constitution of Agency: Essays on Practical Reason and Moral Psychology

Many philosophers believe there is a principle of practical reason directing the individual to maximize the satisfaction of his own interests. This belief is supposedly compatible with the views that all practical reasons are instrumental and all motivation is grounded in desire. Against these claims, this chapter argues that the only possible normative foundation for the egoistic principle (or principle of prudence) would be a rational intuition that maximum satisfaction is the Good; that motivation to conform to the egoistic principle would have to rest in pure practical reason; and that the only coherent formulation of the egoistic principle depends on controversial psychological assumptions characteristic of 18th-century British empiricism.
Core Object Cognition
Susan Carey

in The Origin of Concepts
Published in print: 2009 Published Online: September 2009
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195367638.003.0003
Item type: chapter

This chapter begins to develop an alternative to the empiricist picture of the human initial state. It shows that infants' knowledge of objects displays several of the hypothesized properties of core cognition. It also explores what kind of cognition core cognition is.

The Evident Connexion
Galen Strawson

Published in print: 2011 Published Online: September 2011
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199608508.001.0001
Item type: book

This book offers a new reading of Hume’s theory of personal identity — his ‘bundle theory’ of the self or mind — and his later rejection of that theory. Contrary to what many have supposed, Hume does not in endorsing the bundle theory hold that there are no subjects of experience, as many have supposed. Nor does he hold that the mind is just a series of experiences. His base position, as a ‘sceptical realist’, is that the ‘essence of the mind [is] unknown’ (Treatise, Introduction §8). His (epistemological) claim is simply that we have no empirically justifiable reason to believe in the existence of a persisting subject, or a mind that is more than a series of experiences (each with its own subject). Why does Hume later reject the bundle theory? Many think he is dissatisfied with his psychological account of how we come to believe in a persisting self. But his problem is much more serious. The keystone of Hume’s philosophy is that the succession of our experiences is governed by a ‘uniting principle’ or ‘bond of union’. Unfortunately, an empiricist philosophy that takes a bundle of ontologically distinct experiences to be the only empirically legitimate conception of the mind can’t make explanatory use of those notions in the way Hume does. As he says in the Appendix to the Treatise: having ‘loosen’d all our particular perceptions’, in endorsing the bundle theory, he can’t ‘explain the principle of connexion, which binds them together’.
Is Logical Empiricism Committed to the Ideal of Value-Free Science?
John T. Roberts

in Value-Free Science?: Ideals and Illusions

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: January 2009
Item type: chapter

This chapter argues that logical empiricism is (implicitly) committed to rejecting the ideal of value-free science. Section 7.2 explains the meaning of the logical empiricist approach to philosophy of science. Section 7.3 discusses the meaning of the ideal of value-free science. Section 7.4 returns to the logical empiricist approach to philosophy of science and fills in a few more details. Section 7.5 considers and rejects an argument that seems to show that the logical empiricist approach to philosophy of science must be committed to the ideal of value-free science. Section 7.6 presents the main argument of the chapter, and concluding remarks are offered in Section 7.7.

The Other Bishop Berkeley
Costica Bradatan

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: March 2011
Item type: book

In this book, the author proposes a new way of looking at the influential 18th-century Anglo-Irish empiricist and idealist philosopher. He approaches Berkeley's thought from the standpoint of its roots, rather than from how it has come to be viewed since his time. This book will interest scholars working in a wide variety of fields, from philosophy and the history of ideas to comparative literature, utopian studies, religious and medieval studies, and critical theory. This other Berkeley read and wrote alchemical books, daydreamed of "Happy Islands" and the "Earthly Paradise" and depicted them carefully, designed utopian projects and spent years trying to put them into practice. The author discovers a thinker deeply rooted in Platonic, mystical, and sometimes esoteric traditions, who saw salvation as philosophy and practiced philosophy as a way of life. This book uncovers a richer Berkeley, a more profound and spectacular one, and, it is hoped, a more truthful one.