

Record in the Commens Bibliography. Retrieved from [http://www.commens.org/bibliography/journal\\_article/atkins-richard-k-2017-sensation-nominalism-and-elements-experience](http://www.commens.org/bibliography/journal_article/atkins-richard-k-2017-sensation-nominalism-and-elements-experience), 05.01.2026.

---

**Type:** Article in Journal  
**Author:** Atkins, Richard Kenneth  
**Title:** Sensation, Nominalism, and the Elements of Experience  
**Year:** 2017  
**Journal:** Journal of Speculative Philosophy  
**Volume:** 31  
**Issue:** 4  
**Pages:** 538-556  
**Keywords:** Nominalism, Experience, Empiricism, Merleau-Ponty  
**Abstract:** Charles Sanders Peirce and Maurice Merleau-Ponty raise the same objection to British empiricism: its foundational tenet—captured in Hume's Copy Principle, that all of our ideas are fainter copies of our impressions—is nominalist. It is not clear what this objection amounts to, however, since the British empiricists are nominalists of one stripe or another. I canvass different ways to construe this objection. Three different construals of it fail. A fourth construal succeeds, but in a way that leaves the foundational tenet of British empiricism intact. The problem is not that the tenet is false (it may be) but that it cannot be adopted as a foundation on which to build a philosophical account of those elements of an experience that are contributed by the world and those that are contributed by the experiencing subject.  
**ISSN:** 0891625X  
**Language:** English