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Type: Article in Journal
Author: Sorrell, Kory
Title: Peirce, Immediate Perception, and the "New" Unconscious: Neuroscience and Empirical Psychology in Support of a "Well-Known Doctrine"
Year: 2015
Journal: Journal of Speculative Philosophy
Volume: 29
Issue: 4
Pages: 457-473
Keywords: Immediate Perception, Neuroscience
Abstract: This article defends Charles Peirce's "doctrine of immediate perception." This realistic view holds that conscious agents, due to the work of unconscious mind, directly perceive the world and often know objects, events, and persons as they truly are, independently of how we might prefer to think of them (what is known as our realist intuition). The doctrine provides a promising alternative to more recent views insisting that all experience of the world and other persons is ineluctably mediated by language, along with the categories and biases language inevitably imposes. Peirce's view is further explicated in terms of what neuroscientists now call the "new" unconscious (but to which Peirce contributed to earlier) and supported by recent work in both neuroscience and empirical psychology, especially experiments involving infants. The article supports the conclusion that, while much experience is mediated by language (often helpfully so), direct (and desirable) access to a world that informs and often surprises us persists throughout conscious experience.
ISSN: 0891625X
Language: English