

Reason and Prediction

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An original study of the philosophical problems associated with inductive reasoning. Like most of the main questions in epistemology, the classical problem of induction arises from doubts about a mode of inference used to justify some of our most familiar and pervasive beliefs. The experience of each individual is limited and fragmentary, yet the scope of our beliefs is much wider; and it is the relation between belief and experience, in particular the belief that the future will in some respects resemble the past and the unobserved the observed, which forms the subject of this book. Dr Blackburn's first aim is to state the problem of induction properly, to show that there does exist a genuine problem immune to the solutions in vogue at present, yet no tin principle insoluble. He gives an extended and original account of the concept of a reason and goes on to discuss prediction. In the end Dr Blackburn produces a rationale for belief in certain short-term predictions based on his reinterpretation of the classical principle of indifference. He claims that a justification for induction can be found along the lines he has suggested and must indeed be found there if anywhere.

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