

RITA  
NOLAN

COGNITIVE  
PRACTICES

HUMAN LANGUAGE & HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

NOLAN

COGNITIVE

PRACTICES



"Rita Nolan successfully criticizes ideas – among them, Fodor's 'language of thought' model and Chomsky's 'innateness hypothesis' – that have dominated cognitive psychology and linguistics for decades. But this is much more than a critical book, valuable as good philosophical criticism always is; with a remarkable combination of philosophical imagination and breadth of knowledge, she illuminates the entire area of philosophy and psychology of language. The social practice account of language that she proposes sheds light on a host of topics (including the philosophy of the earlier and the later Wittgenstein), and it leads her to suggest a novel but highly plausible reconceptualization of the development of logical and linguistic skills in the child that will fascinate psychologists as well as philosophers." – Hilary Putnam, Harvard University

How does human language contribute to the cognitive edge humans have over other species? This question eludes most current theories of language and knowledge. Incorporating research results in psychology and cutting a path through a broad range of philosophical debates, Nolan develops a strikingly original account of language acquisition which holds important implications for standard theories of language and the philosophical foundations of cognitive science.

Rita Nolan

The author is Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. She has written on topics in the philosophy of language, social epistemology, and Wittgenstein.

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