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# IMPRESSIONS OF EMPIRICISM

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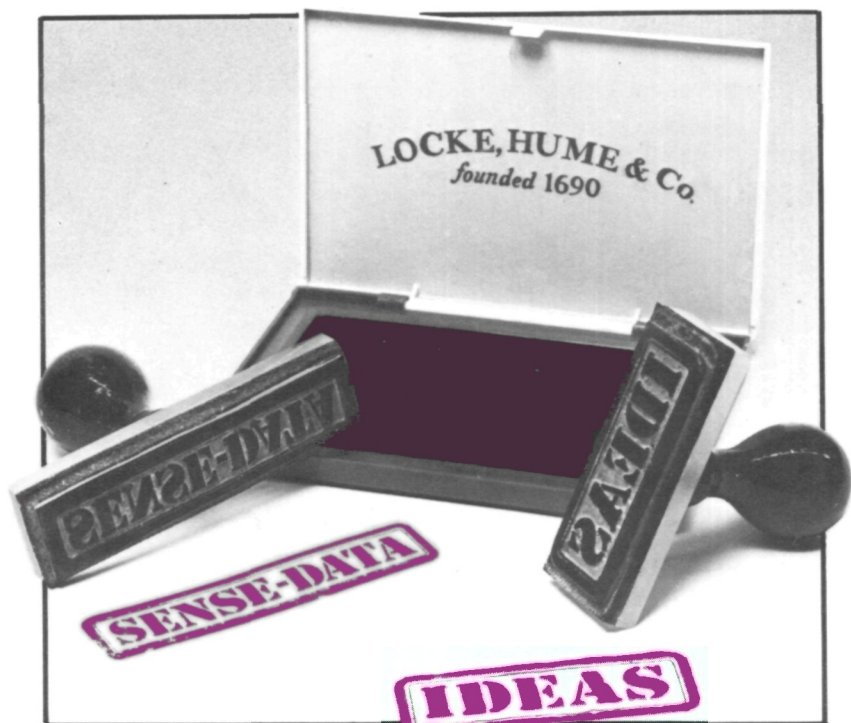
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'Two senses of "empiricism" may be distinguished. The term may be used to refer to a *method*: the empirical method of basing theorising on, and testing it by, observation and experiment. Alternatively it may be used to refer to a philosophical *theory* held in one form or another by, amongst others, John Locke, David Hume, the two Mills, and, more recently, Russell and Ayer. The theory is about knowledge and meaning. It has roots in dualistic theories of perception and communication, and fruits in epistemological problems about how we can possibly know things it does not ordinarily occur to us to question, such as that tables and chairs continue to exist when unperceived, and that other people have minds. The papers in this collection are about empiricism in both senses, and about how they are related. Some of them touch on that most exciting question (exciting to an empiricist *manqué*, that is): whether empiricism, as a theory, is itself empirical. Others, towards the end of the volume, challenge a widely accepted view: the view that science, whatever else it should be, should at least be empirical. The final contribution is an original defence of empiricism – the method, not the theory – in ethics.'

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY LECTURES

VOLUME NINE · 1974–1975

IMPRESSIONS OF EMPIRICISM

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OF  
EMPIRICISM

Edited by  
GODFREY VESEY



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