

First Argument Analysis

In *The Stuff of Thought*, pp. 95-7, Steven Pinker discusses whether Fodor's "Extreme Nativism" is plausible in the light of evolutionary biology. Write 2-3 pages providing a reconstruction and analysis of Pinker's response to Piatelli-Palmarini's argument that Extreme Nativism is compatible with evolutionary biology. (Everything should be in your own words; please do not use any quotations.)

First, explain Extreme Nativism. Second, explain Piatelli-Palmerini's defense of it, and Pinker's reply. Now set out Pinker's response to Piatelli-Palmerini in the form of an argument: some premises followed by a conclusion. Articulate each premise and the conclusion in no more than one sentence. You may need to supply premises that are not explicitly stated in the text. Indicate for each line of the argument whether it is an assumption, or whether it is supposed to follow from earlier lines. (This should appear in parentheses after the premise.)

After stating the argument, briefly explain it in your own words, and then comment on its cogency: Are the premises plausible? Is the argument valid? If not, why not? What additional assumptions would you need for the conclusion to be entailed by the premises?

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