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Sommario/riassunto

How can we explain our capacity to think about particulars in our external environment? Many philosophers have answered this question in terms of a sophisticated conception of space and time and the movement of objects therein. A more recent reaction against this view sought to explain this capacity solely in terms of perceptual mechanisms of object individuation. Neither explanation remains fully satisfactory. This book argues for a more desirable middle ground in terms of a pragmatist approach to demonstrative thought, where this capacity is explained through graded practical knowledge of objects. This view allows us to do justice to important insights put forward by both positions criticized in the book, while avoiding their potential shortcomings. It also paves the way to a more pragmatist approach to the theory of mental representation, where the notion of practical knowledge is allowed to play a central role in our cognitive life. Finally, it shows how practical knowledge may be firmly rooted in neurobiological processes and mechanisms that conform to what the empirical sciences tell us about the mind.