

# CONTEMPORARY NATIVISM, SCIENTIFIC TEXTURE, AND THE MORAL LIMITS OF FREE INQUIRY

Cordero, Alberto (2004) CONTEMPORARY NATIVISM, SCIENTIFIC TEXTURE, AND THE MORAL LIMITS OF FREE INQUIRY . In [2004] *Philosophy of Science Assoc. 19th Biennial Meeting - PSA2004: Contributed Papers (Austin, TX; 2004): PSA 2004 Contributed Papers*.

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## Abstract

Some thinkers distrust Darwinist explorations of complex human behaviors, particularly investigations into possible differences in valued skills between genders, races or classes. Such projects, it is claimed, tend to have adverse effects on people who are already disadvantaged. A recent argument by Philip Kitcher both clarifies and generalizes this charge to cover a whole genre of scientific projects. In this paper I try to spell out and analyze Kitcher's argument. The argument fails, I suggest, because some of its key premises fail to convince. My analysis focuses on relevant facts about the role of inquiry in fallibilist contexts, the texture of belief in contemporary natural science, and the moral dimension of scientific research.

**Subjects:** [General Issues: Science and Society](#)  
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**Conferences and Volumes:** [\[2004\] Philosophy of Science Assoc. 19th Biennial Meeting - PSA2004: Contributed Papers \(Austin, TX; 2004\): PSA 2004 Contributed Papers](#)

**ID Code:** 1908

**Deposited By:** [Cordero, Alberto](#)

**Deposited On:** 21 September 2004