

Contents

1. Introduction 3
 - 1.1 Stated aim 3
 - 1.2 The hard truth about the MP 5
 - 1.3 Further misgivings 11
 - 1.4 Presentation and terminology 20
 - 1.5 Mysterious paradigm mixing 24
 - 1.6 Empirical issues 28
2. The Mechanism of the MP under Scrutiny 31
 - 2.1 Some "guiding ideas" 31
 - 2.2 A closer inspection of the "computational system" 34
 - 2.3 Conclusion 50
3. The Language Faculty 51
 - 3.1 Principles and Parameters: a historical note 53
 - 3.2 Modularity and the random-generator position 57
 - 3.3 Chomsky's ambiguous realism 61
 - 3.4 Instantaneous language evolution 71
 - 3.5 An alternative view of the language faculty 76
 - 3.6 Conclusion 96
4. Questions of Method and Adequacy 97
 - 4.1 What can confirm or disconfirm a paradigm? 98
 - 4.2 Chomsky as a higher authority 113
 - 4.3 Ecologism and formalism 116

- 4.4 What to do with evidence? 118
 - 4.5 Conclusion 124
 - 5. What Is Functional about the MP? 125
 - 5.1 The minimalist version of functionalism 125
 - 5.2 How perfect is language? 127
 - 5.3 Optimal language design and model building: the "fable" 130
 - 5.4 Language and communication 134
 - 5.5 The minimalist program is not minimalist 137
 - 5.6 Why choices? The case of Mauritian Creole 143
 - 5.7 Sociolinguistic factors 147
 - 5.8 Conclusion 149
 - 6. What Is Conceptually Necessary about the MP? 150
 - 6.1 Conceptual motivation for the random generator? 151
 - 6.2 Is the "displacement property" conceptually motivated? 162
 - 6.3 Conclusion 168
 - 7. Surface-Driven Elements of Semantic Interpretation 169
 - 7.1 The question stated 170
 - 7.2 Focusing strategies 175
 - 7.3 Presuppositions 185
 - 7.4 Operator scope 186
 - 7.5 Conclusion 189
 - 8. The Embarrassment of Evidence 191
 - 8.1 Deletion and Raising in infinitival complements 192
 - 8.2 Copying phenomena 216
 - 8.3 Existential *there* 218
 - 8.4 Conclusion 228
- References 231
- Index 239