

## Preface

The essays collected here attempt to solve a wide variety of puzzles about the mind. Out of the solutions proposed emerges a relatively unified and comprehensive theory of the mind, a revised and extended version of the theory I presented in 1969, in *Content and Consciousness*. All the essays, with the exception of Chapter 6, “A Cure for the Common Code?”, were written to be presented individually at conferences and departmental colloquia around the country, and they have been shaped and reshaped by the interplay with many different audiences.

Several virtues and vices spring from this fact. Virtue first: since they were composed to be heard, and comprehended on first hearing, they make for relatively easy reading—for philosophy. Another virtue is that the essays are self-contained, which permits the reader to sample the theory at the point of most initial interest, with the reasonable hope of being able to understand the theory well enough in that domain to know whether or not to pursue it further. A collateral vice is that these essays can be self-contained only by dint of a certain amount of repetition, but this vice has its virtuous side, for it permits central concepts in my theory—such as the concept of an intentional system—and central arguments—such as the arguments about incorrigibility or introspective authority—to be presented from more than one perspective, with more than one emphasis. This provides the skeptical reader with both a demonstration of the broad applicability I claim for these ideas, and several different angles from which to launch attacks.

Ten of the essays have appeared before in print, and drafts of all seventeen have been read and discussed by philosophers, psychologists, and their students, in some cases for years. The interest they have occasioned has encouraged me to bring them together and seek a wider

audience, not only of philosophers and psychologists, but of reflective readers generally, for many of the questions posed are not the private property of professionals, but tantalizers and bafflers familiar to the speculations of even the most untheoretical imaginations. If I close my eyes and imagine a purple cow, is something somewhere really purple and cow-shaped? Could a brain scientist someday read my thoughts in my brain? Could a robot be truly conscious? Is free will an illusion? My answers were developed one at a time over the years, but once I finally noticed the rise in my temptation to indulge in the unseemly habit of citing my own work, I decided to succumb totally and admit that I think these essays are truly interrelated and should be read together.

The unified theory I claim to provide here is presented in much the same order as its ancestor was in *Content and Consciousness*, beginning, in Part I, with basic metaphysical and methodological concerns and then, in Part II, analyzing and defending the—careful—use of mentalistic or intentional formulations in psychological theories: the ascription of *content* to events and states in the mind. The fruits of that analysis are then exploited in Part III to provide answers to the most persistent quandaries about consciousness and its relation to the rest of the world. Part IV pushes tentatively, gropingly into the area I consider most important: the analysis of the relationship between our vision of ourselves as responsible, free, rational agents, and our vision of ourselves as complex parts of the physical world of science. For almost ten years I have been trying to concentrate on this last area only to be repeatedly driven back by complexities (and their attendant fascinations) in the groundwork theory of mind on which my assault on the ethical domain was to rest. Nothing I have learned has changed my mind about the importance or feasibility of that assault, to which I am now returning.

There are many people to thank. I am grateful to hosts, commentators, and audiences around the country for their stimulation and their responses. I am indebted to my students, at Tufts, and during very happy visits at Harvard and Pittsburgh, for their relentless, intelligent, good-natured skepticism. And I have been especially helped by the advice and criticism of Annette Baier, Ronald Barnette, Ned Block, Bo Dahlbom, Jerry Fodor, Michael Hooker, Hilary Putnam, Zenon Pylyshyn, Georges Rey, Amelie Rorty, Joseph Weizenbaum, and my colleagues at Tufts over the years. Finally, I thank my wife Susan for her invariably clear-headed stylistic advice, encouragement and understanding.

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