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0521574366 - What Minds Can Do: Intentionality in a Non-Intentional World

Pierre Jacob

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Some of a person's mental states have the power to represent real and imagined states of affairs: they have semantic properties. *What minds can do* has two goals: to find a naturalistic or non-semantic basis for the representational powers of a person's mind, and to show that these semantic properties are involved in the causal explanation of the person's behavior. In the process, the book addresses issues that are central to much contemporary philosophical debate. It will be of interest to a wide range of readers in philosophy of mind and language, cognitive science, and psychology.

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Acknowledgments

From 1988 to 1994, I was fortunate to be a member of CREA (Centre de recherche en épistémologie appliquée) of Ecole Polytechnique and CNRS in Paris. For this period of time, CREA, a very lively research group led by Jean-Pierre Dupuy, provided me with a unique environment for the exchange of philosophical ideas in France.

I have used some of the material relevant to this book in some of the philosophy of mind courses which I have taught over the past few years in the doctoral program in cognitive science sponsored by University Paris 6, EHESS and Ecole Polytechnique. I started working on mental causation (the second part of this book) before working on the naturalization of intentionality (the first part). Some of the ideas involved in the first part of this book have been presented in the philosophy department at the University of Sienna (Italy), where I was invited to deliver four lectures by Gabriele Usberti in February 1995; at a workshop at the University of Hamburg (Germany) organized by Christian Stein and Mark Textor in March 1995; and in the Summer School on language and understanding at the International Center for Semiotics and Cognitive Studies in San Marino where I taught a course in June 1995. I am grateful to audiences there for their reactions.

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