Contents

List of figures x
List of tables xiii
Preface xv
Acknowledgements xvii

I. The ineffability of meaning 1

Chapter 1. Unweaving a mystery 3
The commonplace view of meaning 4
And the word is . . . meaning 7

Chapter 2. The alchemist, the crucible and the ineffability of meaning 9
The ineffability of meaning 11
Language as a window on the mind 17
The body in the mind 20
Meaning is the Holy Grail 24
Meaning in mind, meaning in language 26

II. Meaning in mind 33

Chapter 3. Patterns in language, patterns in the mind 35
Patterns in language 38
Patterns in the mind 41
All about events 46
Computers behaving badly, and reluctant lovers 49
Foundations of meaning 53
Meaning in mind 56

Chapter 4. Time is our fruit fly 58
It’s only Tuesday 60
A clock in the brain 65
# Contents

The many faces of time  70  
How similar are time and space?  77  
Time is our fruit fly  80  
Time in hand (and ear)  87  
So where does this leave us?  90  
The mystery of time and its implications for meaning  92  

Chapter 5. Concepts body forth  95  
The ghost in the machine  97  
The language of the body  104  
Concepts body forth  110  
Minds without bodies  113  
Laying the ghost to rest  120  

Chapter 6. The concept-making engine (or how to build a baby)  122  
How to build a baby  123  
The anatomy of an image-schema  127  
The rationalist’s retort  136  
Born to see structure in the world  139  
The concept-making engine  148  
Primary scenes of experience  150  

Chapter 7. The act of creation  154  
A cognitive iceberg  159  
The act of creation  165  
Reducing complexity to human scale  174  
The power of blending  179  
The mystery of creativity  185  
Meaning in mind revisited  189  

III. Meaning in language  191  

Chapter 8. Webs of words  193  
Words are changelings  195  
Webs of words  200