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Mind and Supermind

Mind and Supermind offers a new perspective on the nature of belief and the structure of the human mind. Keith Frankish argues that the folk-psychological term 'belief' refers to two distinct types of mental state, which have different properties and support different kinds of mental explanation. Building on this claim, he develops a picture of the human mind as a two-level structure, consisting of a *basic mind* and a *supermind*, and shows how the resulting account sheds light on a number of puzzling phenomena and helps to vindicate folk psychology. Topics discussed include the function of conscious thought, the cognitive role of natural language, the relation between partial and flat-out belief, the possibility of active belief formation, and the nature of akrasia, self-deception, and first-person authority. This book will be valuable for philosophers, psychologists, and cognitive scientists.

KEITH FRANKISH is Lecturer in Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy, The Open University. He has published in *Analysis* and *Philosophical Psychology* and contributed to *Language and Thought: Interdisciplinary Themes*, ed. P. Carruthers and J. Boucher (Cambridge, 1998).

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For my parents, Arthur and Eileen Frankish,
in gratitude for their never-failing support,
encouragement, and love

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Preface

It is an old adage that two minds are better than one, and the same may go for theories of mind. Anyone with even a passing acquaintance with modern philosophy of mind knows that philosophers differ widely in their view of the nature of mental states. One of the sharpest differences is that between the views of Daniel Dennett and Jerry Fodor. According to Dennett (or a slightly caricatured version of him), there is nothing more to having a belief or desire than being disposed to behave in the right way. Mentalistic discourse is a shallow, but very useful, way of characterizing and predicting people's behaviour. According to Fodor, on the other hand (to caricature slightly again), beliefs and desires are discrete, linguistically structured representational states, and everyday mentalistic discourse incorporates a theory of the internal processes that generate behaviour. These views seem, on the face of it, straightforwardly incompatible, and it is widely assumed that endorsing one means rejecting the other. I am going to argue that this is not so. When we look carefully, we find some striking divisions in the way we use mentalistic terms and in the kinds of mental explanation we give. In a rush to establish the scientific credentials of folk psychology, philosophers have tended to gloss over these divisions, imposing a unified framework on the folk concepts and practices. This has, I think, been a mistake. If we take the divisions seriously and trace out their implications, we are led to a picture of the human mind as a *two-level* structure, in which the two levels are differently constituted and have different functions. And when we do this, we see that the views of Dennett and Fodor are not so opposed after all. We have, in a sense, two minds, and need a two-strand theory of mind.

This book began life as a doctoral thesis at the University of Sheffield, and it owes a huge debt to the person who supervised that thesis, Peter Carruthers. Over many years Peter has given very generously of his time, and I thank him for his inspiration, support, and consistently excellent advice. Without him, this book would probably not have been written;

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it would certainly have been much poorer. Thanks are also due to Chris Hookway, who acted as my secondary supervisor, and to George Botterill and Peter Smith, who examined the thesis and supplied helpful feedback. George also supervised my work on the initial proposal from which the thesis grew, and I thank him for his encouragement and advice in those early days. More recently, Maria Kasmirli and an anonymous referee have supplied comments on the typescript, for which I am grateful. During the course of writing I have also benefited from discussions and correspondence with many friends and colleagues, among them Alex Barber, Jill Boucher, Gavin Boyce, Andy Clark, Tom Dickins, Pascal Engel, André Gallois, Nigel Gibbions, David Harrison, Stephen Laurence, Patrick Maher, Betty-Ann Muir, Gloria Origgi, David Owens, David Papineau, Carolyn Price, and Dan Sperber. I thank them all. The influence of Daniel Dennett's writings will be evident throughout this book. Dennett has himself indicated the need for a two-strand theory of mind, and his original essay on the topic has been an important inspiration for the ideas developed here (Dennett 1978a, ch. 16).

Parts of this book make use of material from two earlier publications of mine, though with substantial revision and rewriting. Chapters 3 and 5 draw on my 'A matter of opinion' from *Philosophical Psychology*, *11* (1998), pp. 423–42, with thanks to the editor, William Bechtel, and to the publishers, Taylor and Francis (http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals). Chapter 4 draws upon my 'Natural language and virtual belief', in Peter Carruthers and Jill Boucher (eds.), *Language and Thought: Interdisciplinary Themes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 248–69, with thanks to the editors and to Cambridge University Press. Earlier versions of some of the chapters of this book were used as teaching texts for my third-year course 'Mind, action, and freedom', which I taught in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield during the Spring semester of 1997. I am grateful to all my students in that class for their comments and questions – mentioning in particular Clare Heyward and Intan M. Mohamad. I should also like to express my gratitude to Hilary Gaskin, Mary Leighton, Pauline Marsh, and Lucille Murby for their help in preparing this book for the press.

Finally, very special thanks are due to my parents, to whom this book is dedicated, and to Maria, whose contribution has been the most important of all.

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