

Mind and Supermind, by Keith Frankish. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. xiv + 255. H/b £45.00.

The book defends a two-tiered theory about the folk psychological mind. It is intended as a contribution to the integrationist project: an attempt to regularise and reconstruct folk psychology (hereafter FP)—bringing out its implicit features and proper parts. This allows for a better assessment of its potential fit within scientific psychology. The primary claim is that having one mind of the FP sort does not suffice to account for all the interesting propositional attitude phenomena. A division of labour is required.

Close scrutiny of our FP practice reveals that it implicates beliefs and desires (and related reasoning processes) of two quite distinct sorts. Sometimes we make sense of others using flat-out, unqualified propositional attitudes (hereafter PAs). These are the kind we deploy consciously and actively in the explicit modes of practical and theoretical reasoning which operate according to the rules of classical logic. At other times we explain and predict behaviour by ascribing PAs which are partial and come in degrees. These are passively formed and unconscious, and the way they interact in reasoning and the production of action is best understood along Bayesian lines. For Frankish the differences are so clean-cut and systematic that the states/processes involved deserve separate classification. We have two kinds of mind: a supermind and a basic mind, respectively. He provides a blueprint which comprehensively details the distinctive features of each on p. 50.

Frankish devotes most of the book to developing his theory of the top-level strand of mentality—the supermind, after reviewing precedents in the work of de Sousa, Dennett and Cohen. He argues that supermental thinking is essentially the active, conscious commitment to adopting and maintaining premising policies in which one accepts propositions as premisses in truth-seeking and goal-pursuit reasoning. Taking inspiration from Dennett, he imagines the supermind as a linguistically-based, soft-wired virtual machine that imposes structured regularities on the underlying mental hardware, altering its habits and dispositions. The difference is that whereas Dennett famously regards the conscious mind as having a stream-of-consciousness or Joycean character, Frankish casts it in a more dynamic role—although the processing is serial, the FP supermind is used in certain kinds of classical reasoning acts. Hence, its alias: the premising machine. There is a real advantage to emphasising such reasoning activity as opposed to mere assertion and self-interrogation when it comes to understanding supermental functions. For example, it helps to potentially explain why a supermind might have been selected for, it being such a powerful addition to our cognitive apparatus. A ‘basic mind’ is good enough to get us through most situations, navigating by autopilot and ingrained habit as it were, but sometimes it is thwarted. Tackling problems that the basic mind cannot handle is a job for supermind. However, contrary to what might be expected, going over to ‘manual control’ is to switch into low-gear thinking. It is a shift to a slow, careful deliberative mode that is serial, sequential and fragile.

The arguments for believing in a supermind and its potential application in helping us to understand certain puzzling phenomena are well made. *Akrasia* and self-deception are cases in point. Frankish opens the book with the quip that ‘Two minds are better than one’, but these are instances in which ‘Too many cooks spoil the broth’ (p. xiii). An interesting feature of his approach—given his duplex treatment—is that neither of these phenomena are, strictly speaking, irrational at the fundamental level: the behaviours in question violate no internal norms (understood in light of goals adopted or beliefs/desires held). In *akratic* cases, certain basic desires simply overcome the basic desire to stick to a pre-established goal (i.e. to continue following a supermental premising policy). In so lapsing, one reneges on a previous commitment. Although incontinent, this is not to break faith with rationality. In the case of self-deception one fails to implement a premising policy because one’s basic, non-conscious, desire to shield oneself from certain truths or possibilities turns out to be stronger than the desire to assess evidence only with a view to establishing the truth. In both cases basic motivations interfere with what we might consider advisable epistemic practice but they are not irrational. Consequently, it is a misnomer to lump these phenomena together under the label ‘motivated irrationality’. Frankish’s treatment of first-person authority, in which he develops the idea that avowals are special kinds of ‘performative’—incorporating commitment or re-commitment to premising policies—is also worthy of special attention.

There is a great deal to admire in the book. My only concern relates to the way Frankish understands the groundfloor basic mind (the supermind is the top floor and his theory allows for the existence of a number of non-PA basement levels). In dividing up the FP spoils, Frankish has put the most prominent features associated with PA psychology—such as its propositional and conceptual modularity; its role in flat-out practical reasoning; etc.—into the supermind. We can be assured that the supermind has these features because such activity is conducted consciously. Hence these *explananda* need accounting for in any case. It is far from obvious however that the basic mind, understood in terms of complex, underlying multi-tracked dispositions, needs to be or is best characterized in folk psychological terms. After all, even Frankish acknowledges that some Bayesians have recommended surrendering talk of flat-out belief altogether, treating talk of degrees of belief and degrees of confidence as interchangeable (p. 59). A description of the sustaining causes responsible for specific behaviours requires representing the contributions of basic mental activity as the sum of the weighted contributions made by all one’s putative ‘partial’ beliefs and desires. Such a ‘cause’ would be a holistically entangled ‘total state of mind’ which is difficult to *fully* capture in belief/desire terms in any case. It is no accident that the *ceteris paribus* illocution is used so frequently in this literature. That Bayesian minds can and often are described in PA terms does not entail that they ought to be. It could easily turn out that the best account of their underlying cognitive (not neural) architecture will

not be in PA terms at all. Anthropomorphic tendencies on our part aside, there is no good reason to suppose it will.

This is especially pertinent since Frankish seeks to justify his division within FP not on purely empirical grounds but as making explicit what is already present in ordinary folk psychological practice, bringing out what is normally only imperfectly discernable therein. Nevertheless, since we lack special authority about the nature and content of our basic minds we cannot appeal to our intuitions as evidence in defence of PA-based characterization of it (the story is just the opposite with respect to the supermind). Ultimately, following his mildly revisionist strategy will compel us to decide on the best characterization of the basic mind on abductive grounds (he makes it clear in many places that he does not look to conceptual analysis alone to secure this).

It is therefore a wide open question whether or not the basic mind is best understood in PA terms. Thus Frankish tells us that his austere model of the basic mind is 'detachable' from his supermind theory (p. 160). Yet if it should turn out that thinking of the basic mind in FP terms is seriously undercut, it will be far less easy to make sense of how it implements supermental functions understood in terms of harbouring 'metarepresentational' PA contents about premising policies. Importantly, Frankish seeks to explain the relationship between supermental and basic mental in terms of the former being 'realised in' the latter. It is clear that since the relationship is constitutive, the two minds must always march-in-step in enabling joined up cognition. The supermind mind is realised in the basic mind in that the latter has just the 'right' dispositions to implement it (Logically, this could not be otherwise). If we assume that adopting a supermental policy imposes the habitual patterns on the basic mind this would explain how the two minds came to be in such unity. Frankish claims we are only able to sponsor 'rich' supermental cognitive activity *in virtue* of having our more basic 'austere' minds. That is, one must be highly confident that one has adopted such-and-such a policy and have the desire to maintain it (or at least this must be believed/desired more strongly than whatever else one believes/desires that would motivate action incompatible with adherence to the policy). Frankish does not say just how high such confidence/desirability must be but it ought to be clear, case-by-case, if it has dipped down too low. The trouble is that this entails the existence of fully intensional, metarepresentational capacities at the basic level: one must have *basic* beliefs and desires *about* premising policies in order to instantiate them.

Although it is true that *anything* that funds the right supermental dispositions will also be interesting enough in its behaviour to warrant an austere PA characterization, this will be the case even if no PAs *in fact* underwrite such behaviour. As Dennett taught us, such ascriptions are only very weakly justified by some of our predictive practices—for example FP can be used to make sense of the behaviour of non-verbals and even, on occasion, inanimate systems and things—even if we should come to doubt that they are 'true believers' in a more robust sense. It may be that *serious* PA ascriptions should

be restricted to the supermind—talk of beliefs and desires at the ‘basic’ level may simply reflect a certain limit of our imagination as opposed to imposing any interesting constraints on theories about our cognitive architecture. As above, Frankish seems happy to accept this possibility. However there is a tension in doing so, for it is non-optional on his account that the basic mind really involves the manipulation of propositional contents as it must sponsor metarepresentations of the kind needed for supermental thinking. This being so, it looks as if Frankish must endorse a strongly realist, PA-based construal of basic mind despite himself. For my money, there are good independent reasons for not understanding the nature of the basic mind in such a manner. If that should turn out to be right, it seems some adjustment to Frankish’s account of the nature and relation between the two minds would be needed to resolve this tension. Even so, this should not detract from the worth of this careful piece of work. It advances some very challenging claims and fertile proposals and is a valuable book. I recommend adopting and sticking to a policy of reading it.

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Persons and Passions: Essays in Honor of Annette Baier, by Joyce Jenkins, Jennifer Whiting, and Christopher Williams (eds). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005. Pp viii + 368. H/b \$53.00.

This collection of papers explores some of the themes that have been central to the philosophy of Annette Baier. The bulk of the papers take a largely historical approach, looking especially at the two thinkers who have most stimulated Baier in her philosophical career, Descartes and Hume. The papers offer some original insights into the work of the two thinkers by focusing on the role that the *passions* play in their work, and by reflecting on the importance of *persons* in a full, morally-loaded sense.

The collection begins with a useful scene-setting introduction from Christopher Williams, who recounts an anecdote of Baier warning him ‘about the type of historian of philosophy who “tries to show that he is just a bit smarter” than the historical thinker he is writing about’ (p. 13). We doubt that Baier is any smarter than Descartes or Hume. But we think she is often *wiser* than they. And that is a still rarer quality among philosophers. Many of the essays in this collection try to show that Descartes or Hume were wiser than philosophers tend to suppose—in allowing a real role for passions in one’s mind (Descartes); by allowing a ‘world-taking’ and not merely feeling-ist character to