



Deconstructing the Mind (Philosophy of Mind)

Stephen P. Stich

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Over the last two decades, debates over the viability of commonsense psychology have been center stage in both cognitive science and the philosophy of mind. Eliminativists have argued that advances in cognitive science and neuroscience will ultimately justify a rejection of our "folk" theory of the mind, and of its ontology. In the first half of this book Stich, who was at one time a leading advocate of eliminativism, maintains that even if the sciences develop in the ways that eliminativists foresee, none of the arguments for ontological elimination are tenable. Rather than being resolved by science, he contends, these ontological disputes will be settled by a pragmatic process in which social and political considerations have a major role to play. In later chapters, Stich argues that the widespread worry about "naturalizing" psychological properties is deeply confused, since there is no plausible account of what naturalizing requires on which the failure of the naturalization project would lead to eliminativism. He also offers a detailed analysis of the many different notions of folk psychology to be found in philosophy and psychology, and argues that simulation theory, which purports to be an alternative to folk psychology, is not supported by recent experimental findings.

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