

Contents

Foreword (Godfrey Vesey); Unreasonable Care: the establishment of selfhood (Elizabeth Newson); Moral Integrity (Bernard Mayo); Educating the Imagination (Mary Warnock); Conjugal Faithfulness (P. AE Hutchings); On Having a Reason (Stuart Hampshire); 'Irresistible Impulse' and Moral Responsibility (Susan Khin Zaw); Human Values in a Mechanistic Universe (Margaret A. Boden); Absolute Ethics, Mathematics and the Impossibility of Politics (R. F. Holland); The Constitution of Human Values (J. N. Findlay); Assessing the Value of Saving Lives (Jonathan Glover); *Index*.

COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING

GODFREY VESEY (ed.)

Specialists in a variety of subjects have an interest in communication. But, paradoxically, they tend not to communicate with one another about communication.

As a result, what is regarded as a pre-judicial dogma by one group of specialists may be regarded by another as so obvious a truism as not to be worth a second thought. For example, there is the dogma (or truism) that linguistic communication consists in conveying things, called "ideas" or "thoughts", from one person's mind to another person's mind by means of spoken or written signs, and that the signs are needed only because we cannot get at one another's thoughts directly by telepathy.

This new volume is a contribution to correcting the unfortunate lack of inter-disciplinary studies in communication. Many of the contributors are recognised as authorities on communication within their own disciplines. But for the purposes of this volume they were asked to write as if for readers outside their discipline and, where possible, to relate their own studies to those of people outside their discipline. Thus G. H. R. Parkinson, editor of a philosophical anthology on the theory of meaning, throws philosophical punches at George Steiner, Professor of Literature and author of *After Babel*; philosopher Gareth B. Matthews accuses psychologist Jean Piaget of condescendingly evaluating children's answers to his questions about thinking and dreaming in terms of his own dualist preconceptions; and psychologist Judith Greene, author of a standard text on psycholinguistics, takes on Noam Chomsky.

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