



# Explaining Attitudes: A Practical Approach to the Mind (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy)

*Lynne Rudder Baker*

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Explaining Attitudes offers a timely and important challenge to the dominant conception of belief found in the work of such philosophers as Dretske and Fodor. According to this dominant view, beliefs, if they exist at all, are constituted by states of the brain. Rudder Baker rejects this view and replaces it with a quite different approach: practical realism. Seen from the perspective of practical realism, any argument that tries to interpret beliefs as either brain states or immaterial souls is a false dichotomy. Practical realism takes beliefs to be states of whole persons, rather like states of health. What a person believes is determined by what a person would do, say, and think in various circumstances. Thus beliefs and other attitudes are interwoven into an integrated, commonsensical conception of reality.

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