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The First Person in Cognition and Morality by Béatrice Longuenesse (review)

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The Review of Metaphysics, Volume 73, Number 4 (Issue No, 292), June 2020, pp. 846-848 (Review)

Published by The Philosophy Education Society, Inc.



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answers, with a subsequent list of points meant to drive the case home. Excessive repetition across chapters mars the book as a whole, which is unfortunate given the obvious skill the author has at expressing his thinking.

Overall, Kulp makes his case for the validity of commonsense moral understanding by presenting a nonnaturalistic theory of moral realism with clarity and vigor. With light, humorous, and provocative examples, the book exhibits his excellent ability to work out in technical detail the metaphysical corollaries of the central claim that ordinary moral thinking is valid.—Kayhan A. Özaykal, *Istanbul University*

LONGUENESSE, Béatrice. *The First Person in Cognition and Morality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. vii + 73 pp. Paper, \$15.00—Longuenesse's metaphysical stipulation is that consciousness in the rational unity of our thinking is more fundamental than consciousness of our proprioceptive body, for being attentive to the rational unity of content(s) in one's thinking is what makes it possible to assess the standpoints from which we initially formulate, and then arrive at, shared universal conclusions. Two dichotomies transpire: singular/universal and bodily/rational. What is radically individual in what we assert of ourselves is what is true of us as an entity individuated in space and time—existence as a material organism. However, with these specific uses—the apperceptive “I think” or the moral “I ought to”—what we are asserting of ourselves is, according to Longuenesse, the exercise of capacities that, by principle, we share universally. It is not that this “I” is not indexical, for it still refers to an individuated entity; rather, with “I think,” if I am correct to say that there are “users” of “I,” such that “I” am the thinker of “I think,” then “I” is still individual. Yet, I am also asserting something universal. In Kant's case, and in Longuenesse's view as a faithful Kantian, this is not an ontological claim (unlike, for instance, with Descartes or Aristotle) but an epistemological claim entangled with the metaphysics of mind.

Thus, we have a formidable response to Lichtenberg's oft-quoted claim that we should say “it thinks” or “there is thinking going on” rather than “I think,” as well as a response to Nietzsche's notorious notion that thoughts come about when they will and not when “I” will them. Rather than asserting the Cartesian argument of “self” as thinking-identity, Longuenesse defends that in cases of “I think” nothing is necessary to competently use the first-person pronoun “I” aside from mastery, implicit or explicit, of a fundamental reference-rule (that is, the “thinker-rule”). On one hand, “I” refers to the producer of the thought. However, the predicate attributed to “I” produces a kind of consciousness of self that is the basis of making a statement where “I” is indicated, which references embodied consciousness (“I am jumping”), thinking (“I think the proof is valid”), or both embodiment and thinking (“I see a magnolia”). Indeed, there is

always the singularity of “I,” and sometimes this singular “I” stands for the particular embodied entity that we can individuate in space, time, and biography; however, sometimes that very “I,” which remains individuated by the reference-rule, stands for all thinkers. When I say, “I think this proof is valid,” there is nothing beyond the fact that I am engaged in that thought that should make the predicate valid particularly for me or anyone else.

Moving from theoretical cognition to practical cognition, Longuenesse demonstrates how our use of “I” in the moral “I ought to” is premised, as in the use of “I” in “I think,” on a type of self-consciousness that has both an individual “I” and the claims to universal validity of those first-person moral models exercised in “I (morally) ought to X” or “I am (morally) obligated to X.” Longuenesse stipulates that Freud’s genealogy of the moral imperative is compatible with Kant’s investigation of the justificatory structure of a priori cognition and moral reasoning. That is, Freud’s notion of ego is proximate to the consciousness of one’s own body and the two types of self-consciousness fundamental to use of “I”: (1) consciousness of being engaged in establishing rational unity among the contents of one’s mental states, and (2) consciousness of one’s body/its position in the world.

Accordingly, Freud’s genealogy of both ego and superego contributes to our understanding of the combination of particular and universal claims carried by our use of “I” in the moral “I ought to.” Longuenesse makes the point that, for Freud, there is a connection between organizing the contents of mental events according to logical rules (organization proper to the ego) and the ability to cognize in the first-person. For Freud, the ego’s organization (*das Ich*) is paramount for indexically using the word and concept *Ich* (“I”). This position is strikingly similar to Kant’s, for whom unifying our perceptual inputs according to logical rules is a necessary condition for thinking in the first person. For Kant, our use of “I” expresses the transcendental unity of apperception: unity in our consciousness of the features of objects, which is also a unity of our self-consciousness, that is, our consciousness of being ourselves and being engaged in bringing rational unity into the contents of our perceptual states and into our thoughts. According to Kant’s categorical imperative, morality is universalizable because self-legislation has a universal foundation, as it allots us with being capable of a universal standpoint shared by all human beings cum rational beings. This capability of a universal standpoint in cognition allows us to access the particular reasons we may have to act in one way rather than another, as well as claiming normative validity in willing.

Vis-à-vis self-governance, Longuenesse draws us to Freud’s curious claims that Kant’s categorical imperative is heir to the Oedipus complex. For Freud, the ground level of moral attitude is emotion (stationed in the id and its superego) and is a feature of mental life imposed through development from childhood through the stages of adulthood. Regardless of whether the origin of morality is in the id and its outgrowth, the superego, the “energy” of the id is enrolled in the task of internalizing the

features of the ego into the mental life of the young child. For Freud, the reasoning behind Kant's categorical imperative being heir to the Oedipus complex amounts to saying that its categorical nature has emotional roots and that the unconditional demands of morality rest upon emotional life, which also sustains the development of the ability to assess, endorse, or reject justifications of moral commands. On Freud's account, it is the proper work of the ego to transform our emotional attitudes—the moral attitude more than any other—into reasoned attitudes.

According to Freud's genealogical claim, determinate structure is provided not by reason/its universal principle but by the structure of developmental interdictions and renunciations, which are subsequently internalized. Despite this internalization, its original structure, which provides for the context of what is originally categorical in norms of behavior, remains. Acquiring knowledge of facts of the matter about the world (the ego's "reality principle") counters the repeated "spinning" of fantasies born from earlier, uncontrolled traumatic experiences. This can be executed via the expression of individual recovering relations to the existing, current world of object to which one's emotions connect. (Freud designates this recovery as the role of talk therapy.)

Both the Kantian model and Freud's genealogical model posit overriding personal interest in favor of the categorical commands of obligations. For Freud, the enlargement of moral concerns runs in parallel with the human infant's development vis-à-vis internalization of norms that trump self-interested rules of instrumental agency, resulting in an integration of norms into rational positions concerning the world one inhabits; this depends on three factors: original internalization of norms, current social context, and perceptive expansion of our moral compass according to ego's reality principle. Freudian perception is not directed at ourselves/self-perception but at ourselves in the world. Thus, the moral "I ought" illuminates a combination of the particular standpoint premised on individual emotional biography and rationally endorsed binding. In singling out Kant's categorical imperative as the heir of the Oedipus complex, Freud, reminding us of the archaic roots of morality in human psychology, voices agreement with Kant's position that the moral attitude is made necessary by the fact that conflicts between egoistic interest and categorical moral commands arise necessarily and can be resolved through restless searching, "engaging each of us individually and all of us rationally with the same urgent normative demand."—Ekin Erkan, *CUNY Graduate Center*