

Béatrice Longuenesse, *I, Me, Mine: Back to Kant and Back Again*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, xix + 257 pp.

In her rigorous yet pellucid reading of Kant, Béatrice Longuenesse draws her attention towards the conceptual role of the first-person 'I' in 'I think'. The concept and word 'I' is the bedrock from which all sensations, feelings, and emotions become propositionally self-ascribed. Pace Kant, Longuenesse makes the stipulation that there is a kind of consciousness propping up our ability to make first-person judgments that is *more fundamental* than the consciousness of our body. This means that the ability to recognize and reference oneself as the 'I' engaged in cognizing is more conceptually fundamental than being an embodied, spatiotemporal entity. *I, Me, Mine* offers an entirely novel reconstruction of Kant's apperceptive 'I think' before naturalizing the 'I' in Kant via Freud's developmental concept of the 'ego' (*das Ich*), which, vis-à-vis metapsychology, engages with the structural organization of mental processes qua emotion. Longuenesse ultimately draws out how Freud's 'Ich' and its developmental account bears a striking similarity to the unity of representational contents that determines Kant's 'I'.

In reading Kant, 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. The quilting point of Longuenesse's project is as follows: the availability of the concept 'I', as the concept referring, in any instance of its use, to the entity of which the predicate in the proposition currently thought, 'I am F,' is true—that is, the availability of the concept 'I' presupposes the capacity to think writ large (83). It follows that thinking means unifying and articulating the contents of mental states into concepts, propositions, and inferential patterns. For Kant, there is a fundamental difference between the self-consciousness proper to the thinking subject in the course of their thinking and the consciousness of themselves as an object in the world. This difference is made even more distinct if, in the latter instance, we mean one's consciousness of themselves as an embodied entity—the 'I' as a physical object. It follows that what Kant means by *consciousness of oneself as a thinking subject* is not and cannot be reduced to consciousness of oneself as a physical entity, as the philosopher Quassim Cassam claims, despite it *is* intimately connected with the consciousness one has of one's own body (viz. proprioception). Just as Cassam has argued that awareness of oneself as a physical object is necessary to ground self-consciousness, Gareth Evans has proposed that the body is necessary to furnish any referential use of 'I,' including the self-ascription of mental states. Longuenesse's intervention is, thus, to stake fertile grounds and oppose such readings, illuminating a more fundamental conceptual role that the first-person 'I' expresses.

Consequently, Longuenesse begins the book by opposing this recent position amongst Kantian interlocutors, a tradition that attempts to map Wittgenstein's use of 'I' as subject onto Kant's consciousness of oneself as

subject. Longuenesse takes issue with those who emphasize the body as grounding any self-referential use of 'I', where our having available a concept of ourselves as a physical thing located in space is necessarily involved even in the self-ascription of beliefs and experiences—namely, in the self-ascription of mental predicates. Longuenesse thinks that this view, where embodiment is the bedrock for any use of 'I', meets the proper epistemic demands for the *usage* of 'I' but does not capture the semantics of 'I'. Longuenesse makes the case that Kant's "representation with consciousness," which posits the mental ascription of identities and differences, is a kind of higher-order consciousness that depends on phenomenal consciousness—the qualitative 'what it's like' to be the thinker of 'I' (i.e., 'I' as subject). According to Longuenesse, this is already in Kant's Transcendental Unity of Apperception (TUA), which is governed by the rules of *imagination* as well as logical rules of judgment and inference according to which the contents of one's representational states are reliably related to independently existing objects. Whether 'I' is a use of 'I' as subject or 'I' as object, Kant's TUA enumerates a common ground: "the unity of self-consciousness ... makes possible both our synthesizing representations into conceptualizable wholes ... and our ascribing thoughts to ourselves in the proposition 'I think'" (31). Thus, *all* uses of 'I', even uses of 'I' as object, depend at least in part on the kind of information on which the uses of 'I' as subject depend vis-à-vis the *activity of thinking*—what is available to subjects via the combination of representations, which transpires as the "what-it's-like-for-the-subject-of-thinking", or the "mode of presentation" of the "'I' as subject" (31). One's qualitative awareness of thinking is *immune to error through misidentification* as the fundamental reference rule (FRR) for 'I' steps in: "'I' is a word or concept that refers, in any instance of its use, to the author of the thought or the speaker of the sentence in which 'I' is being used" (23). Longuenesse's intervention stresses that the concept 'I' presupposes the exercise of the capacity for unifying and conceptualizing mental contents: the very exercise of this capacity is conceptually expressed in the proposition 'I think'. All other judgments are subsidiary.

Satisfying the FRR for 'I' calls for nothing more than being the thinker of the thought and speaker of the sentence in which 'I' is used. Having available the fact that one is, in any given instance of one's use of 'I', the entity satisfying its reference rule requires the *awareness of one's being engaged in thinking*. Yet, in many uses of 'I', the predicate that is self-ascribed is a predicate referring to some *bodily property*. Reviewing case studies of deafferented patients and referencing Oliver Sacks' research, Longuenesse turns to empirical examples to demonstrate that proprioceptive consciousness of one's own body follows from a more fundamental consciousness of oneself *as a self*, an entity that counts as the referent of 'I' whenever 'I' is used by that entity (33–34). Longuenesse argues against the view that it is a *necessary condition* on the very possibility of a referential role for 'I' that its referent be an embodied, spatiotemporal entity, and that all 'I'-users be aware of themselves as such an entity. It follows that consciousness of oneself as thinking is, as a matter of empirical fact rather than as a matter of *a priori* argument, intimately connected to awareness of one's own body.

Longuenesse then turns to Kant's view of self-consciousness by focusing on Kant's Transcendental Deduction of the Categories and Paralogisms of

Pure Reason. Longuenesse first deracinates the ‘I think’ from the TUA by analyzing Kant’s three syntheses: the presentation of sensory information, (its) reproduction in imagination, and apperception:

For ‘recognition under a concept’ to occur, all past representations, their regularly occurring patterns, the reproductive associations those patterns have elicited, all those features must remain available for recognition. In other words, they must remain available for use in one and the same activity of apprehending, reproducing (according to associative rules), and recognizing. This is how concepts, and thus representations of objects as falling under those concepts, are eventually acquired. (79)

As the precondition for objective representation of the world, ‘I think’ indexes the unity of mental activity that conditions all particular instances of ‘I think P’. Parsing the Transcendental Deduction, Longuenesse shows how Kant develops an analysis of the type of self-consciousness grounding the proposition ‘I think’ and the role of ‘I’ in that proposition. Countering Descartes’ cogito argument, Kant’s Paralogism of Substantiality criticizes the fallacious inference by which rationalist metaphysicians support their claim that the referent of ‘I’ in ‘I think’ is a soul, a thinking substance. In the Paralogism of Substantiality, Kant criticizes the inference by which rationalist metaphysicians support their claim that the soul is also a simple substance, distinct from the body. Developing these paralogisms, Longuenesse underscores that the concept ‘I’ is but a logically singular term, expressing the thinker’s consciousness of the logical connectedness of their thoughts.

In the Paralogism of Personality, Kant criticizes rationalists for, again, engaging in a fallacy of equivocation. For rationalist metaphysics, as thinking beings we are immediately aware of our own ‘numerical identity’ at different times and, as such, we are persons. Kant argues that we are aware of our own ‘numerical identity’ at different times not in virtue of mere thinking (thinking ‘I think’), but insofar as we, as thinking beings, are capable of consciousness of our continued existence as spatiotemporal, empirically given, embodied entities. Accordingly, Longuenesse develops a positive notion of persons as embodied entities endowed with unity of apperception. This is not the conclusion in Kant but one Longuenesse teases out. Longuenesse denies that the consciousness of the ‘numerical identity’ of any entity, including oneself, is possible for us other than by relying on criteria for identifying and re-identifying that entity in space and time.

The negative result from Kant’s Paralogisms is that even though, in thinking, we develop an implicit or explicit conception of ourselves as the agent of our thoughts—indivisibly present in all instances of our thinking, numerically identical in different times and distinct from our bodies—that conception has neither *a priori* metaphysical support nor empirical support. We cannot derive any objectively justified belief in our persisting existence from the *first-person* consciousness of ourselves in thinking. Hence the positive thesis: the only way we are objectively justified in believing ourselves to be entities that persist through time, and the only way we are able to track our own existence through time, is by adopting a (supplementary) *third-person standpoint* on our own existence as the existence of an embodied entity.

Longuenesse then scrutinizes Kant’s Third Antinomy and the concept of “person” as an “empirically accessible” entity that is not “necessary and

sufficient for practical use” (152). As one cannot posit an “uncaused cause” *sui generis*, the *ratio cognoscendi* of metaphysical freedom must include not only a psychological notion but also a moral notion. That is, a person is a conscious being that has a *rational will*, a faculty of desire determined under moral law—this is linked to the “moral ‘I ought to’”(173).

Longuenesse argues that Kant’s view of the structure of our mental life, grounding the use of ‘I’ in ‘I think’ and in ‘I ought to’, finds a descendant in Freud’s ‘ego’ and ‘super-ego.’ Notably, Freud underscores that Kant’s Categorical Imperative is the “direct heir of the Oedipus complex” (220). Unlike the unity of apperception expressed in ‘I think’, indexed to a particular body and extending to self-consciousness in instrumental and prudential reasoning, the use of ‘I’ in the moral command depends on consciousness of oneself as the subject of an activity of reasoning that determines the maxims of one’s actions under the Categorical Imperative’s unconditional demand (217). Freud’s account of the structure of mental life—‘ego’—provides a developmental story for the unity of apperception grounding the use of ‘I’ in ‘I think’; similarly, Freud’s account of the unconscious component—‘super-ego’—and its compulsive power provides a developmental story for the conflicted structure of mental life that grounds Kant’s use of ‘I’ in the moral ‘I ought to’. The unconditional character of morality is, for Kant, originally grounded in pure reason affecting the faculty of desire; for Freud, it is originally grounded in the raw emotion that binds us to the (authority-) figure “from which we have learned the rules of our socialization” (221).

Longuenesse’s project defends the intimate connection, and distinction, between *consciousness of oneself in thinking* and *consciousness of one’s own embodied existence* without appealing to the noumenal realm. Specifically, Freud’s metapsychological analysis of mind naturalizes Kant’s analysis of ‘I’ in its theoretical and practical uses: ‘I think’ and ‘I (morally) ought to’, respectively. Longuenesse thereby outlines a kind of self-consciousness that, while intimately connected to consciousness of one’s own body, is nevertheless distinct from it and is, moreover, *the condition for any use of ‘I’*. Bridging Kant and Freud while unspooling an intervention countering those readers of Kant who have recently set embodiment as the fundamental aperture for cognition, Longuenesse’s comprehensive project sets her beside those philosophical giants like P.F. Strawson and Wilfrid Sellars who have prodded forth novel modes of naturalized Kantianism.

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