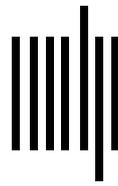


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Being No One

The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity

BY THOMAS METZINGER

According to Thomas Metzinger, no such things as selves exist in the world: nobody ever had or was a self. All that exists are phenomenal selves, as they appear in conscious experience. The phenomenal self, however, is not a thing but an ongoing process; it is the content of a "transparent self-model." In *Being No One*, Metzinger draws strongly on neuroscientific research to present a representationalist and functional analysis of what a consciously experienced first-person perspective actually is. Building a bridge between the humanities and the empirical sciences of the mind, he develops new conceptual toolkits and metaphors; uses case studies of unusual states of mind such as agnosia, neglect, blindsight, and hallucinations; and offers new sets of multilevel constraints for the concept of consciousness. Metzinger's central question is: How exactly does strong, consciously experienced subjectivity emerge out of objective events in the natural world? His epistemic goal is to determine whether conscious experience, in particular the experience of being someone that results from the emergence of a phenomenal self, can be analyzed on subpersonal levels of description. He also asks if and how our Cartesian intuitions that subjective experiences as such can never be reductively explained are themselves ultimately rooted in the deeper representational structure of our conscious minds.

"*Being No One* is Kantian in its scope, intelligence and depth. Steeped in contemporary neuroscience, psychology and philosophy, the book gives the unsolved Kantian problems of inner self and outer world a new look, a new life, and a new route to solution. Metzinger's story is understandable, compelling, and, quite simply, very very smart."

— Patricia and Paul Churchland, University of California, San Diego

"*Being No One* is a superb and indispensable book. Thomas Metzinger's intelligence, open-minded honesty, and knowledge combine to produce the most complete and satisfying discussion of the problem of self currently available."

— Antonio and Hanna Damasio, Professors of Neurology, University of Iowa College of Medicine

"While some philosophers have resisted scientists' incursions into the philosophy of mind, Thomas Metzinger has welcomed them. In this book he employs his impressively detailed knowledge of the latest developments in cognitive neuroscience to develop an exciting new philosophical approach to consciousness for which the experience of the self is fundamental. His is a truly interdisciplinary project which has important implications for future work in both philosophy and neuroscience."

— Chris Frith, Institute of Neurology, University College London

Additional endorsements:

"Thomas Metzinger is one of those courageous explorers who dare to travel beyond the borders of their familiar territory. This book is a successful and brilliant attempt to bring together what had been separated artificially, the philosophy and the neuroscience of mind. It is a must for those who believe that consciousness is a mystery and for those who think it is not."

— Wolf Singer, Max Planck Institute for Brain Research

"*Being No One* is essential reading for all scholars interested in the study of the self and of its distortions. In this thought-provoking book Metzinger presents an exciting new theory of phenomenal awareness, a theory that has the merit of being firmly grounded on a vast neuroscientific and psychopathological literature, which is here synthesized and made available to a wider audience for the first time."

— Vittorio Gallese, University of Parma

"The strength of Metzinger's book lies in his mastery of supposedly disparate fields. *Being No One* successfully bridges the gap between elaborate philosophical models of the self and the neural models that were elaborated in our laboratories. It is a book that has much to offer to a wide array of scholars and readers."

— Marc Jeannerod, Institut des Sciences Cognitives

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