



Naturalism and the First-Person Perspective

Lynne Rudder Baker

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Science and its philosophical companion, Naturalism, represent reality in wholly nonpersonal terms. How, if at all, can a nonpersonal scheme accommodate the first-person perspective that we all enjoy? In this volume, Lynne Rudder Baker explores that question by considering both reductive and eliminative approaches to the first-person perspective. After finding both approaches wanting, she mounts an original constructive argument to show that a non-Cartesian first-person perspective belongs in the basic inventory of what exists. That is, the world that contains us persons is irreducibly personal.

After arguing for the irreducibility and ineliminability of the first-person perspective, Baker develops a theory of this perspective. The first-person perspective has two stages, rudimentary and robust. Human infants and nonhuman animals with consciousness and intentionality have rudimentary first-person perspectives. In learning a language, a person acquires a robust first-person perspective: the capacity to conceive of oneself as oneself, in the first person. By developing an account of personal identity, Baker argues that her theory is coherent, and she shows various ways in which first-person perspectives contribute to reality.

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