Abstract:

It is common, particularly in Neo-Kantian theories of mind, to hold that the capacity for judgment is both necessary and sufficient for critical reason. Judgment entails the capacity to form mental states on the basis of reasons, also to perform inferences; propositional attitudes like belief are paradigm judgments. Critical reason entails capacities to conceive of reasons as such and to ask and answer questions about justification. Within the Neo-Kantian tradition freedom of choice is also commonly regarded as necessary and sufficient for both judgment and critical reason; these three capacities are thus understood as a tight cluster, mutually necessary. Recent work (notably that of Tyler Burge) has presented serious challenges to the claim that critical reason is necessary for judgment, but the implications of this challenge for freedom are relatively unexplored. I suggest that if judgment does not entail critical reason then freedom should be understood as associated with the former rather than with the latter. I then explore implications of these claims for ethics, including the moral status of nonhuman animals. By holding to the Neo-Kantian view that belief entails responsiveness to reasons but not the Neo-Kantian view that reasons-response entails critical or reflective thought, an account of animal moral status emerges which makes sense of freedom and responsibility in nonhuman animals.