Author’s response to reviews

Title: What Passive Euthanasia Is

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Author’s response to reviews:

Hi –
Many thanks for your feedback on the accepted m/s. I’ve accommodated the requests to the extent possible compatible with maintaining readability (and my own narrative voice), and to the extent that doing so is compatible with what I take to be the general conventions of philosophical writing. As before, I’ll reproduce your requests here, and respond to them one by one.

1. We would like to request that you please amend the style of writing so that it is as objective as possible. As such, please try and limit referring to yourself in the first person, where possible.
RESPONSE: I’ve taken out several uses of the word “I”, but not all. Some of the uses of the first-personal pronoun are simply as part of signposting – “I will argue/have argued”, and I have kept it when it is used in this way, since altering it would sacrifice far more than it gains, requiring clunky formulations along the lines of “it is argued that” or – worse – “this paper argues that”. I do not think that there is any loss of objectivity here. On the other hand, I’ve removed almost all of the interjections like “I contend that…”, which (on reflection) add nothing anyway. The one time that it remains is in respect of the differentiation between motivation and intention that I draw in §1, because I am not satisfied with any of the alternative ways of structuring the sentence in which it appears. Again, though, I do not think that objectivity is sacrificed: I am simply setting out the stall at that stage of the argument.
Numerically, most of the uses of “I” (and the overwhelming majority of those that remain) appear in the context of thought-experiments in which “I” simply represents a fictionalised protagonist. (There’s one instance in which this protagonist has my nickname, too, but – again – I don’t think that that undermines the objectivity of the piece; but it does preserve tone and readability.) All in all, I am confident the use of the first personal pronoun is in line with its use in general philosophical argument throughout the literature.

2. We note that there are names included in an example in the main text of your debate. Please be sure to clearly indicated that these names are fictitious.
RESPONSE: I have to admit that I do not see the problem here. The names used are fairly obviously introduced as being characters in thought-experiments: Smith, Jones, Brown and Robinson are stock names, and I have simply expanded this cast by adding a few more common names from around the world. The context makes it clear that they are not real people; they are always introduced as characters in a thought experiment, or with clear cues (“Imagine x”, “Suppose y”, and so on). Again, I think any alteration would detract from the clarity of the argument, and certainly from its scansion.
3. Please remove the response to reviewers and revised manuscript file from the file inventory as it is no longer needed at this stage.
RESPONSE: Done.

I hope that this covers everything; if you've any further queries, please do give me a shout.

Best wishes

Iain