Journal of Philosophical Research
doi: 10.5840/jpr2021816169
Online First: August 17, 2021

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT AUTHORITY

CASEY DOYLE
BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

Abstract: Barz (2018) contends that there is no specification of the phenomenon of first-person authority that avoids falsity or triviality. This paper offers one. When a subject self-ascribes a current conscious mental state in speech, there is a presumption that what she says is true. To defeat this presumption, one must be able to explain how she has been led astray.

I. SPECIFYING FIRST-PERSON AUTHORITY

Wittgenstein claimed that a philosophical problem has the form, "I don't know my way around." (1953 §123, quoted in Barz 2018), but the words of David Byrne, singer of the Talking Heads, might better capture certain familiar philosophical challenges: "you're talking a lot, but you're not saying anything." In a recent paper, Wolfgang Barz contends that talk of first-person authority is just that, talk (2018). Specifications of the phenomenon are either trivial, and thus unworthy of philosophical reflection, or false. The challenge is welcome since the use of the term is all over the map. It is common for philosophers to introduce the topic of first-person authority in a way that is either muddled—for example, by conflating it with epistemic privilege (see Byrne 2005, 2018 for discussion of this conflation)—or vague. Others treat the term as synonymous with a certain *approach* to self-knowledge (see Gertler 2012 for this usage). And not all philosophers working on self-knowledge take the explanation of the phenomenon to be central to their task (see Byrne 2018 for an example). It would be useful to clarify the starting point. Even those who think there is something to the idea of first-person authority should welcome the challenge.

For all that, I will be arguing that Barz's view is wrong: there is something about first-person authority.[1] There is a specification of the phenomenon that avoids triviality and is not subject to his objections.

Barz provides three criteria a specification of first-person authority must meet. It matters that we are interested in a *specification* rather than an *account*. Barz is trying to understand the starting point for philosophizing: a characterization of the phenomenon of first-person authority that we seek to explain with an account. He thinks no interesting one can meet all three of his conditions. After making some relatively uncontroversial claims about first-person authority, I will outline Barz's criteria and endorse them. I will

© Philosophy Documentation Center ISSN: 1053-8364

also explain how one specification of the phenomenon fails to satisfy them. Then I will set out and motivate my alternative. The key move involves a claim about what is required to defeat another's self-ascription of some mental state. When a subject self-ascribes a mental state there is a presumption that what she says is true. This presumption is very strong: to defeat it one must be entitled to an explanation of why the subject was led astray.

II. THREE CRITERIA

It is widely thought to be a part of our ordinary understanding of the mental that each of us speaks with a special kind of authority when we self-ascribe our current, conscious mental states.[2] There are many different explanations of why we have this sort of authority, and as Barz's challenge makes clear, there is no consensus view about what exactly the phenomenon is. But some preliminaries should be agreed by all parties.

First, we must distinguish the following three claims, all of which are thought to capture what is distinctive or special about the first-person perspective.

> EPISTEMIC PRIVILEGE: My beliefs about my own mind are more likely to count as knowledge than my beliefs about your mind.[3]

> PECULIAR METHOD: My beliefs about my own mind are arrived at by a method that is uniquely first-personal, a method that, in principle, is only available to me.[4]

> AUTHORITY: When I self-ascribe a mental state in speech, I possess a kind of authority that I lack when I speak about the mental states of another.

Each of these involves an asymmetry between the first and third-person perspectives. But they are distinct. The truth of none of these depends on the truth of the others. From the fact that we enjoy a uniquely first-personal method for knowing our minds it follows neither that this method is epistemically privileged nor that self-ascriptions formed on its basis are authoritative. Perhaps introspection is like an unreliable witness who will only speak to you.[5] Likewise, self-ascriptions can be epistemically privileged even if they are not arrived at by a peculiar method and even if they lack authority. For example, Gilbert Ryle (1949) and Peter Carruthers (2011) hold that we form beliefs about our minds by means of the same mechanisms that we form beliefs about other minds. One might endorse this and add to it the claim that this mechanism, though more reliable in our own case, is not reliable enough to support a general claim to authority. Finally, one might deny that there is a first-personal method for arriving at self-ascriptions and deny that self-ascriptions constitute genuine knowledge, and yet accept that we speak with authority when we self-ascribe mental states. Such a view is often associated with Wittgenstein.

These claims also have different subject matters. Epistemic Privilege is a property of our beliefs or knowledge. Peculiarity is a property of our cognitive capacities and mechanisms. First-person authority is a property of utterances or speech acts.[6] Our focus here is authority. It might turn out that Privilege or Peculiarity can explain Authority, but we should not assume that from the start. We would like a

specification of the phenomenon at issue that does not assume anything about the relations between these claims.

The claim that I have a certain kind of authority when I speak about my own mind could mean lots of different things. I am an authority on various facts about my son's biography, since I am in an especially good position to know them. Scissors in hand, I am an authority on the length of his hair. In theory, I am an authority on his bedtime. But these are quite different senses of authority. This is why a specification is called for.

Here are Barz's three constraints any adequate specification of the phenomenon of first-person authority must meet. The names are my own.

> PREVALENCE: " . . . any satisfactory specification must delineate the alleged authority as a feature that at least a sufficiently large number of *self-ascriptions have*." (Barz 2018: 127)
>
> ASYMMETRY: " . . . any satisfactory specification must delineate the alleged authority as a feature that *the third-person counterparts of self-ascriptions*—in short, 'other-ascriptions'—*lack*." (Barz 2018: 127)
>
> WONDER: " . . . any satisfactory specification must delineate the alleged authority as a feature that *gives rise to a kind of puzzlement distinctive of philosophical problems*."[7] (Barz 2018: 127)

Barz claims that the first two of these are obvious. The second surely is, since it is standard for presentations of first-person authority to claim that there is an asymmetry between the first and third-person perspectives. The first claim should be unobjectionable as well. Consider the specification on which first-person authority consists in a *presumption of truth* in favour of self-ascriptions (Davidson 1984). This is a general presumption in favor of all self-ascriptions. Of course, in many cases the presumption is defeated, because the hearer will possess evidence that the speaker does not speak truly. But even so, the presumption applies to self-ascriptions in general, satisfying Prevalence.

The third criterion is less obvious and more controversial. The basic idea is that any specification of first-person authority must make it plain why philosophers are puzzled by it and take there to be a distinctively philosophical task of explaining it. As it turns out, Barz has a particular view about what makes for a philosophical puzzle: it must take an aporetic form (2019).[8] A specification of first-person authority must be able to serve as one leg of an inconsistent triad that gives rise to philosophical puzzlement. While I am sympathetic to Barz's view about the source of philosophical puzzles, it seems too demanding to yoke all work on first-person authority to this particular metaphilosophical view. Instead, we can work with the vaguer idea that a specification of first-person authority must make clear why it is a philosophically puzzling phenomenon.[9]

Do these constraints have any teeth? Yes. Consider the following specification of the phenomenon, familiar from Donald Davidson's (1984) work on first-person authority:

> PRESUMPTION: When I self-ascribe my current conscious mental states there is a presumption that what I say is true, a presumption that does not hold when I ascribe mental states to others.

Presumption seems to meet all three of the criteria. It is a general presumption, so it applies to a wide range of self-ascriptions. It captures the asymmetry. And it seems grist for the philosophical mill when coupled with further claims about self-knowledge. To wit: how could there be a presumption that my self-ascriptions are true when they are not based on any sort of evidence? (Bar-On 2004) Why is there a presumption that what I say is true in my own case but not when I speak about others, given that both concern contingent facts about some person's psychology?

But trouble sets in when we ask: what kind of presumption is this? Compare Presumption with what Tyler Burge calls the "Acceptance Principle":

> ACCEPTANCE PRINCIPLE: "A person is entitled to accept as true something that is presented as true and that is intelligible to him, unless there are stronger reasons not to do so" (Burge 1993: 467).

The Acceptance Principle articulates a defeasible presumption in favor of what another says. If Simon tells you that the train is cancelled, you, thereby, absent reasons to think otherwise, are entitled to accept what he says. If the Acceptance Principle is true then there is a presumption of truth in favor of what one says on *any* subject matter, including another's mind. So if the principle is true, it seems that the idea of a presumption of truth cannot capture the asymmetry between the first and third-person perspectives.

It will not do to insist that the Acceptance Principle is false, as doing so would commit one to a Reductionist account of testimonial justification.[10] If Non-Reductionism is false, then one must possess additional positive evidence for trusting someone when she self-ascribes a mental state. The worry, though, is that there are many circumstances in which another's self-ascription is *all one has to go on*.[11] And if a subject lacks authority in those circumstances then the view will run afoul of Prevalence.

We can put the point this way. If Reductionism about testimony is true, then Presumption violates Prevalence. Whereas, if Non-Reductionism is true, then Presumption violates Asymmetry. Barz makes a similar point, though not explicitly in terms of Reductionism and Non-Reductionism.

Further, Barz considers an alternative conception of the presumption in question, one on which the asymmetry is captured by notions like "willingness to doubt," "degree of justification," "reliability," and the like.[12] One specification would be: we are less likely to doubt a subject's self-ascription than her ascription of mental states to others. Another is: we presume that another's self-ascriptions are more reliably formed than her ascriptions of mental states to others. As Barz rightly points out, the problem with these specifications is that they violate Wonder.[13] There is nothing especially puzzling about the fact that there is some difference in degree between self-ascriptions and other ascriptions when it comes to likelihood of doubt, reliability, or justification.[14]

Let us assume, then, that Barz's criteria are good ones, with the proviso that we needn't understand Wonder in the precise terms of his preferred metaphilosophy. And let us assume also that Presumption is not an adequate specification of the phenomenon of first-person authority. Finally, let us agree with Barz that appeals to differences in degree of properties like reliability, justification, or the likelihood of doubts being raised cannot capture what is supposed to be philosophically puzzling about first-person authority. In the next section, I will propose an alternative, a variant of the idea that self-ascriptions enjoy a defeasible presumption of truth.[15]

III. THE PROPOSAL

Here is how I propose that we understand the phenomenon of first-person authority:

> FIRST-PERSON AUTHORITY: When a subject self-ascribes a current conscious mental state in speech, there is a presumption that what she says is true. In order to be epistemically justified in defeating the presumption one must possess *both* evidence that what she says is false *and* evidence that entitles one to an explanation of how she has been led astray.

We can bring the idea here into view by contrasting it with Burge's Acceptance Principle. Suppose I tell you that our mutual friend, Tom, is very upset that the Houston Astros lost last night. By the Acceptance Principle, there is a presumption that what I say is true, and you are *prima facie* entitled to take me at my word. But Tom is your friend, too, and you know a thing or two about him. You know that Tom is not a baseball fan. So you have good reason to believe that Tom does not feel any particular way about the Astros's fate. It seems plausible that this is all you need to defeat the reason provided by my testimony. Knowing what you do about Tom is a good enough reason not to take me at my word. This is so even though you may well lack a story about why I came to a different conclusion about Tom. You have got a good reason to believe that what I say is false and so a good reason to believe that I am wrong. You do not need to explain why I am wrong to defeat my testimony.

But things are different when it comes to self-ascriptions Suppose I tell you that I want a cup of coffee. As my friend, you know that I am not a coffee drinker. So it is surprising to hear me say this. You have some evidence for thinking that I am wrong, that I do not really want coffee. Still, this is not enough to defeat my testimony. You should still take me at my word, unless you have some story in hand about why I have been led astray. Any number of such explanations might be available. Perhaps I am being insincere and am merely trying to fit in with a peer group. Perhaps I am confused, drunk, self-deceived, or otherwise irrational. Different explanations will apply to different cases. But, arguably, in order to justifiably refrain from taking me at my word you need to be entitled to some such explanation. Victoria McGeer puts the point as follows:

> [N]ot only must the rest of the person's behaviour speak strongly against taking them at their word; there must be some reasonable account of how they have failed to maintain first-person authority in the particular case. In other words, the idea of a special kind of authority attaching to first-person

> claims brings with it the demand for special explanations in the case of failure. (McGeer 2007, 81)

It is important that the demand is for an *explanation* of the subject's failure to know her mind. Evidence of error is not enough. After all, evidence that her self-ascription is false is evidence that she is in error when she speaks her mind. You also need evidence that entitles you to a specific explanation of the source of the error.[16] [17]

If I tell you that "I want to get away from it all," there is a presumption that what I say is true. In some circumstances, you can defeat that presumption, that is, you can be entitled to refrain from taking me at my word. To do so, you need sufficient reason to believe that what I say is false, i.e., reason to believe that I do not want to run away from it all. Furthermore, you need to be able to explain why I am wrong about this. Here are two things to notice about First-Person Authority, so understood. First, you do not need to actually offer the special explanation when refusing to take me at my word. You only need to possess the justification that entitles you to such an explanation. Second, the explanation in question need not be true: you only need to be entitled to it. This parallels the way in which defeat works in other cases. Suppose I tell you that it is warm in Malta today. Assuming the Acceptance Principle is true, you thereby possess *prima facie* reason to believe that it is warm in Malta today. But suppose too that you have good evidence that it is not warm in Malta, so you have good reason to believe that what I say is false. Perhaps you are entitled to reject my testimony. This is so even if the counterevidence you possess is misleading. The same applies to cases of first-person authority. If you have strong evidence that I am confused, irrational, or self-deceived, then you may be entitled to reject my testimony about my own mind. This is so even if that evidence is misleading.[18]

Still, you might think that First-Person Authority is too strong. That is because you might think that evidence that another's self-ascription is false is sufficient to defeat their testimony about their mind. Consider the case of Ralph, an avowed anti-sexist whose behavior makes plain that he is a sexist (Schwitzgebel 2012). Ralph will tell you that he believes that men and women are equals and should be treated as equals until he is blue in the face. But it is obvious that he thinks otherwise. Do we really need an explanation of why Ralph is wrong to defeat his testimony about his mind?[19]

I think so. Ralph is clearly wrong about the cause of his behavior. His behavior is either caused by a belief state or something else, such as an implicit bias, if this is not a propositional attitude. If the cause is implicit bias, it is not clear that he lacks first-person authority. Perhaps Ralph really does hold anti-sexist beliefs, it is just that these beliefs don't influence his behavior as they should. Such cases are not a problem for our view.

Of course, that is not the interesting case, nor is it the one we are invited to imagine. Suppose that Ralph is simply wrong about what he believes and there is plenty of behavioral evidence that suggests that Ralph holds sexist beliefs, whatever he happens to say. In such a case, it is plausible to suppose that hearers will possess plenty of evidence that would justify them in holding an explanation of why Ralph speaks falsely. Avowing sexist beliefs often comes at a high social cost. If

he is being insincere or insufficiently reflective, that may be because Ralph wants to be seen by his peers as a right-minded individual. Obviously, which explanation we endorse will depend on the details of the case, but, in general, it is plausible to suppose that in many such cases hearers will have evidence for attributing to Ralph the sorts of motivational states that stand in the way of introspection and truthful self-ascription. Since this evidence is readily available in cases like Ralph's, the case does not provide us with reason to think that it is not required to defeat his testimony.[20]

IV. SATISFYING THE CRITERIA

Barz is correct that the bare idea of a presumption of truth cannot distinguish self-ascriptions from other claims, including ascriptions of mental states to others. But the demand for special explanations can. The presumption we enjoy when we speak our minds is one that can only be defeated in certain circumstances, when an explanation for our being led astray is available.

This seems to be a distinctive feature of self-ascriptions. By this I mean that, arguably, it is only in the case of self-ascriptions that one must be entitled to an explanation of why the speaker is wrong in order to be entitled to ignore their testimony. There are, of course, cases where, due to individual psychology or social norms, it is hard for a hearer to overturn the claim of a speaker without special explanations. Suppose my preacher tells me that p and I have good reason to believe that not-p. Despite the available counterevidence, I might have a hard time disagreeing with her. Perhaps this is because I have become accustomed to deferring to her, or because I do not want to make her upset. Whatever its exact source, my reluctance is rooted in features of my psychology. Perhaps I could overcome this resistance if I had some story of why, on this occasion, she was led astray. But in this case, I would claim, I behave poorly. The counterevidence I possess is sufficient to justify me in rejecting the testimony. A special explanation is not required in this case because the counterevidence is enough.[21] Self-ascriptions are different because there is a rational and not merely psychological demand for such an explanation.[22]

This specification meets all of Barz's criteria. First, it can explain Asymmetry, since the demand is not in play in ascriptions of mental states to others. Second, since it is a general presumption, it covers a wide range of cases, satisfying Prevalence. This is true even if "special explanations" *are* available in a wide range of cases. Irrationality is such an explanation: irrationality can lead one into error about one's attitudes (Moran 2001, Gibbons 2013). Perhaps we are very often irrational (Stich 1985). Still, we have first-person authority whenever we speak our minds. It just might turn out that the presumption in our favor is often defeated. Finally, First-Person Authority is philosophically puzzling. Why is it that self-ascriptions, and perhaps self-ascriptions alone, enjoy this kind of authority? Why isn't evidence that another's self-ascription is false sufficient to defeat it? Why is there a demand to offer special explanations? These are philosophical questions and the puzzlement they give rise to is, I take it, genuinely philosophical.

Barz insists that genuine philosophical puzzlement is rooted in *aporia*. Perhaps that is true. I have proposed we get on specifying first-person authority with as few

metaphilosophical commitments as possible. But that might seem sneaky. To avoid the suspicion, here is an *aporia* involving our specification (the generation of which relies on the assumption that self-ascriptions *alone* require special explanations):

> FIRST-PERSON AUTHORITY: When a subject self-ascribes a current conscious mental state in speech, there is a presumption that what she says is true. In order to be epistemically justified in defeating the presumption one must possess *both* evidence that what she says is false *and* evidence that entitles one to an explanation of how she has been led astray.
>
> ERROR: We can be in error about our mental states.
>
> NO EXPLANATION NEEDED: Where a subject is prone to error about some subject matter, defeating their testimony does not require a special explanation about why they have been led to error. All that is required is a reason to believe that what they say is false that is sufficient to outweigh the reason provided by their testimony.

No Explanation Needed tells you that the way things work in the case involving Tom above is the way they always work. You are entitled to disagree with someone so long as you have good evidence on your side. You do not need to be able to explain why they are wrong. The thought is simply that, given the live possibility that they are wrong, no special explanation of why they are wrong is needed. Error points out that one can make mistakes when it comes to self-ascriptions. It would follow that no special explanation is needed when we disagree with someone's self-ascription. But First-Person Authority says that this is not so. Each of the claims is plausible but they are jointly inconsistent. This is puzzling.

V. TOWARDS AN ACCOUNT

Many philosophers assume that we speak with a special kind of authority when we self-ascribe mental states, and that this authority is a distinctive mark of the first-person perspective. But, as Barz shows, it is not entirely obvious just how to understand the relevant form of authority. That is, it is not obvious what the phenomenon is that we are trying to explain, let alone how to explain it. Barz contends that existing specifications of the phenomenon should lead us to conclude that there is not anything significant about the idea of first-person authority. I agree that the bare idea of a presumption of truth cannot capture the asymmetry between the first and third-person perspectives, especially if something along the lines of Burge's Acceptance Principle is true. Nevertheless, there is something to the idea of first-person authority. I have proposed that the presumption of truth with respect to self-ascriptions of mental states is distinctive because of how strong it is. In order to defeat the presumption in favor of what I say when I speak my mind, you need to be entitled to explain why I am wrong. Plausibly, self-ascriptions are the only speech acts for which this is the case, and this is something that distinguishes self-ascriptions from ascriptions of mental states to others.

As mentioned earlier, the focus here has been the *specification* of first-person authority and not an *account* of it. The question, then, is whether existing accounts

of first-person authority adequately can explain the specification offered here. I don't suppose we can simply rule out accounts based on this specification, but it will raise questions. For example, on a familiar view, first-person authority is akin to the authority of a subject matter expert. That is, privilege explains authority. But in other domains rejecting the testimony of an expert does not require being entitled to an explanation of why they have been led astray. Can this view explain the difference between one's relation to one's own mind and other cases of expertise? Likewise, we might ask whether other accounts of first-person authority, such as Bar-On's (2004) Neo-Expressivism, can explain the strong form of authority specified here. Finally, earlier I mentioned that irrationality or other incapacities can explain failures of self-knowledge and so provide grounds for rejecting another's avowal. Does this lend support to views that draw an intimate connection between our capacity for self-knowledge and rationality, such as those developed by Sydney Shoemaker (1994), Richard Moran (2001), or John Gibbons (2013)?

My point is twofold. First, First-Person Authority, as specified here, is philosophically puzzling and worthy of our time. Second, the proposed specification is a fruitful starting place, since it raises pressing questions for accounts of the phenomenon that has puzzled so many.

ENDNOTES

1. To be fair, Barz only claims that the specifications he considers, drawn from the literature, do not pick out a phenomenon worthy of philosophical reflection. He leaves it open whether there is another specification that fares better. But the essay is surely intended to suggest a negative answer to its titular question, "Is there Anything to the Authority Thesis?"

2. I won't make any assumptions here about *which* states we speak with authority. I'll use familiar examples, belief, desire, emotions, etc.

3. See Byrne 2005, 2018 for this way of articulating privilege. There are, of course, other ways of understanding it. But Byrne's formulation has the advantage of being acceptable to many. Still, it is controversial. That is because Byrne makes a statistical claim about our reliability. But you might prefer to put the point in terms of the special epistemic status enjoyed in the good case, leaving it open whether subjects are typically in the good case. For example, John Gibbons (2019) argues that, in the good case, self-ascriptions are based on their truthmakers. That is a special epistemic status. But his view leaves it open whether our beliefs about our minds typically earn this status.

4. The language of "peculiarity" and "privilege" comes from Byrne 2005, 2018.

5. Schwitzgebel 2008 suggests a view along these lines. There is a uniquely first-personal method, introspection, but it isn't very reliable.

6. This is a point that Barz makes, as well.

7. Emphases in original.

8. Barz provides this example of a paradigmatic philosophical *aporia*: (1) The mental and the physical are distinct; (2) The mental and the physical causally interact; (3) The physical is causally closed.

9. Later I will argue that the specification I offer also generates *aporia*.

10. Reductionism holds that a hearer is justified in believing what a speaker says if and only if she both has positive reasons for believing that the speaker's testimony is reliable and lacks undefeated defeaters indicating the falsity of the testimony. (Adler 2002, Fricker 2006, Kenyon 2013, Sutton 2007) Non-Reductionism denies that a hearer must possess positive reasons for believing that the speaker's testimony is reliable. Hearers are default entitled to accept another's word so long as they lack undefeated defeaters indicating the falsity of the testimony. (Burge 1993, Coady 1992, Dummett 1994, Evans 1982, McDowell 1994, Weiner 2003).

11. See Gomes 2015 for discussion of the claim that testimony is a basic source of justification about other minds.

12. See section V of Barz 2018.

13. Furthermore, specifications that mention "reliability" or "justification" build the idea of epistemic privilege into the specification of first-person authority, and we were hoping to avoid that.

14. See Barz 2018 for a presentation of this point in terms of his favored metaphilosophy.

15. Barz considers another specification of first-person authority, according to which the subject's authority consists in the fact that self-ascriptions are immune from ordinary doubts. This specification has been advanced by Bar-On 2004. I won't run through Barz's objections. But let me raise another. It seems plain that we very often do doubt and question another's self-ascription. A blanket immunity from doubt does not seem to govern our interactions with others when they speak their mind. Instead, self-ascriptions are immune from doubts about one's evidence or reasons. As Hampshire (1979) pointed out: if I tell you, "I am so angry!," it seems inappropriate to ask, "How do you know that?" Arguably, this is because there is no sensible answer to that question: self-ascriptions are not based on evidence or reasons in the ordinary sense. They are baseless or groundless. But the baselessness of self-knowledge is a distinct phenomenon from the authority with which we speak when we self-ascribe mental states.

16. Evidence of error might constitute evidence that *some* special explanation is true. But that is not the same thing as an explanation of what has gone wrong here and now. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pushing on this issue.

17. Notice that these explanations are "special" because they are *required* to overturn another's testimony only in the case of self-ascriptions. We make use of these sorts of explanations all the time: you do it when you refuse to take a drunk person at their word, even if you have no evidence bearing on the topic of their conversation. Explanations of why another is led astray are often *relevant* when weighing another's testimony, but they are *required* to overturn a speaker when they speak their mind. In that respect, self-ascriptions are special.

18. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pushing me on this point.

19. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pointing out the relevance of this example.

20. One might insist that this further evidence is irrelevant. All one needs to reject the self-ascription is evidence of error. It is hard to know what to say when intuitions clash like this, but let me frame the response as a hypothesis: Cases in which it is intuitively acceptable to reject another's self-ascription will be cases where evidence entitling one to a special explanation is available. In cases in which such evidence is not available, the hearer will not be entitled to simply reject the self-ascription.

21. Thanks to an anonymous referee for the example. See Barz 2018 for a different take on this.

22. It seems to me that self-ascriptions alone call for special explanations. Below, in generating an *aporia*, I assume this. But, suppose that is wrong. As I argue below, the specification offered here satisfies all of Barz's criteria, and generates philosophical puzzlement, even if self-ascriptions are not unique in calling for special explanations. (Thanks to an anonymous referee and Heather Battaly for pushing me on this.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adler, Jonathan. 2002. *Belief's Own Ethics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Bar-On, Dorit. 2004. *Speaking my Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barz, Wolfgang. 2018. "Is there Anything to the Authority Thesis?" *Journal of Philosophical Research* 43: 125–43. https://doi.org/10.5840/jpr2018712122

Barz, Wolfgang. 2019. "The Aporetic Structure of Philosophical Problems." *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy* 3: 5–18.

Burge, Tyler. 1993. "Content Preservation." *The Philosophical Review* 102: 457–88. https://doi.org/10.2307/2185680

Byrne, Alex. 2005. "Introspection." *Philosophical Topics* 33: 79–104. https://doi.org/10.5840/philtopics20053312

Byrne, Alex. 2018. *Transparency and Self-Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198821618.001.0001

Carruthers, Peter. 2011. *The Opacity of Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coady, C. A. J. 1992. *Testimony: A Philosophical Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Davidson, Donald. 1984. "First-Person Authority." *Dialectica* 38.2–3: 101–111. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-8361.1984.tb01238.x

Dummett, Michael. 1994. "Testimony and Memory." In *Knowing from Words: Western and Indian Philosophical Analysis of Understanding and Testimony*, ed. Bimal Krishna Matilal and Arindam Chakrabarti, 251–272. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-2018-2_12

Evans, Gareth, 1982. *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fricker, Elizabeth. 2006. "Second-Hand Knowledge." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 73.3: 592–618. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2006.tb00550.x

Gertler, Brie. 2012. *Self-Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Gibbons, John. 2013. *The Norm of Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199673391.001.0001

Gibbons, John. 2019. "Introspecting Knowledge." *Philosophical Studies* 176.2: 559–579. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-017-1028-9

Gomes, Anil. 2015. "Testimony and Other Minds." *Erkenntinis* 80:173–83. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-014-9619-8

Hampshire, Stuart. 1979. "Some Difficulties in Knowing." In *Philosophy as it is*, ed. Ted Honderich and Myles Burnyeat. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Kenyon, Tim. 2013. "The Informational Richness of Testimonial Contexts." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 63.250: 58–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9213.12000

McDowell, John. 1994. “Knowledge by Hearsay.” In *Knowing from Words: Western and Indian Philosophical Analysis of Understanding and Testimony*, ed. Bimal Krishna Matilal and Arindam Chakrabarti, 195–224. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.

McGeer, Victoria. 2007. “The Moral Development of First-Person Authority.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 16.1: 81–108. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0378.2007.00266.x

Moran, Richard. 2001. *Authority and Estrangement*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ryle, Gilbert. 2000 [1949]. *The Concept of Mind.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schwitzgebel, Eric. 2011. *Perplexities of Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8243.001.0001

Schwitzgebel, Eric. 2012. “Self-Ignorance.” In *Consciousness and the Self: New Essays*, ed. Jee Loo Liu and John Perry, 184–97. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511732355.009

Shoemaker, Sydney. 1994. *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stich, Stephen. 1985. “Could Man be an Irrational Animal?” *Synthese* 64.1: 115–35. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00485714

Sutton, Jonathan. 2007. *Without Justification*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/7262.001.0001

Weiner, Matthew. 2003. “Accepting Testimony.” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 53.211: 256–264. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9213.00310

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2009 [1953]. *Philosophical Investigations.* Fourth Edition. Trans. by Peter Hacker and Johann Schulte. Oxford: Blackwell.