

# *Immunity to Error through Misidentification*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In a famous passage from *The Blue Book*, Wittgenstein describes two different “uses” of the first person:

There are two different cases in the use of the word “I” (or “my”) which I might call “the use as object” and “the use as subject.” Examples of the first kind of use are these: “My arm is broken,” “I have grown six inches,” “I have a bump on my forehead,” “The wind blows my hair about.” Examples of the second kind are: “I see so-and-so,” “I hear so-and-so,” “I try to lift my arm,” “I think it will rain,” “I have toothache.” One can point to the difference between these two categories by saying: The cases of the first category involve the recognition of a particular person, and there is in these cases the possibility of an error. . . . It is possible that, say in an accident, I should feel a pain in my arm, see a broken arm at my side, and think it is mine, when really it is my neighbor’s. . . . On the other hand, there is no question of recognizing a person when I say I have toothache. To ask “are you sure it’s *you* who have pains?” would be nonsensical.<sup>1</sup>

In “Self-Reference and Self-Awareness,” Shoemaker introduced the notion of *immunity to error through misidentification*, intending this notion to capture and explain the difference between the two different “uses” of the first person that Wittgenstein describes. In Shoemaker’s terminology, first-person claims or beliefs that would be expressed using “I” as subject are immune to error through misidentification. Those that would be expressed using “I” as object are vulnerable to error through misidentification. Shoemaker writes:

The statement “I feel pain” is not subject to error through misidentification: it cannot happen that I am mistaken in saying “I feel pain” because, although I do know of someone that feels pain, I am mistaken in thinking that person to be myself. . . . [T]his is also true of first-person statements that are clearly not incorrigible; I can be mistaken in saying “I see a canary,” since I can be mistaken in thinking that what I see is a canary or (in the case of hallucination) that there is anything at all that I see, but it cannot happen that I am mistaken in saying this because I have misidentified as myself the person I know to see a canary.<sup>2</sup>

If I say “I feel pain” or “I see a canary,” I may be identifying for someone else the person of whom I am saying that he feels pain or sees a canary. But there is also a sense in which my reference does not involve an identification. My use of the word “I” as the subject of my statement is not due to my having identified as myself something of which I know, or believe, or wish to say, that the predicate of my statement applies to it.<sup>3</sup>

This notion of immunity to error through misidentification plays an important role in Shoemaker’s discussions of self-knowledge, perception, and memory.<sup>4</sup> The notion has also been taken up and discussed by Gareth Evans and several other writers.<sup>5</sup> What is not always acknowledged in these discussions is that there are several *different* sorts of error through misidentification, and that they are importantly different. This paper aims to clarify and distinguish these different kinds of identification and misidentification and the correspondingly different notions of *immunity* to error through misidentification. I will argue that immunity to error through misidentification comes in two main sorts. In section V, I will show how we can put these distinctions to use in assessing a debate between Shoemaker and Evans about whether first-person memory-based beliefs are immune to error through misidentification. Evans says they are immune; Shoemaker says they are not. I will argue that, with respect to the most interesting sort of immunity, Shoemaker is right: our first-person memory-based beliefs do *not* have that sort of immunity.

## II. *De Re* MISIDENTIFICATION

Let's begin with an example:

*Example 1.* I want to tell you a story about Harry's antics at a party last week. However, you've never met Harry and you don't even know him by name. I believe that a certain blue-coated man, whom we both can see, is Harry. So I say, "That man [pointing to the blue-coated man] was the life of the party last week." However, the blue-coated man is not Harry.

What's going on here? We'll begin by explaining the example in crude terms, and work towards a more precise account.

In the example, I mistakenly believe the blue-coated man to be Harry. I wanted to say something about Harry; but in fact I said something about the blue-coated man instead. It's *also* true that I wanted to say something about the blue-coated man. But my ultimate aim was to say something about Harry. I tried to do this *by* saying something about the blue-coated man.

Let's begin making this more precise. Sometimes one conveys information about one person by asserting propositions about another person. For instance, I might convey information about Harry's wife by saying, "Not only is Harry a cuckold, but, in addition, he is having a hard time paying off all the credit card bills for new dresses." My comments might be regarded as "saying something about Harry's wife," in a loose and indirect sense. In Example 1, however, I'm not merely trying to convey information about Harry, in that sense. I'm trying to express some *singular proposition* about Harry.

Let me say a little about what I mean by a "singular proposition." I take a singular proposition about some object  $x$ , to the effect that that object is  $F$ , to be a proposition whose truth-value with respect to any possible world  $w$  depends solely on whether or not  $x$  is  $F$  in  $w$ . It does not depend on the doings of any other objects in  $w$ .<sup>6</sup> I also assume that a singular proposition about  $x$  is a kind of proposition such that belief in that proposition would be a *de re* belief about  $x$ . If one is not capable of having *de re* thoughts or beliefs about  $x$ , then one is not capable of entertaining or believing any singular proposition about  $x$ .<sup>7</sup> I leave it open whether the singular proposition expressed by a sentence like "Cicero is bald" is identical to the singular proposition expressed by a sentence like "Tully is bald." They will be singular propositions about the same object. But on some views they will nonetheless be distinct singular propositions.

I said that in Example 1, I try to say something about Harry *by* saying something about the blue-coated man. Of course, I don't *think of* my act of referring to the blue-coated man as a means or way of referring to Harry. I think that referring to the blue-coated man *just is* referring to Harry. But for

those who recognize that the blue-coated man is not Harry, it does seem natural to describe my actions by saying that I'm trying to refer to Harry by referring to the blue-coated man. After all, *why* did I refer to the blue-coated man? Presumably because I assumed (however unreflectively) that I could refer to Harry by doing so.

In action theory, it's common to distinguish between *basic actions* and *non-basic actions*.<sup>8</sup> A non-basic action is an action you perform *by* performing some other action. (For instance, when you turn on the light by flipping the switch, your act of turning on the light is a non-basic action.) A basic action is an action you perform, but not *by* performing any other action. In Example 1, I intend to, and I'm trying to, refer to Harry and express a singular proposition about him. Call my attempt to do this a "referential attempt." I also intend to, and I try to, refer to the blue-coated man and express a singular proposition about him. This second referential attempt succeeds, but it might not have succeeded. (We'll examine cases where it doesn't succeed in a bit.) Now, since I attempt to refer to Harry *by* referring to the blue-coated man, let's say that my attempt to refer to the blue-coated man is *more basic* than my attempt to refer to Harry. This is meant to parallel the distinction between basic and non-basic actions in action theory. In calling my attempt to refer to the blue-coated man "more basic," I'm not saying that it's more important, or that I'm more committed to referring to the blue-coated man than I am to referring to Harry. I just mean that it's *by* performing (or trying to perform) that action that I try to refer to Harry.

Now, in Example 1, I express a false singular proposition about the blue-coated man, to the effect that he was the life of the party. I only express this proposition because I assume that by doing so, I can express the singular proposition that *Harry* was the life of the party. Hence, it looks like *any justification* I have for believing the singular proposition I succeed in expressing will rest on my justification for believing that Harry was the life of the party, and that he is the blue-coated man. This feature of the example will be central to the notions we discuss in this paper.

Say that we have a case of *de re misidentification* whenever the following three conditions obtain:

- (i) There is some singular proposition about *x*, to the effect that it is *F*, that a subject believes or attempts to express.

In Example 1, this is the singular proposition I asserted about the blue-coated man, to the effect that he was the life of the party.

- (ii) The subject's justification for believing this singular proposition rests on his justification for believing, of some *y*, and of *x*, that *y* is *F* and that *y* is identical to *x*.

In Example 1, as we just saw, my justification for believing the blue-coated man to be the life of the party rests on my justification for believing a singular proposition, about Harry, to the effect that he was the life of the party, and a singular proposition, about Harry and the blue-coated man, to the effect that they are identical. Call singular propositions of this latter sort “identity assumptions.”

(iii) However, unbeknownst to the subject,  $y \neq x$ .

In Example 1, my identity assumption is false. So this is a case of *de re* misidentification.

In short, we have a case of *de re* misidentification whenever one’s justification for the proposition believed or expressed rests on one’s prior justification for believing, among other things, a certain identity assumption—and this identity assumption turns out to be false.<sup>9</sup>

Here is another example of *de re* misidentification:

*Example 2.* As before, there is a blue-coated man we both can see. This time, the blue-coated man is such that I want to tell you something about *him*. I want to tell you that he looks suspicious. Since I believe him to be Sam, who is well-known to both of us, I say, “*Sam* looks suspicious.” However, the blue-coated man is not Sam.

In this example, we have the converse of the situation in Example 1. Here I ultimately want to say something about the blue-coated man, but in fact I say something about Sam instead.<sup>10</sup> I claim of Sam that he looks suspicious. My justification for that claim rests in part on my false assumption, about the blue-coated man and Sam, that they are identical. So this too is an example of *de re* misidentification.

Our examples so far have dealt with my making certain *claims*, but the phenomenon of *de re* misidentification has nothing especially to do with language and linguistic reference. It can occur in thought as well. Consider the following examples:

*Example 3.* I see that the blue-coated man is carrying a gun under his coat. Because I’ve misidentified the blue-coated man as Sam, I form the *de re* belief, of Sam, that he is carrying a gun.

Here I believe of Sam that he is carrying a gun, and my justification for that belief rests in part on my false assumption, about the blue-coated man and Sam, that they are identical. This is an example of *de re* misidentification.

First-person claims and beliefs about oneself can also exemplify *de re* misidentification. For instance:

*Example 4.* In history class, I learn certain things about Napoleon, including the fact that he was born on Corsica. I want

to express a singular proposition, about Napoleon, to the effect that he was born on Corsica. Because I falsely believe myself to be Napoleon, I say, “*I* was born on Corsica.”

*Example 5.* I see a person in the mirror with a black eye, misidentify him as myself, and think to myself, “*I* have a black eye.”

In these examples, I misidentify someone else as myself. I can also misidentify someone who is in fact me as someone else:

*Example 6.* I see myself in the mirror wearing a yellow hat, and mistake myself for George. As a result, I form the *de re* belief, of George, that he is wearing a nice yellow hat.

These are all cases of *de re* misidentification.

In the definition of *de re* misidentification, I said that the subject’s justification for one belief or claim *rests on* his justification for believing certain other things. We will return to this notion later in the paper. Let me just point out now that I do not assume that whenever your justification for believing one proposition rests on your justification for believing other propositions, you will have *formed* or even *entertained* a belief in those latter propositions. Nor do I assume that you have *based* the first belief on a belief in those latter propositions. To help fix our ideas, consider the following example:

*Example 7.* I’m driving my car. I look at my gas gauge, and it appears to read “E.” This gives me justification for believing that I’m out of gas. However, for no good reason, I suspect that I’m hallucinating the gas gauge. So I do not actually form the belief that I’m out of gas, nor do I form the belief that my gas gauge reads “E.”

In this example, since my suspicions are groundless and irrational, it seems plausible to say that I have justification for believing that I’m out of gas, even though I do not actually form this belief.<sup>11</sup> What’s more, there is an obvious sense in which my justification for believing that I’m out of gas *rests on* my justification for believing that the gas gauge reads “E.” This is the kind of epistemic dependence that the definition of *de re* misidentification refers to.<sup>12</sup> Note that, in Example 7, since I do not actually form the belief that the gas gauge reads “E,” or the belief that I’m out of gas, I don’t *base* the one belief on the other. So you can sometimes have justification for believing one thing, which rests on justification you have for believing something else, even when you did not base a belief that the first thing is true on a belief that the second thing is true. This will be important later.<sup>13</sup>

The phenomenon of *de re* misidentification should be distinguished from a similar but different phenomenon, which I will call “badly aimed reference.” Consider all the cases in which you try to use a certain referential

device to refer to *x*, and to express a singular proposition about *x*, but you end up referring to some *y* instead, which is not identical to *x*. In some of these cases, *y* will be such that you tried to refer to *x* by referring to *y* (just as, in Example 4, I tried to refer to Napoleon by referring to myself). These are examples of *de re* misidentification, of the sort we've already seen.

Perhaps there are other cases, too, though. In these other cases, although you do refer to *y*, you weren't *trying* to refer to *y*. You weren't even trying to refer to *y* as a way of referring to something else. For instance:

*Example 8.* Without turning and looking, I point to a place on the wall behind me, which has long been occupied by a picture of Rudolf Carnap, and I say, "That is a picture of a great philosopher." Unbeknownst to me, someone has replaced my picture of Carnap with a picture of Spiro Agnew.<sup>14</sup>

Here it is arguable that I have said, of a picture of Spiro Agnew, that it is a picture of a great philosopher. (Perhaps the *speaker's reference* of my claim was the missing picture of Carnap, and if you know how my office used to be decorated, I may have succeeded, pragmatically, in conveying some information to you about the picture of Carnap. But it's plausible that the proposition expressed by my claim "That is a picture of a great philosopher" concerns the picture of Agnew.) I was not *trying to refer* to the picture of Agnew, though. One could argue that I was trying to refer to *whatever picture I was pointing to*, which picture *turned out to be* the picture of Agnew. I am doubtful whether this is so. I don't think I need to have tried to refer to whatever picture I was pointing to, in the case as I described it. But what is important is that, even if I *did* try to do that, I had no *de re* intention to refer to the picture of Agnew; and I made no *de re* attempt, directed at that particular picture, to refer to it. This is shown by the fact that when I was pointing behind my back, I was wholly oblivious to the picture of Agnew. I did not even believe it to exist. What I thought I was pointing at was a different picture.<sup>15</sup> In Example 8, then, there does not seem to be anything other than the picture of Carnap such that I was trying to express a singular proposition about the picture of Carnap *by* referring to and expressing a singular proposition about that other thing. So we can say that my attempt to refer to the picture of Carnap was a *basic* referential attempt. Of course, I was trying to refer to the picture of Carnap by *doing* certain other things: I was trying to refer to it by pointing behind my back and by uttering certain words. But I wasn't trying to refer to it, and to express a singular proposition about it, by referring to and expressing a singular proposition about anything else. That's what I mean by saying that my attempt to refer to the picture of Carnap was a basic referential attempt.

In Example 8, then, my basic referential attempt was to refer to the picture of Carnap. But as things turned out, I failed to refer to the picture

of Carnap and I ended up referring to, and expressing a singular proposition about, some other picture. Call such examples cases of “badly aimed reference.”

It is controversial whether cases of badly aimed reference are possible. Some philosophers would argue that in Example 8, I *did* succeed in referring to, and expressing a singular proposition about, the missing picture of Carnap. Others would argue that I did not succeed in referring to *any picture at all*. I don't want to enter into those debates. I only want to stress that these cases of badly aimed reference, if they *are* possible, don't count as *de re* misidentification, as I'm conceiving it. I said that in Example 8, I have no *de re* beliefs or intentions about the picture of Agnew. So even if I did happen to express a singular proposition about that picture, this is not a singular proposition which I intended or attempted to express. It would be odd, then, to say that I have any *justification* for believing something about Agnew's picture, that rests in part on my justification for believing, of the two pictures, that they are identical. As I said, I'm wholly unaware of the existence of the picture of Agnew. So I don't have *any de re* beliefs about that picture; nor do I have any justification for such beliefs. So it would be false to say that “my justification” for the proposition I expressed about Agnew's picture rests in part on “my justification” for a false identity assumption about that picture. I *don't have* justification of either sort. For this reason, my claim does not count as a case of *de re* misidentification.<sup>16</sup>

To summarize: when we're trying to determine whether a certain speech act counts as a case of *de re* misidentification, we're concerned with what singular proposition the subject was *attempting* to express, and, more specifically, we're concerned with what singular proposition his *basic* referential attempt aimed to express. We want to know whether his justification for believing *that* singular proposition rests on a false identity assumption. We're not concerned with what kind of justification he has for singular propositions that he merely *happens* to express without having made any attempt to express them. Nor are we concerned with what kind of justification he has for the propositions that he ultimately wants to convey or get across. We're only concerned with the nature of his justification for the singular propositions that his basic referential attempts aim to express. We want to know whether *that* justification rests on a false identity assumption.<sup>17</sup>

In what follows, we will be concerned only with the phenomenon of *de re* misidentification and with other related phenomena. We will not pay much attention to the phenomenon of badly aimed reference. I introduced that notion only to distinguish *de re* misidentification from it and to set it aside.

Given the notion of *de re* misidentification, we can formulate a notion of **immunity to *de re* misidentification**. Roughly speaking, a belief or



assertion should count as immune to *de re* misidentification just in case it is not possible to form that belief or make that assertion and to have thereby made an error through *de re* misidentification. However, we should note that it's not—or not just—the *propositional content* of a belief that determines the belief's scope for error through *de re* misidentification. Whether or not a belief is immune to *de re* misidentification *depends on its grounds*. One and the same proposition might be believed for a variety of reasons; it could be immune to *de re* misidentification when believed on the basis of some reasons, and vulnerable to *de re* misidentification when believed on the basis of others. So let's say that a proposition is **immune to *de re* misidentification when justified by grounds G** just in case, whenever that proposition is believed on grounds G, then the resulting belief can not be in error through *de re* misidentification. Say that a proposition is **absolutely immune to *de re* misidentification** just in case it is immune to *de re* misidentification when justified by *every* possible ground for believing it.<sup>18</sup> By extension, we can say that *a belief* is immune to *de re* misidentification, either absolutely or relative to certain grounds, when *the proposition believed* is immune to *de re* misidentification in the relevant way.

Beliefs of the form *I exist* and *I am thinking* are surely immune to *de re* misidentification, when they are believed on the basis of cogito-type reasoning.<sup>19</sup> Beliefs about oneself, to the effect that one has certain occurrent mental states, are also plausibly immune to *de re* misidentification, when these beliefs are held on the basis of introspection. (I assume that it is not possible to have introspective access to the mental states of other persons and, in doing so, to mistake their mental states for your own.) The belief that I myself have a toothache, the belief that I think it will rain, and the belief that I am trying to lift my arm all fall in this category. All of these beliefs are ones that would be expressed with what Wittgenstein calls the use of 'I' as subject.<sup>20</sup>

Next, consider self-ascriptions of *factive* mental states and their kin, like the belief that one perceives a canary, the belief that one is touching and feeling a piece of cloth, and the belief that one is waving one's arm. These are also plausibly immune to *de re* misidentification, when believed on the ordinary sort of first-person grounds. Shoemaker claimed that such beliefs are *absolutely* immune to misidentification. However, Evans and McGinn have devised convincing counterexamples, where someone believes one of these propositions to be true in a way which is vulnerable to misidentification.<sup>21</sup> For instance:

*Example 9.* It feels to me as if I am touching a piece of cloth, but I have reason to suspect that my tactile perceptions are illusory. I cannot see my hands; however, in a mirror I can see several people reaching out and touching various things. A person

who looks much like me is touching a piece of cloth. On this basis, I form the belief that I am in fact touching a piece of cloth.

It would be possible in such a situation for me to be a victim of *de re* misidentification, if I am wrong in thinking that the person I see touching a cloth in the mirror is myself. Hence, these beliefs are not absolutely immune to *de re* misidentification. They are only immune to *de re* misidentification when believed on the ordinary sort of first-person grounds.

Some beliefs about oneself are clearly vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. These include the following: the belief that I have a broken arm, the belief that I am bleeding, the belief that I am wearing a yellow hat, and so on. (Example 5 was a case of this sort.) I can see someone else with a broken arm, misidentify the bearer of the broken arm as myself, and as a result form the belief that I have a broken arm. That would be a case of *de re* misidentification.<sup>22</sup>

For other beliefs about oneself, it's more controversial whether they are vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. For instance, proprioceptive and kinaesthetic beliefs, like the belief that my legs are crossed, and the belief that I am being pushed, are plausible candidates for being immune to *de re* misidentification. So too are beliefs like the belief that there is a canary in front of me, the belief that I am facing a table, and the belief that a car is approaching me quickly—when these beliefs are based on a perception “from the inside” that my body stands in the relevant relation. (That is, in the cases I'm imagining, I don't perceive my body in a mirror and see that there is a canary in front of it. I just perceive the canary, in the center of my field of vision.) However, all of these cases are controversial, and I myself have doubts about whether these sorts of beliefs are immune to *de re* misidentification even when believed on the ordinary sort of first-person grounds.<sup>23</sup>

Many demonstrative beliefs and claims are vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. This is most clear when the justification one has for believing the claim does not (wholly) come from the same experiences that one is relying on to make the demonstration. Example 1 illustrates such a case: I claimed “*That man* was the life of the party last week.” Here my demonstration relies on certain visual experiences, but those experiences are at best only part of what justifies me in believing the man in question to have been the life of the party. My justification for that belief also draws heavily on my memories of the party. Because the person I remember is not the same person I see, I am a victim of *de re* misidentification.<sup>24</sup>

In summary, all introspectively based beliefs about oneself will be immune to *de re* misidentification, and many—though perhaps not all—demonstrative beliefs and beliefs about one's bodily state will be vulnerable to *de re* misidentification.

### III. *Which-Object*-MISIDENTIFICATION

Now I want to introduce another sort of “error through misidentification.” Consider the following example:

*Example 10.* I smell a skunky odor, and see several animals rummaging around in my garden. None of them has the characteristic white stripes of a skunk, but I believe that some skunks lack these stripes. Approaching closer and sniffing, I form the belief, of the smallest of these animals, that it is a skunk in my garden. This belief is mistaken. There are several skunks in my garden, but none of them is the small animal I see.

Although I am here correct in thinking that *something* instantiates the property of being a skunk in my garden, I have not managed to correctly figure out *which* thing (or things) it is which instantiates this property. Let’s call such examples cases of ***which-object-misidentification***, or *wh*-misidentification, for short.

We can be more precise. First, let’s introduce a notion that will greatly ease exposition. Say that certain grounds *G* you have “offer you knowledge that *p*” iff *p* is true and, in virtue of having grounds *G*, you satisfy all the other conditions for knowing that *p*, except for those conditions that require you to believe *p*. Hence, for grounds *G* to offer you knowledge that *p*, you need not actually believe that *p*; but those grounds do have to justify you in believing that *p*. In addition, those grounds have to “be connected to” or “derive from” the facts that make *p* true, in whatever way is required to solve the Gettier Problem.<sup>25</sup> Because of the Gettier Problem, not every justified belief counts as knowledge. So not every case of having justification for believing something true will count as having justification that offers knowledge. Until we know more about the relationship between justification and knowledge, we cannot give a precise account of what it is for grounds to derive in the right way from the facts that make *p* true. So our grasp of the notion of “justification that offers knowledge” will remain somewhat schematic. However, I think we have enough of an understanding of the notion for our purposes here.

Let me make a small amendment to the definition of this notion. Let’s say that grounds *G* *also* offer you knowledge that *p* in those cases where (i) *p* is true, and (ii) the grounds *G* justify you in the right way in believing that *p*, but (iii) you *also* happen to possess (misleading) evidence which defeats those grounds *G*. With the notion of “offering knowledge” understood in this way, you can have justification which offers you knowledge that *p* even if—because you also possess some (misleading) defeating evidence—you’re not *all things considered* justified in believing that *p*. Roughly speaking, grounds *G* will offer you knowledge that *p* in those cases where, if you

were to believe that  $p$  on the basis of  $G$ , and you possessed no defeating evidence, then your belief would constitute knowledge that  $p$ .

Now, with this notion in hand, we can say that *wh*-misidentification occurs when:

- (i) A subject has some grounds  $G$  that offer him knowledge of the existential generalization  $\exists x Fx$ .
- (ii) Partly on the basis of  $G$ , the subject is also justified, or takes himself to be justified, in believing of some object  $a$  that it is  $F$ .
- (iii) But in fact  $a$  is not  $F$ . Some distinct object (or objects)  $y$  is  $F$ , and it's because the grounds  $G$  "derive" in the right way from this fact *about*  $y$  that they offer the subject knowledge that  $\exists x Fx$ .

Example 10 is a case of *wh*-misidentification of this sort. My grounds do offer me knowledge that there is some skunk in my garden, and if I were to form this belief, it would count as knowledge. But I am mistaken in believing of the small animal I see that it is a skunk in my garden. My grounds for believing that there is some skunk in my garden derive from some other animals  $y$ , which *are* skunks in my garden.

Note: in such a case, my grounds need *not* offer me knowledge of any objects  $y$  that they are  $F$ . The real skunks might be hidden from sight, and so I might not yet be offered knowledge, *of any of those particular animals*, that it is a skunk in my garden. Merely *smelling* a skunk need not yet put me in a position to hold *de re* beliefs or knowledge about the particular skunk I'm smelling.<sup>26</sup>

One might be tempted to say that, as with *de re* misidentification, cases of *wh*-misidentification also involve a "mistaken identity assumption." For instance, one might say that, in Example 10, I've mistakenly identified *what I'm smelling* as the small animal I see. But this is not an "identity assumption" of the sort I described before: I'm not yet in a position to believe, *of* some thing that I'm smelling, that it is identical to anything else. In fact, I'm not yet in a position to hold *any de re* beliefs about any of the things I'm smelling. I don't yet have any correct beliefs, about some particular animal, that I am smelling *it*, or that *it* is a skunk in my garden. My problem is precisely to *arrive at* such a *de re* belief. I'm trying to figure out which animal, if any, is a skunk that I'm smelling.

Pay close attention to this difference between *de re* misidentification and *wh*-misidentification. In cases of *de re* misidentification, I form a mistaken belief of  $a$  that it is  $F$ , and my epistemic right to this belief rests on my justification for believing, of some *particular* object  $y$ , that  $y$  is  $F$  and that  $a$  and  $y$  are the same object. I may be right in thinking that  $y$  is  $F$ ; where I go wrong is in taking  $y$  to be the same thing as  $a$ . (For instance, in Example 3, I may be right in thinking of the blue-coated man that he is carrying a gun; where I go wrong is in taking him to be Sam.) In cases of *wh*-misidentification,

I also form a mistaken belief of *a* that it is F, but here my epistemic right to that belief *does not* rest on my justification for believing, of any *other* object, that *it* is F. In cases of *wh*-misidentification, I go wrong not in *re-identifying* the thing I know to be F as some other thing; rather, I go wrong in figuring out *which thing* is F, in the first place.

Given the notion of *wh*-misidentification, we can formulate a notion of immunity to *wh*-misidentification. A singular proposition that *a* is F is **immune to *wh*-misidentification when justified by grounds G** just in case no possible belief of *a* that it is F could be justified by those grounds and yet be in error through *wh*-misidentification. (As before, a proposition will count as **absolutely** immune to *wh*-misidentification just in case it is immune to *wh*-misidentification when justified by *every* possible ground for believing it. And a belief will count as immune to *wh*-misidentification just in case the proposition believed does.)

Here's an example. Beliefs of the form *I have a pain* are surely immune to *wh*-misidentification, when they are believed on the basis of introspective grounds. How could I possibly know on those kinds of grounds that *someone* has a pain, but be wrong in believing that *it's me* who feels a pain? One can't be introspectively aware of a pain without thereby *feeling* that pain, oneself.

The fact that you believe of *a* that it is F on grounds that make your belief immune to *wh*-misidentification does not entail that your belief is *infallible*. You may be mistaken in believing on those grounds that *a* is F. It's just that one kind of mistake is ruled out: roughly speaking, it is not possible for you to be *right* in thinking that something is F, but to have made a mistake in figuring out *which* thing it is that is F.<sup>27</sup> Cashing this out in somewhat more precise terms, there is no "part" of your justification for believing that *a* is F which could offer you knowledge that *something* is F, while leaving it an open question for you whether *a* is F.<sup>28</sup> Hence, any ground you acquired for doubting that *a* is F would ipso facto be a ground for doubting that anything is F (assuming you don't have independent reason to believe there are F's elsewhere in the world).

What does it mean to say that "part" of your grounds justifies you in believing that something is F? Suppose you have certain visual experiences V. These experiences justify you in believing that there is a red apple in front of you. They also justify you in believing that the room is illuminated. Now, it would be possible for you to acquire evidence which defeated your justification for believing that there is a red apple in front of you, but which left intact your justification for believing that the room is illuminated (e.g., you may learn that the item in front of you is made of plastic, or you may learn that there is a mirror two feet in front of your eyes). Hence, we could describe this case by saying that "part" of your grounds V justifies you in

believing that the room is illuminated. It is possible to “take away” some of those grounds, by defeating them, in such a way that what is left will (still) justify you in believing that the room is illuminated.<sup>29</sup>

To be more precise, we need to distinguish between two different sorts of defeating evidence. Suppose the wall looks blue to you. That gives you justification for believing that the wall is blue. I *undercut*, or discredit, your justification for believing that the wall is blue by telling you that your eyes aren’t working reliably today. This testimony doesn’t add to the case in your possession for believing that the wall *is not* blue. It undercuts the grounds you already possess. An *additive* defeater, on the other hand, would defeat your justification for believing the wall is blue by giving you positive evidence that the wall *is not* blue. Thus there are two kinds of defeating evidence: undercutting defeaters and additive defeaters.<sup>30</sup>

Here is another example. Suppose I believe that my arm is broken, because it is swollen and looks oddly twisted. If you show me an X-ray of my arm, with all of the bones intact, you have presented an additive defeater against my belief. Your defeater supplies some positive reason to believe that my arm is not broken. If, on the other hand, you show me a medical textbook which states that arms are sometimes swollen and twisted in the way my arm is *without* being broken, you have presented an undercutting defeater. Your defeater does *not* supply any positive reason to believe that my arm is not broken. It does however raise doubts about whether my grounds for believing that my arm is broken are really adequate reasons for believing that.

To explain what it is for “part” of your grounds to justify you in believing something, we need to employ the notion of undercutting defeaters. (If you have evidence for believing *p*, and God appears to you and says, “*p* isn’t true, but *q* is,” his testimony might defeat your original evidence and give you reason to believe *q*, but we don’t want to conclude that part of your original evidence therefore already justified you in believing *q*.) What we should say is this: “part” of your grounds justifies you in believing that *p* iff it is possible to “take away” some of those grounds, by *undercutting* them, in such a way that what is left will (still) justify you in believing that *p*.

Pulling this all together, we can say that a singular proposition about *a* to the effect that it is *F* is **vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification when justified by grounds *G*** just in case:

When that proposition is believed on grounds *G*, it is possible for those grounds to be defeated by undercutting evidence in such a way that the following two conditions hold:

- (i) the combination of *G* and that undercutting evidence *no longer* justifies you in believing of *a* that it is *F*; but
- (ii) the combination of *G* and that undercutting evidence *could*,<sup>31</sup> by itself, offer you knowledge that  $\exists x Fx$ .

If it is *not* ever possible for G to be undercut in that way, then the belief is immune to *wh*-misidentification when justified by grounds G.

Are any beliefs immune to *wh*-misidentification, in this sense?

As with *de re* misidentification, it seems plausible that beliefs to the effect that I have certain occurrent mental states are immune to *wh*-misidentification, when those beliefs are held on the basis of introspection. So, as we said, the introspectively based belief that I have a pain is immune to *wh*-misidentification. The belief that I think it will rain, and the belief that I am trying to lift my arm, are also immune to *wh*-misidentification, when these are based on introspection. So too are beliefs like the belief that I see a canary. If this is believed on the ordinary sort of first-person grounds, it is hard to see how my grounds could offer me knowledge that *someone* sees a canary, but I have made a mistake in figuring out *who* sees a canary.

We've already seen an example of a belief that suffers from *wh*-misidentification: my belief that *that animal* is a skunk in my garden, in Example 10.<sup>32</sup>

*Wh*-misidentification can occur without *de re* misidentification. (In Example 10, my belief that *that animal* is a skunk in my garden suffers from *wh*-misidentification, but not from *de re* misidentification. I don't go wrong in *reidentifying* some animal I already know to be a skunk. I go wrong in figuring out *which* animal is a skunk, in the first place.) And *de re* misidentification can occur without *wh*-misidentification. (In Example 3, I do correctly come to know, of the blue-coated man, that he is carrying a gun. I only go wrong in thinking that man to be Sam.) But if your belief of *a* that it is F is *immune* to *wh*-misidentification when justified by certain grounds, that means that the justification those grounds give you for believing that *something* is F suffices by itself to justify you in believing that *it's a* which is F. Here your justification for believing of *a* that it is F does not depend on there being some particular object *y* you antecedently know (or have justification for believing) to be F, and on your believing (or having justification for believing) *a* and *y* to be the same object. So there is no possibility here of *de re* misidentification.

In other words, if a belief is immune to *wh*-misidentification when justified by certain grounds, that entails that it is also immune to *de re* misidentification when justified by those grounds. (Contraposing, any beliefs which are vulnerable to *de re* misidentification when justified by certain grounds are ipso facto also vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification when justified by those grounds. So, for example, in Example 3, where my belief of Sam that he is carrying a gun exemplifies *de re* misidentification, this belief must therefore also be vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification, when believed on the grounds described in the example.) This will be important in what follows.

The converse does not hold. In Example 10, my belief that *that animal* is a skunk does not rest on any identity assumption. There is no particular

animal I antecedently know to be a skunk, which I could reidentify as the small animal I see. So this belief is immune to *de re* misidentification, when based on the grounds described in Example 10. But in Example 10, my belief *does* exemplify *wh*-misidentification. This shows that immunity to *de re* misidentification, when based on certain grounds, does not entail immunity to *wh*-misidentification, when based on those grounds. This will also be important in what follows.

Summarizing, then: immunity to *wh*-misidentification entails, but is not entailed by, immunity to *de re* misidentification. In that sense, immunity to *wh*-misidentification is a more basic and more rare epistemic status. To my mind, the phenomenon of *wh*-misidentification is also epistemologically more central—and more interesting—than the phenomenon of *de re* misidentification. Our study of the debate between Shoemaker and Evans, in section V, will testify to this.

#### IV. SHOEMAKER

We have now distinguished two main sorts of error through misidentification. Let's pause and take stock. Are either of these the sort of misidentification Shoemaker is interested in when he talks about "immunity to error through misidentification"? And if so, which? There's no easy answer to that question. Let's look at the details.

Shoemaker's official definition of "error through misidentification" goes as follows:

To say that a statement "*a* is F" is subject to error through misidentification relative to the term "*a*" means that the following is possible: the speaker knows *some particular thing* to be F, but makes the mistake of asserting "*a* is F" because, and only because, he mistakenly thinks that the thing he knows to be F is what "*a*" refers to.<sup>33</sup>

Here it seems that Shoemaker is envisaging an error of the sort we discussed in Examples 1 through 6: that is, an error of *de re* misidentification. There is *some particular thing* *y* one knows to be F, and one mistakenly says (or believes) that *a* is F only because one has misidentified *y* as *a*. Similarly, some other things Shoemaker says also suggest that you only make an "error through misidentification" of the sort he has in mind when you are correct in believing, not merely the existential generalization  $\exists x Fx$ , but in addition, some singular belief, about a particular thing, that *it* is F.<sup>34</sup> So it looks as if *de re* misidentifications count as "errors through misidentification" in Shoemaker's sense, but *wh*-misidentifications do not.

However, elsewhere Shoemaker does not speak of knowing *some par-*



*ticular thing* to be F, and mistakenly thinking that it's *a* which is F. He merely speaks of knowing *that* something is F, and mistakenly thinking that it's *a* which is F.<sup>35</sup> This second characterization fits both *de re* misidentifications and *wh*-misidentifications. And in one place Shoemaker writes:

In introspective self-knowledge there is no room for an identification of oneself. . . . There are indeed cases of genuine perceptual knowledge in which awareness of oneself provides identification information, as when noting the features of the man I see in the mirror or on the television monitor tells me that he is myself. But there is no such role for awareness of oneself as an object to play in explaining my introspective knowledge that I am hungry, angry, or alarmed. This comes out in the fact that there is no possibility here of a *misidentification*; if I have my usual access to my hunger, there is no room for the thought "Someone is hungry all right, but is it me?"<sup>36</sup>

I take Shoemaker's claim that "there is no room" for the thought "Someone is hungry all right, but is it me?" to mean that *it could never be reasonable for me to entertain the doubt* that, although I do know by this means that someone is hungry, it's not me who is hungry. Any ground I had for doubting that *I* am hungry would ipso facto be a ground for doubting that *someone* is hungry. (Or at least, a ground for doubting that I know by this means that someone is hungry. I may know of other hungry people in the world.) This sounds like immunity to *wh*-misidentification.

Wittgenstein says that to ask "Are you sure it's *you* who have pains?" would be nonsensical. I think that this claim can be interpreted in the same way I have interpreted Shoemaker's claim that "there is no room" for the thought "Someone is hungry all right, but is it me?" So interpreted, Wittgenstein's point would be that it could never be reasonable for me to entertain the doubt that, although I do know (in that way) that someone has pains, it's not me who has pains. So Wittgenstein appears to have something like *wh*-misidentification in mind, in his discussion of the use of "I" as subject.

In addition, as we've already seen, the central paradigms of Wittgenstein's use of "I" as subject—the claims "I have a toothache" and "I think it will rain," when these are based on introspection—all seem to be characterized by immunity to *wh*-misidentification. (They are also, as a consequence, characterized by immunity to *de re* misidentification, too. But, as we've noted, immunity to *wh*-misidentification is the more basic and more interesting epistemic status.)

I am not sure which of the two sorts of immunity Shoemaker had in mind when he introduced the notion of "immunity to error through misidentification." But to the extent that Shoemaker's notion is supposed to capture and explain Wittgenstein's use of "I" as subject, these considerations favor

interpreting “immunity to error through misidentification” primarily in terms of immunity to *wh*-misidentification.

In the next section, we will examine a debate between Shoemaker and Evans about whether first-person memory-based beliefs are “immune to error through misidentification.” Shoemaker claims they are not so immune. I am not sure whether he had *wh*-misidentification or *de re* misidentification in mind when he claimed this. But I think Shoemaker’s claim is correct, if we interpret “immune to error through misidentification” as “immune to *wh*-misidentification.” So I will defend his claim, so interpreted.<sup>37</sup>

## V. KNOWLEDGE BY QUASI-MEMORY OF ANOTHER PERSON’S PAST

Shoemaker thinks that a central class of first-person claims and beliefs are immune to error through misidentification, and that a central class of demonstrative claims and beliefs are immune to error through misidentification, too. However, he thinks there are important differences between these two classes of beliefs. Most notably—and to a first approximation—he thinks that the immunity to error through misidentification of first-person judgments is preserved in memory, whereas that of demonstrative judgments is not preserved in memory.<sup>38</sup> That is, if I was originally justified in thinking “I am F” in a way which was immune to error through misidentification, then my current memory-based belief that I was F will also be immune to error through misidentification; whereas if I was originally justified in some perceptual demonstrative belief of the form “That is F” in a way which was immune to error through misidentification, any current perceptual demonstrative belief of the form “That thing was F” which my memory justifies me in believing will be vulnerable to error through misidentification.<sup>39</sup> What I’m currently demonstrating may not be the thing from which my memory derives.

This is all just a first approximation to Shoemaker’s view. His final view is a bit more complicated. It’s these complications which I now want to examine.

In certain cases, Shoemaker believes that the immunity to error through misidentification of first-person beliefs is *not* retained in memory. These are science-fiction cases of a sort familiar from discussions of personal identity. Say that a subject *quasi-remembers* an event *e* iff *e* took place, the subject has an apparent memory of *e*, and this apparent memory causally derives (in much the same way that one’s memories ordinarily derive from one’s own past perceptions and experiences) from *someone’s* perception or experience of *e*. We’ll assume that it’s possible for these causal relations to hold

between the mental lives of different people, so that one person can quasi-remember events originally perceived or experienced by someone else.<sup>40</sup>

Consider the following example:

*Example 11.* We kidnap Mr. Tweedle in his sleep, separate the two hemispheres of his brain, and place each of the hemispheres in a new body. This produces two new persons, Dee and Dum, each of whom is psychologically continuous with Tweedle, but neither of whom is identical to Tweedle. Dee and Dum are kept ignorant of what has happened. Because they've inherited much of Tweedle's brain, they quasi-remember various events in Tweedle's life. In his youth, Tweedle once pulled his cat's tail. Dee now has quasi-memories of pulling the cat's tail. Because Dee is unaware that his apparent memories derive from the past life of someone else, he thinks to himself, "I once pulled the cat's tail."

To simplify discussion, let me stipulate that when I speak of quasi-remembering events from someone's life, I mean having memory experiences "from the inside" of those events, where those memory experiences constitute quasi-memories. For example, if Dee is to quasi-remember Tweedle's first kiss, he has to have an memory experience "from the inside" as of engaging in that kiss. (He does not have to know that it is Tweedle's life that he is quasi-remembering.) If Dee merely has a memory as of *seeing* Tweedle kiss somebody, from a distance, that will not count as "quasi-remembering an event from Tweedle's life" in our discussion. Now, what shall we say about the example?

Dee's quasi-memories can't offer him knowledge that *he* pulled the cat's tail, since *he* did not pull the cat's tail. However, Shoemaker would say that Dee's quasi-memories *do* offer him knowledge that *someone* pulled the cat's tail.<sup>41</sup> Hence, Dee's belief that he pulled the cat's tail is a case of *wh*-misidentification. He's in a position to know that someone pulled the cat's tail, but wrong in thinking that he's the person who performed that action. Since Dee's grounds for believing that he pulled the cat's tail are the same sort of grounds we rely on in forming beliefs about our own past lives, all of our memory-based first-person beliefs are vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification, too.

In Shoemaker's view, then, the possibility of quasi-memory shows that the first-person beliefs about the past that we base on our apparent memories are *not* really immune to error through misidentification. These beliefs do, however, have a very *restricted scope* for error through misidentification. Such errors occur only when one quasi-remembers events from someone else's past life. In the actual world, this never happens. Hence, we can say that *given* that all of our quasi-memories ("from the inside") are in fact memories of events from our own past lives, our memory-based beliefs enjoy a *de facto* immunity to *wh*-misidentification.<sup>42</sup>

Evans denies all of this. He would deny that Dee's quasi-memories offer Dee knowledge that *someone* pulled the cat's tail. On Evans's view, Dee merely has a *memory illusion* of pulling the cat's tail. It's true that someone, namely Tweedle, *did* pull the cat's tail, but Dee is in no position to know this.<sup>43</sup> If Dee *knew* that his apparent memories reliably derived from events in someone else's life, then perhaps he could take those apparent memories, *together with that additional knowledge*, to support the hypothesis that someone pulled the cat's tail, even if he himself did not.<sup>44</sup> But Evans claims that Dee's apparent memories could not by themselves offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat's tail.

Hence, on Evans's view, Example 11 would *not* be a case of *wh*-misidentification. There is no way to undercut Dee's grounds for believing that he pulled the cat's tail, while still leaving Dee with grounds that justify him in believing, or offer him knowledge, that someone pulled the cat's tail. So memory-based first-person beliefs are immune to *wh*-misidentification, after all.<sup>45</sup>

I side with Shoemaker in this debate. It seems plausible to me that Dee's quasi-memories *do* offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat's tail, and hence I think that Dee *is* a victim of *wh*-misidentification. So I agree with Shoemaker that memory can not give us genuine immunity to misidentification (*wh*-misidentification). It can at best give us only a *de facto* immunity to this sort of misidentification.

I don't have much positive argument to present in support of the claim that Dee's quasi-memories offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat's tail. That claim just seems intuitively plausible to me. (If one were a reliabilist about justification, one might try to expand the story in such a way that subjects in Dee's world regularly and reliably quasi-remembered events from other people's past lives. This might make it more plausible that Dee's quasi-memories offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat's tail. However, I am not a reliabilist about justification, and I don't want to appeal to considerations of that sort.) What I will do is argue that *we lack good reasons to deny* Shoemaker's claim that Dee's quasi-memories offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat's tail. This should help make the claim more plausible.

We will look at four reasons Evans presents for denying that Dee's quasi-memories offer him this knowledge. I will argue that none of Evans's arguments withstands scrutiny. Throughout, I will assume that *our* quasi-memories do offer *us* knowledge of events from our own past lives. That is, I will assume that Evans is not a skeptic about memory in general; he just thinks that there is a special problem with cases like Dee's.

Evans's first argument goes as follows. Many of our memory beliefs are justified, but these beliefs do not involve and are not based on any

“identification component.” That is, we do not in general base these memory beliefs on any assumption of the form “I am *that man* (the man whose past experiences I am remembering).” Hence, memory gives us a kind of justification which is “identification-free,” in Evans’s terminology.<sup>46</sup> Now, it is clear that Evans assumes that if our memory beliefs were vulnerable to any sort of error through misidentification, then they would have to involve or be based on some such “identification component.” Since they are “identification-free,” and are not based on any such “identification component,” Evans concludes: “If a subject has, in virtue of the operations of his memory, knowledge of the past states of a subject, that subject is himself.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, Dee’s quasi-memories can not offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat’s tail, unless *he* pulled the cat’s tail (which he didn’t). So Dee’s quasi-memories do not offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat’s tail; and hence Dee is not a victim of *wh*-misidentification.

Evans’s notion of an “identification-free” belief here is the notion of a belief which can be justified even though the subject did not *base* the belief on any identity assumption. The subject believes of *a* that it is F, and is justified in so believing, even though *he went through no process* of identifying, or reidentifying, *a* as the thing he already knew or believed to be F.<sup>48</sup> In his argument, Evans is assuming that if our memory-based beliefs are “identification-free” in that way, then those beliefs are immune to misidentification. He does not give us any argument for this assumption. Should we accept it?

We should not. When we were discussing *de re* misidentification, I said that:

- (i) I have justification for believing of *a* that it is F, which *rests on* my justification for believing, of some *y*, that it is F and that it is identical to *x*.

does not entail:

- (ii) I actually believe of *a* that it is F, and this belief *is based on* my belief, of some *y*, that it is F and that it is identical to *x*.

Hence, the fact that a belief is “identification-free,” in Evans’s sense, because (ii) is false, is compatible with (i)’s still being true, and the belief’s therefore being vulnerable to *de re* misidentification.

A given belief that *a* is F *might be* identification-free because it’s justified in a way that renders it immune to misidentification. But it might be identification-free for other reasons, as well. It might be identification-free because, although the belief is *vulnerable* to misidentification, the circumstances in which such misidentification would arise are so pathological and rare that it’s not a requirement, for you to be justified in believing that *a* is F, that you rule those possibilities out. Hence, you can have identification-free

justification for a belief, even in cases where the belief still *rests on* certain identity assumptions, and so is still *vulnerable to* misidentification.

Consider the following example:

*Example 12.* A store sells “calibration-free” scales, which you can purchase and begin to use, without first having to calibrate them. They come pre-calibrated from the factory. So proper use of these scales does not require one first to calibrate them. But of course, that doesn’t show that these scales cannot possibly deliver miscalibrated results. If they were subjected to temperatures over 750° F before being sold, that might for instance throw their calibration off.

Proper use of these scales does not require one first to calibrate them; but that does not show that the scales are “immune to errors through miscalibration.” Similarly with immunity to misidentification. It’s not generally a requirement, for you to be justified in believing something, that you first consider and rule out every possible source of error. In particular, your belief that *a* is F might be vulnerable to certain sorts of misidentification error, even though having justification for the belief does not require you to consider those errors and rule them out—and so, you don’t have to engage in any process of identification or reidentification in order to have that justification. On the one hand, we have the question: Does justifiably holding such-and-such a belief (or properly using such-and-such a scale) require one first to rule out certain sorts of errors? On the other hand, we have the question: Is this belief (or this scale) vulnerable to those sorts of errors? If the errors are sufficiently pathological, or so rare that you’re ordinarily justified in not taking them into account, then the answer to the first question might be “No” even though the answer to the second question is “Yes.” Hence, the mere fact that your justification for a belief is identification-free does not guarantee that the belief is immune to errors of misidentification.

There are important *connections* between Evans’s notion of “identification-free” beliefs and the two sorts of immunity that we discussed in sections II and III. If one’s belief is *not* identification-free, then the belief is based on (and so presumably one’s justification for the belief *rests on*) an “identity assumption,” and the belief is vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. In *Varieties of Reference*, 190–91, Evans in effect argues that any belief which is immune to *wh*-misidentification will be identification-free. These two points show that immunity to error through misidentification, in either of the senses we examined, entails that one’s belief is identification-free. However, what is important for our present purposes is the fact that the converse does not hold. The fact that one’s belief is identification-free does not show that the belief is immune to errors of misidentification.

Turning to the case at hand, it is plausible that, given the way things

actually are, errors of misidentification of the sort Dee makes are so *unusual* that it's not a precondition, for him to be justified in trusting his apparent memories, that he first rule that sort of error out. This is why his belief that he pulled the cat's tail is identification-free. Nonetheless, we seem to have described a kind of misidentification error that his belief is vulnerable to. So his belief is identification-free, but nonetheless vulnerable to misidentification.

In light of the taxonomy I've developed in this paper, I think we should understand Evans's first argument as relying on the premise that identification-free beliefs are immune to *de re* misidentification. From that premise, and the fact that Dee's belief is identification-free, Evans concludes that Dee is not a victim of *de re* misidentification. However, as I've just shown, the fact that beliefs are identification-free does *not* show that they are immune to *de re* misidentification. And, in any case, the kind of immunity we're concerned with in the present discussion is immunity to *wh*-misidentification. As we saw at the end of section III, immunity to *de re* misidentification does not entail immunity to *wh*-misidentification. So even if Dee's belief is immune to *de re* misidentification, that does not refute the claim that Dee is a victim of *wh*-misidentification.

Evans's second argument can be reconstructed as follows: Memory-based beliefs cannot possibly suffer from error through misidentification, because in cases where one quasi-remembers events from someone else's past life, one need not be in a position to hold *de re* thoughts about the person from whom one's quasi-memories derive.<sup>49</sup> So those quasi-memories need not put one in a position even to *entertain*, much less to believe, false identity assumptions of the sort that are involved in error through misidentification.

For the sake of argument, I am prepared to grant that Dee's quasi-memories do not put him in a position to hold *de re* beliefs about Tweedle. Hence, I also grant that Dee's belief that he pulled the cat's tail does not suffer from *de re* misidentification. But even if that is correct, it does not show that Dee is not a victim of *wh*-misidentification. As we've already seen, immunity to *de re* misidentification does not entail immunity to *wh*-misidentification. Evans has not yet shown that it is impossible for Dee to know that someone pulled the cat's tail. We have only granted that Dee's quasi-memories do not enable Dee to know *of Tweedle* that *he* pulled the cat's tail. That is, Dee can't know *whose* past life he is quasi-remembering. That may be. I'm only arguing, on Shoemaker's behalf, that Dee's quasi-memories offer him knowledge of the existential generalization  $\exists x$  ( $x$  pulled the cat's tail). That is all that is needed to show that Dee is a victim of *wh*-misidentification.

Evans's third argument is set out in the following passage:

Suppose we surgically “transfer the memories” from the brain of subject S’ to the brain of subject S, and suppose S does not know that this has happened. S will, of course, make judgments about his past in the normal way. But suppose that he discovers that he was not F, and he was not G . . . —that in general his memory cannot be relied upon as an accurate record of his past. Suppose that, fantastically, he then retreats to making *general* past-tense judgments: “Someone was F, and was G . . .” *These judgments could not possibly constitute knowledge.* Even to be intelligible in putting them forward, S would have to offer what had actually happened, or something very like it, as a hypothesis; but he could not possibly be said to know that it was true. It would be a sheer guess. Consequently he could not be said to know anything based on it.<sup>50</sup>

Evans makes two claims here. The first is that it would be unreasonable for S to continue believing that someone was F, in the face of the evidence he has acquired (and hence if S did continue believing that someone was F, his belief would not constitute knowledge). The second is that S could *reasonably* continue to believe that someone was F *only if* he had good reason to believe that someone else’s memories had been implanted in his brain. But in Evans’s story, S does not have any reason to believe this.

I will make two points in reply to this argument.

If S is like the rest of us, then I agree with Evans that it would not be *all things considered* reasonable for S to continue believing that someone was F, in the face of the evidence that Evans describes. But, as I’ll now explain, this is compatible with the claim that S’s quasi-memories do offer him knowledge that someone was F.

If S is like the rest of us, he has *general background knowledge about the sorts of memories he usually has*. This background knowledge tells him that if he has an apparent memory as of being F, but *he* was not F, then the most likely explanation is that he’s having a memory illusion, rather than quasi-remembering events from someone else’s life. This is why it is all things considered unreasonable for S to continue believing that someone was F.

Let B be this general background knowledge. Let M be S’s quasi-memories as of being F. Let D be the defeating evidence Evans describes, which convinces S that *he* was not F. What we’ve seen so far is that the combination M + D makes it unreasonable for S to believe that *he* was F; and the combination B + M + D makes it unreasonable for S to continue believing that *someone* was F. But the important question is: *If we bracket B*, would the combination M + D *by itself* continue to justify S in believing that someone (other than himself) was F? If it would, then the only reason why it is all things considered *unreasonable* for S to believe that someone was F is that S also possesses background knowledge B. And recall our definition



of what it is for some grounds to offer one knowledge. Roughly speaking, grounds G offer one knowledge that *p* whenever, if one were to believe that *p* on the basis of G, *and were to possess no defeating evidence*, then one's belief would constitute knowledge that *p*. *So it is possible for M + D to offer S knowledge that someone was F, even if S also happens to possess defeating evidence* (namely, B) *which makes it all things considered unreasonable for him to believe that someone was F.*

This, then, is my first objection to Evans's argument. Even if we accept Evans's claim that it is all things considered unreasonable for S to continue believing that someone was F, it may still be true that S's quasi-memories offer him knowledge that someone was F. By the same token, it may still be true that Dee's quasi-memories offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat's tail. So Evans has not shown that Dee is not a victim of *wh*-misidentification.

I myself have the intuition that if we bracket B, S's grounds M + D *do* justify S in believing that someone was F—and I think this is an important fact about the justification we get from memory. But I recognize that not everyone will share this intuition; and I do not have the space to defend it here. So my second objection to Evans's argument will not rely on it.

My second objection is this. Suppose Evans is right, and S's grounds M + D *do not* justify him in believing that someone is F. That would make it harder to show that S's belief that he was F *exemplifies wh*-misidentification. But would it show that S's belief is *immune* to *wh*-misidentification? It would not. To show that S's belief that he was F is immune to *wh*-misidentification, Evans would have to show that there is *no way* of undercutting S's grounds for that belief while still leaving S with grounds for believing that someone was F. Evans's argument, at best, only shows that *certain* sorts of defeating evidence—the evidence Evans describes in his example—undercut *both* S's grounds for believing that he was F, *and* his grounds for believing that someone was F. There may very well be *other* sorts of defeating evidence that undercut only the first grounds, while leaving the second grounds intact. If there is, or could be, defeating evidence of that sort, then S's belief that he was F does count as vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification.

In fact, defeating evidence of that sort is near to hand. Suppose we do not merely tell S that “in general his memory cannot be relied upon as an accurate record of his past.” Suppose we tell S more of the details about what has actually happened. We tell him that some of his memories are quasi-memories of events in someone else's past life, and that none of his memories as of being F derive from actual events in his own life. We leave it open whether his memories as of being F are among the quasi-memories of someone else's past. Call this information D\*. D\* undercuts the justification that S's quasi-memories give him for believing that *he* was F. It tells him that his

quasi-memories are no reliable guide to *his own* past. But it's not obvious that D\* would *wholly* undercut the justification that S's quasi-memories give him. It's plausible that when D\* is added to S's quasi-memories M, this would *still leave* S justified in believing that *someone* was F—someone other than himself, whose past life S is quasi-remembering. (I find this assessment of the case to be widely shared. In any event, Evans has not given us any convincing argument *against* this assessment of the case.) Note that D\* does not *tell* S that he was not F; nor does it tell him that someone else was F. It just leaves it a live epistemic possibility for him that someone else was F and that his quasi-memories are informing him that this is so. So D\* is not an additive defeater. It *undercuts* S's justification for believing that he was F. Yet it seems plausible that, if S did acquire D\*, that would *not* yet be enough to undercut the justification that his quasi-memories M give him for believing that someone was F.<sup>51</sup>

Hence, certain sorts of defeating evidence can undercut S's grounds for believing that he was F, while still leaving him with grounds for believing that someone was F. At best, Evans's story only shows that certain other sorts of defeating evidence do not do this. So it seems that S's belief that he was F *is* vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification, after all. The same sort of reasoning shows that Dee's belief that he pulled the cat's tail should be counted as vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification, too.

Evans's fourth argument rests on the premise that memory is not *silent* about whose past life it is reporting. Memory presents events as having occurred in *one's own past life*. For instance, to remember, or seem to remember, being in the West Indies is to remember, or seem to remember, *oneself* being in the West Indies.<sup>52</sup>

It is controversial whether memory does represent remembered events as having taken place in one's own life.<sup>53</sup> However, let's go along with Evans and agree that it does. We can even agree that this shows that, *as a whole*, the justification I get from my apparent memories always justifies me in believing that *I myself* performed certain actions, witnessed certain events, and so on. What is needed to show that Dee is not a victim of *wh*-misidentification is the stronger thesis that *no part* of the justification one gets from one's apparent memories leaves it an open question who performed those actions or witnessed those events. Evans's premise does not establish this stronger thesis. For it may be that memory gives one a "package deal" of justification: it tells me that *someone* performed a certain action, and it also tells me that *I* am the person who performed that action. So long as these two pieces of justification always arrive as a package, Evans will be right to say that memory is not *silent* about whose past life it is reporting. But so long as these two pieces of justification are also, in principle, separable—so long as one can *undercut* the one piece of justification

without undercutting the other—then it is possible for one’s apparent memories to offer one knowledge that someone performed a certain action, even when one did not perform that action oneself.

Consider the following analogy. Suppose I have a visual experience that represents that a little girl is standing ten feet in front of me. Call this proposition L. Proposition L entails that there is a little girl somewhere or other in my spatial vicinity. Call this latter proposition L\*. My visual experience represents L as being the case; it does not merely represent L\* as being the case. The experience justifies me in believing *both* L and L\*. But it seems plausible that the justification the experience gives me for believing L can be undercut while still leaving me justified in believing L\*. For instance, someone might tell me that I’m in a hall of mirrors, and that there is a full-length mirror two feet in front of me. If I were to acquire that evidence, I would no longer be justified in believing that there is a little girl standing *ten feet in front of me*, but my visual experience *would* still justify me in believing that there is a little girl somewhere or other in my spatial vicinity.

Similarly for the justification we get from memory. Dee’s memory experiences do represent *him* as having pulled the cat’s tail. But it’s compatible with this that those experiences can be undercut in a way that still leaves Dee justified in believing that *someone* pulled the cat’s tail. Hence, it is possible for Dee’s quasi-memories to offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat’s tail, even though Dee himself did not. So Evans has not refuted the claim that Dee is a victim of *wh*-misidentification.

In conclusion, none of Evans’s criticisms seem to me to refute the claim that Dee’s quasi-memories offer him knowledge that someone pulled the cat’s tail. I myself find that claim plausible. Hence, I agree with Shoemaker that Dee is a victim of error through misidentification (*wh*-misidentification). So first-person memory-based beliefs are not *immune* to *wh*-misidentification. At best, they have only a de facto immunity, given that cases like Dee’s do not in fact occur.<sup>54</sup>

## NOTES

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, ed. Rush Rhees (Harper and Row, New York, 1958), 66–67.
2. Sydney Shoemaker, “Self-Reference and Self-Awareness,” *Journal of Philosophy* 65 (1968), reprinted in *Identity, Cause, and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 6–18. This passage is from 8.
3. *Ibid.*, 9.
4. In addition to “Self-Reference and Self-Awareness,” see also “Persons and Their Pasts,”

*American Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (1970), reprinted in *Identity, Cause, and Mind*, 19–48; “Introspection and the Self,” in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 10, ed. P. A. French, T. E. Uehling and Howard Wettstein (1986), reprinted in *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3–24; and Lecture I of “Self-Knowledge and ‘Inner Sense,’” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54 (1994), also reprinted in *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays*, 201–23.

5. See Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, ed. John McDowell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), §§ 6.6, 7.2, 7.3, and 7.5. Other writers who discuss immunity to error through misidentification and related phenomena include G. E. M. Anscombe, “The First Person,” in *Mind and Language*, ed. Samuel Guttenplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Christopher Peacocke, *Sense and Content* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), chaps. 5–6; Colin McGinn, *The Subjective View* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), chap. 4; William Taschek, “Referring to Oneself,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 15 (1985); Harold Noonan, *Personal Identity* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989), chap. 8; François Recanati, *Direct Reference: From Language to Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Lucy O’Brien, “The Problem of Self-Identification,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 95 (1994–95); Brian Garrett, “Wittgenstein and the First Person,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1995); Quassim Cassam, *Self and World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), chap. 2; and Jason Stanley, “Persons and Their Properties,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 48 (1998): 159–75. See also section 11 of Crispin Wright’s first Whitehead Lecture, in his *Mind, Rules, and Privacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).
6. Because of this, a singular proposition, about the so-and-so, that *it* is F, is a different proposition from the (non-singular) proposition that the so-and-so is F. Singular propositions are normally expressed using singular terms that are *de jure* rigid, in the sense articulated by Saul Kripke in *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).

For the purposes of this paper, we do not need to inquire into what the truth-value of a singular proposition about *x* is in worlds where *x* does not exist. However, intuitively, the truth-value of that proposition in those worlds should not depend on the doings of any *other objects* in those worlds, besides *x*.

7. Philosophers who accept the notion of *de re* beliefs but who work with a different notion of proposition (e.g., those who understand propositions as sets of possible worlds) are invited to translate my talk about singular propositions, and belief in singular propositions, into their favorite idiom.
8. For some discussion of this distinction, see Arthur C. Danto, “Basic Actions,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1965); Myles Brand, “Danto on Basic Actions,” *Nous* 2 (1968); Alvin Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970); Annette C. Baier, “The Search for Basic Actions,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971); Julia Annas, “How Basic Are Basic Actions?” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 78 (1977–78); and Carl Ginet, *On Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), chap. 1.
9. Note that I do not require one’s claim or belief of *x* that it is F to be *false* for it to exemplify *de re* misidentification. As I’ve defined *de re* misidentification, it includes *all* of the cases where the claim or belief of *x* that it is F rests on a false identity assumption—regardless of whether that claim or belief happens (by accident) to be true. (This is merely a terminological decision, and so far as I can tell, nothing important hangs on it. It does affect the way we classify beliefs of the form *I exist*. See n. 19 below.)
10. Compare Kripke’s “Smith/Jones” example, in § 3b of “Speaker’s Reference and Semantic Reference,” in *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, ed. P. A. French, T. E. Uehling, and Howard Wettstein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979).
11. And even if my suspicions were warranted, it would still seem plausible to say that I have prima facie justification for believing that I’m out of gas. It’s just that I’d *also* have

reason to believe that I'm hallucinating, and this would *defeat* my *prima facie* justification for believing that I'm out of gas.

12. See Pryor, "The Skeptic and the Dogmatist" (in preparation), where I discuss this kind of epistemic dependence further. In the terminology of that paper, having justification for believing that I'm out of gas requires me to have *antecedent justification* for believing that the gas gauge reads "E." I have to have justification for believing the second thing, and my reasons for believing it can't presuppose or beg the question whether the first thing is true.
13. One could define a different notion of misidentification, which was more concerned with what information you have actually *based* your belief that *a* is F on. (Such a notion would focus on the question: Have you *based* your belief that *a* is F on a belief of some *y* that it is F, and that it is identical to *a*?) In his discussion, Evans primarily works with a notion of that sort. We will discuss Evans's notion, and the differences between it and *de re* misidentification, in section V.
14. This example is from David Kaplan, "Dthat," in *Syntax and Semantics* 9, ed. Peter Cole, (1978), reprinted in *Demonstratives*, ed. Palle Yourgrau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11–33, at 30. See also Shoemaker's "This tie is red" example in "Self-Reference and Self-Awareness," 9.
15. It is a controversial matter what the necessary conditions for *de re* belief are. In denying that I have any *de re* beliefs about the picture of Agnew, I am not relying on any specific story about this. For instance, I am not assuming that I can have *de re* beliefs only about objects I am currently perceiving, or objects that I am able to "track" or locate in space. *Independently* of any specific story about what's required for *de re* belief, I think it is plausible that, in the case I described, I have no beliefs about the existence of *that* picture. My beliefs are all about a *different* picture.

Contrast a case in which, instead of pointing behind my back, where I assume my picture of Carnap to be, I instead point ahead through some fog at a dimly seen picture of Agnew, which I mistake for my picture of Carnap. In such a case I *do* seem to have beliefs about the picture of Agnew. I believe it to be my picture of Carnap. Example 8 seems importantly different.

16. In other examples of badly aimed reference, I may have *de re* beliefs about the thing I succeed in referring to. For instance, consider a variant of Example 8 in which the picture of Spiro Agnew was stolen from my bedroom and placed in my office, where the picture of Carnap used to be. The important point is that the explanation of *why* I express a singular proposition about the picture of Agnew has to do with my *referring by accident* to something other than my basic referential attempt aimed to refer to. (This is what makes the example a case of badly aimed reference.) The explanation doesn't have to do with any *de re* beliefs or justification I have for beliefs about the picture of Agnew.
17. To make this explicit, we could revise the first clause of the definition of *de re* misidentification, to read: (i\*) There is some singular proposition about *x*, to the effect that it is F, that a subject believes, or that it is the aim of *his basic referential attempt* to express.

Here's a rather baroque case, which may help clarify these points. Suppose several men are standing on the other side of a fence from me. Only the tops of their heads and their eyes are visible. Their mouths are not visible. I'm holding a conversation with one of these men. This puts me in a position to hold *de re* beliefs about him (just as you'd be able to hold *de re* beliefs about someone you've only spoken with over the phone). Call this man "Talky." I have auditory justification for believing, of Talky, that he is talking to me. As it happens, one of the men I see on the other side of the fence is bald, and I *falsely* believe that he is the man who is talking to me. Call this man "Baldy." A friend is standing next to me. She can see all of these men, but she doesn't know who is talking to me. I try to tell my friend that Talky is talking to me *by* pointing to Baldy and telling her that *he* is talking to me. To do this, I turn to my friend, and I point over my shoulder (thinking that I am pointing to Baldy) and I say, "*That man* is talking to me."

What is my basic referential attempt here? It is to refer to Baldy and to express a

singular proposition about Baldy. I'm trying to refer to Talky *by* referring to Baldy. I falsely believe that they are one and the same. Since my justification for believing that Baldy is talking to me rests on my mistaken assumption that Talky and Baldy are identical, this counts as a case of *de re* misidentification. It counts as a case of *de re* misidentification *even if* I happen to have been careless in my pointing, and to have pointed not to Baldy, but to someone else instead. In fact, it counts as a case of *de re* misidentification even if I have accidentally pointed to the person who is in fact Talky, the person talking to me. Even if I have (accidentally) succeeded in expressing a singular proposition about Talky, my basic referential attempt was to express a singular proposition about Baldy. It's what justification I have for the latter proposition that determines whether this counts as a case of *de re* misidentification.

For what it's worth, I would *also* count this example as a case of badly aimed reference, since the singular proposition I succeeded in expressing was not the one I was basically attempting to express. So in baroque cases like this one, we can have both badly aimed reference and *de re* misidentification.

18. Cf. Shoemaker's distinction between "circumstantial" and "absolute" immunity to error through misidentification, in "Self-Reference and Self-Awareness," 8.
19. I have doubts about whether these beliefs are *absolutely* immune to *de re* misidentification. In Example 4, I falsely believed myself to be Napoleon, and so I carried out my intention to express a singular proposition about Napoleon by using the word "I." What if I had also based my belief that *I exist* on the prior belief, of Napoleon, that he exists, and on my mistaken assumption that I and Napoleon are the same person? To be sure, something would have to be seriously wrong with me for me to base my belief that I exist on those sorts of grounds, rather than on cogito-type reasoning. But I think such a case would nonetheless be possible. In such a case, my belief that I exist, though true, would exemplify *de re* misidentification. So if such cases are possible, the belief that I exist is not absolutely immune to *de re* misidentification. See also n. 20.
20. I said that these beliefs are immune to *de re* misidentification when based on introspective grounds. To claim that those beliefs are *absolutely* immune to *de re* misidentification would require two further assumptions. These assumptions are:
  - (1) The singular proposition that *I am F* is distinct from the singular proposition that *Jim Pryor is F*, and from the singular proposition that *He* [pointing to Jim Pryor] is F.
  - (2) It is only possible for me to be justified in believing the singular proposition that I have a toothache (and similar propositions) on introspective grounds.

Both of these assumptions are controversial. Assumption (1) in particular is very controversial. If we deny assumption (1), then propositions like *I have a toothache* will sometimes be vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. For the proposition that *Jim Pryor* has a toothache is vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. Consider the following case: I develop amnesia and forget my name. As a result, when I hear various things about Jim Pryor, I think he is somebody other than myself. I form the mistaken belief that one of my neighbors, whom I antecedently know to have a toothache, is Jim Pryor. Hence, on the basis of my knowledge of the neighbor that he has a toothache, I form a belief of Jim Pryor that he has a toothache. This would be a case of *de re* misidentification. If the singular proposition that I have a toothache is *the very same proposition* as the singular proposition that Jim Pryor has a toothache, then it too exhibits *de re* misidentification in this case.

Assumption (2) is plausible only if (1) is. Moreover, someone might reject (2) even if he accepts (1). On some views, one can acquire justification for believing oneself to have a toothache, by means other than introspection. (Perhaps a cerebroscope tells you that you are in pain.) See also n. 19.

21. See Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 219–20; and McGinn, *The Subjective View*, 50–51. See

also n. 20 above. If we *were* going to say that these beliefs are absolutely immune to misidentification, as Shoemaker does, then again we'd need to accept assumption (1), for the reasons discussed there.

22. This marks another difference between *de re* misidentification and badly aimed reference. Competently using "I" requires using it with the basic referential intention to refer to oneself, and if one does so use it, one succeeds in referring to oneself. So the claims "I am bleeding," "I have a broken arm," and so on, will *never* suffer from badly aimed reference. My use of "I" in these claims will always refer to the person my basic referential attempt aimed to refer to. However, these claims *are* vulnerable to *de re* misidentification.

One has to be careful when describing cases of *de re* misidentification involving beliefs like "I have a broken arm." In the case I described, there is a certain person *y*, and I first have justification for believing of *y* that he has a broken arm, and I misidentify *y* as myself. That is a case of *de re* misidentification. A different sort of case would be where I *don't* have justification for any singular beliefs about *y*, but only justification for singular beliefs about *y*'s arm, *a*. In such a case, I could misidentify *a* as being my arm, *a\**, with which I am well acquainted. Because I know of *a\** that it is my arm, I go on to believe that I have a broken arm. In this case, my belief of *a\** that it is broken would exemplify *de re* misidentification. My belief of *myself* that I have a broken arm would *therefore be based on* some *de re* misidentification. But it would not *itself* count as a case of *de re* misidentification, in the strict sense I've defined. For, in this case, my belief that I have a broken arm doesn't rest on any false identity assumptions involving *me*. It only rests on false identity assumptions about my arm, *a\**.

In the face of such cases, we may want to introduce an extended notion of *de re* misidentification, which includes all of the strict cases of *de re* misidentification and *also* any belief whose justification rests on one of those strict cases of *de re* misidentification.

23. I discuss these doubts in n. 54, below.
24. Consider also the example in n. 17, in which I'm talking to several people on the other side of the wall, and I tell my friend that *that man* [pointing to Baldy] is talking to me. Here my demonstration relies on my visual experience of Baldy, but my justification for the belief is primarily auditory. Here too I am a victim of *de re* misidentification, because my justification for my claim rests on my false assumption, about the bald man I see and the man I hear talking to me, that they are identical.

For other cases of demonstrative belief, where the information that justifies one in holding the belief comes wholly from the same information that one relies on in making the demonstration, it is harder to say whether the belief is vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. I think that at least some of these cases exemplify *de re* misidentification; but I do not have the space to argue this here.

John Campbell, in his contribution to this volume, describes some cases of demonstrative belief that do *not* appear to be vulnerable either to *de re* misidentification or to *which-object*-misidentification (which we will examine next). Campbell also points out that, in certain cases, beliefs based on *testimony* may also be immune to errors of misidentification.

25. That's Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23 (1963). But you knew that. Gettier's essay is reprinted, along with many other relevant papers, in *Knowing: Essays in the Analysis of Knowledge*, 2d ed., ed. Michael D. Roth and Leon Galis (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984).
26. Some philosophers dispute this. They would say that if there is only one skunk that I'm smelling, I *can* form a *de re* belief about that skunk, by employing a device like Kaplan's *dthat* (see "Dthat," and also Kaplan's "Demonstratives," in *Themes from Kaplan*, ed. Joseph Almog, John Perry, and Howard Wettstein [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989]). For instance, I can believe that *dthat*(the thing which I'm smelling) is a skunk, or that *dthat*(the thing from which my justification for believing that there is a skunk in my garden derives) is a skunk.

- I do not think that, in Example 10, I need to be in a position to entertain these propositions or hold these beliefs. On my view, if I am not *already* able to hold *de re* beliefs about the thing which I'm smelling, then I am not in a position to entertain the singular proposition expressed by "*that*(the thing which I'm smelling) is a skunk." (Though of course I understand the words. This case is analogous to a case where I hear you say, "You are a jerk," but I don't know who you're talking to.) I do not have the space to defend this view here, but I plan to discuss these issues elsewhere. For some relevant discussion, see Keith Donnellan, "The Contingent *A Priori* and Rigid Designators," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 2, ed. P. A. French, T. E. Uehling, and Howard Wettstein (1977).
27. This talk of "figuring out" is not to be taken literally. I do not suppose that we ordinarily go through any process of trying to figure out which objects instantiate the properties we're getting justification about. A more precise definition of immunity to *wh*-misidentification follows.
  28. Some justification is such that it *could* offer you knowledge that *p* iff it's intrinsically such that, in some nearby possible world *where p is true*, justification of that intrinsic sort does offer you knowledge that *p*. The reason for talking about justification which *could* offer you knowledge that something is *F* is this. We want to be able to say that a belief that *a* is *F* is vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification even if nothing in fact *is* *F*. In such cases, we can't suppose that your justification for the belief that *a* is *F* *actually does* offer you knowledge that something is *F*—it can't offer you that knowledge, since it's *false* that something is *F*. Hence, what we want to say is the following: if your justification is of a sort that *could* offer you knowledge that something is *F*, while leaving it an open question whether *a* is *F*, then your belief that *a* is *F* is vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification.
  29. Two comments here. First, I'm using "part" here in the sense of a proper part. Second, I'm not requiring that, if part of some grounds *G* justifies you in believing *q*, then the grounds *G* must *as a whole* justify you in believing *q*. *Another part* of *G* might justify you in believing not-*q*.
  30. For similar distinctions, see John Pollock, *Knowledge and Justification* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), chaps. 2 and 5; Pollock, "Reliability and Justified Belief," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 14 (1984); William Alston, "An Internalist Externalism," *Synthese* 74 (1988), reprinted in *Epistemic Justification* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 237–45, at 238; Crispin Wright, "Strict Finitism," *Synthese* 51 (1982), reprinted in *Realism, Meaning and Truth*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 107–75, at 117–20; Crispin Wright, "Rule-Following, Meaning and Constructivism," in *Meaning and Interpretation*, ed. Charles Travis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 271–97, at 290–91; and Wright, "Skepticism and Dreaming: Imploding the Demon," *Mind* 100 (1991): 87–115, at 94–95. Some types of defeating evidence might have both undercutting and additive elements; but we will ignore such cases.
  31. See n. 28 above.
  32. In n. 54 below, I suggest some grounds for thinking that beliefs like *My legs are crossed* and *There is a canary in front of me* are also vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification.
  33. "Self-Reference and Self-Awareness," 7–8; my emphasis.
  34. See "Persons and Their Pasts," n. 4.
  35. See, for instance, Shoemaker, "Introspection and the Self," 15; and "Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, ed. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 467–69, at 468.
  36. "Self-knowledge and 'Inner Sense,'" 210–11.
  37. Some of the other authors who discuss immunity to error through misidentification only address errors of *de re* misidentification. (See, e.g., McGinn, *The Subjective View*, 48.) Others characterize immunity to error through misidentification in a way that sounds more like my immunity to *wh*-misidentification. (See, e.g., Stanley, "Persons and Their Properties," 169–70. Crispin Wright and John Campbell have offered similar characterizations, in public lectures.) As we'll see in section V, below, Evans primarily operates with yet a further notion, different from all of those we've discussed so far.



38. See “Self-Reference and Self-Awareness,” 10; “Persons and Their Pasts,” esp. 20–22 and 45–46; “Introspection and the Self,” 15–16; and “Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity,” 468.
39. Shoemaker is supposing here that my demonstrative “that thing” is *perceptual*, and refers to an object I’m currently perceiving. It’s not a “past-tense demonstrative,” of the sort described in Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, §§ 5.5 and 7.5, which is stipulated to refer to the object I’m currently remembering.
40. The notion of quasi-memory is introduced in “Persons and Their Pasts.” See also Derek Parfit, “Personal Identity,” *Philosophical Review* 80 (1971), reprinted in *Personal Identity*, ed. John Perry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 199–223; and Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), at 220–22. It’s defined slightly differently by different authors.

Some authors claim that quasi-memory would be a way of having non-inferential *knowledge* of events which were originally perceived or experienced by other people. I think that this is correct, but, as we’ll see below, this is a controversial issue. So I do not want to build it into *the definition* of quasi-memory that it puts one in a position to have such knowledge.

41. See, e.g., “Persons and Their Pasts,” 23–24, where he calls quasi-memory a way of having “knowledge” of past events. At that point in the paper, it is still an open question whether it is possible to have quasi-memories “from the inside” of events from another person’s past life. But later in the paper (§§ 4 and 5), Shoemaker argues that this is possible.
  42. See “Persons and Their Pasts,” 46.
  43. See *Varieties of Reference*, 244–45.
  44. See *Varieties of Reference*, 245; Cassam, *Self and World*, 41–43; and Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, 220–22 and n. 15.
  45. Note that, in setting up this debate, I am not relying on any assumptions about what Shoemaker or Evans *means* by “immunity to error through misidentification.” They make certain claims about subjects who quasi-remember events from other people’s past lives, and what those subjects would thereby be able to know. From those claims, we can see that Shoemaker thinks that memory-based *wh*-misidentification is possible and that Evans thinks that it is not possible.
  46. See Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 242ff.
  47. *Ibid.*, 245.
  48. Evidence for this interpretation: Evans says that knowledge that *a* is *F* is identification-dependent iff that knowledge “can be seen as the result of knowledge of the truth of a pair of propositions [*b* is *F*] (for some distinct Idea, *b*) and [*a* = *b*]” (*Varieties of Reference*, 180). This passage suggests that, for Evans, whether a given piece of knowledge counts as identification-dependent or identification-free depends on whether it was based on certain other beliefs.
- This suggestion is confirmed by other things Evans says. For instance, he glosses the claim that a given piece of knowledge that *a* is *F* is identification-dependent as: “that is, based upon a way of knowing about objects which yields in the first instance knowledge that [*b* is *F*] is true, for some distinct Idea *b*, together with a belief that [*a* = *b*] is true” (*ibid.*, 190). And, later, he seems to be saying that a thought is identification-dependent just in case “criteria of recognition are brought to bear, and so forth” (*ibid.*, 218).
49. See *Varieties of Reference*, 243–44. What Evans actually says is that it would be possible to think about that person (have an “adequate Idea” of him) only by description. Some philosophers think that Kaplan’s *dthat* operator gives us a way to hold *de re* beliefs about any person we can descriptively identify; so they would resist the conclusion that we are not in a position to hold *de re* beliefs about the person from whom our quasi-memories derive. I do not think that Kaplan’s *dthat* operator gives us a way to do this (see n. 26 above). Neither does Evans think this. And, in any event, as Evans points out, ordinary subjects do not have descriptive beliefs concerning the sources of their quasi-memories.

50. *Varieties of Reference*, 244–45.

51. Evans and Cassam claim that the only way for S to gain knowledge that someone was F would be for him to base his belief that someone was F on specific evidence telling him how his memories were produced (see n. 44 above). Note that, in the story I've told, S's justification for believing that someone was F, after he's been given D\*, does *not* derive from some evidence S has about how his memory experiences were produced. After all, D\* does not give S any good additive evidence about where his memory experiences came from. It just leaves it a live epistemic possibility that they are quasi-memories of someone else's past. Compare the hall-of-mirrors evidence in the example on p. 297, below. I think of D\* and this hall-of-mirrors evidence as working in similar ways.

These issues merit further discussion, and a closer investigation into the epistemology of memory. Here I've just tried to sketch what I regard as the most plausible story about S's epistemic situation, after he's received evidence D\*.

52. See *Varieties of Reference*, 244–45, 246–48.

53. Parfit appears to have denied this at one time. See "Personal Identity," 209.

54. These claims about memory may have analogs for perception. Just as it is possible to quasi-remember events from someone else's past life, it may be possible to "quasi-perceive" facts about someone else's body, if one is "hooked up" to that body by remote sensory links. See Daniel Dennett, "Where am I?" in *Brainstorms* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978); and Lucy O'Brien, "Evans on Self-Identification," *Nous* 29 (1995) for discussion of such cases. (I'm assuming that *temporarily* being "hooked up" to someone else's body would not suffice to make that other body *one's own* body.) In such a case, one might know by quasi-perception that someone's legs are crossed, or that someone is facing a table, and mistakenly believe that the person in question is oneself. If so, then the belief that my legs are crossed and the belief that I am facing a table will be vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification, in the same way that Dee's memory-based belief that he pulled the cat's tail is vulnerable to *wh*-misidentification.

In addition, if "quasi-perceiving" facts about someone else's body puts one in a position to hold *de re* beliefs about that body, then it might sometimes be an open question for one whether that body was one's own, and one might sometimes make a mistake about whether that body was one's own. Hence the belief that my legs are crossed and the belief that I am facing a table may also be vulnerable to *de re* misidentification. (Evans denies that the ordinary person, when "hooked up" to another body in this way, would have any *de re* beliefs about that body. See *Varieties of Reference*, 221 and 224. I think Evans is on firmer ground when he denies that quasi-remembering events from someone else's past life puts one in a position to hold *de re* beliefs about the person whose life is being remembered. It seems much more plausible to me that when one "quasi-perceives" facts about another body, one has *de re* beliefs about that remote body.)

In my opinion, these claims about perception are correct. But they need careful consideration and defense. I will have to leave that task for another occasion.

Special thanks to Jason Stanley, with whom I've been discussing these issues, off and on, since 1995; and to Alex Byrne and Susanna Siegel, who read and commented on a several drafts of this paper. I am also grateful to Tyler Burge, Richard Heck, Richard Moran, Christian Piller, Scott Soames, and Jennifer Whiting for useful criticisms and advice. Thanks most of all to Sydney Shoemaker. I am deeply indebted to his teaching, writing, and encouragement.