was about to make the crucial move that would have led to her death and to the kids' salvation, she is stopped mid-action by an angel who reveals to her that actually she need not die in order to save the kids. All she needs to do is give up $200. Lisa can now choose either to save the kids or keep the $200. As far as I can tell it would be crazy of her to hold on to the $200.

Once we fix the preferences of the agent, Gert's normative judgments lose their intuitive appeal. It is not true that, given Lisa's preferences, as were confirmed by her incipient actions, it is rationally permissible for her to choose the $200 over saving the kids from malnutrition. From the point of view of a specific agent, the argument is not sound and the single-value view of reasons is coherent.

*Brute Rationality* is a very interesting book. Its main theses deserve serious consideration; it is full of subtle examples and satisfyingly complex arguments and is driven by a powerful set of intuitions that even those who disagree with Gert's conclusions should do more to accommodate.

**Yonatan Shemmer**
University of Sheffield

DOI 10.1215/00318108-2007-044

David Finkelstein, *Expression and the Inner*.

When I tell you what it is that I think or feel, my pronouncements often carry a certain kind of authority. You might tell others what it is that I’m thinking or feeling, but your pronouncements never carry this kind of authority, at least not when you’re talking about my thoughts or feelings. Let’s use the phrase “first-person authority” to label this kind of authority, namely, the kind that I often have and that you always lack, when saying what thoughts or feelings I have. What explains the fact that we possess this kind of authority on those occasions that we do possess it? Many of the answers that have been proposed to one or another version of this question fall into one of the following six general categories:

1. We have first-person authority with respect to our own thoughts and feelings when, and because, we know them by means of a process that is much more intimate and reliable than is ordinary perception and is directed to the contents of our own minds.
(2) We have first-person authority with respect to our own thoughts and feelings when, and because, we know them by means of an ordinary perceptual process that is directed to the contents of our own minds.

(3) We have first-person authority with respect to our own thoughts and feelings when, and because, our taking ourselves to have those thoughts and feelings constitutes our having those thoughts and feelings.

(4) We have first-person authority with respect to our own thoughts and feelings when, and because, those thoughts and feelings are simply identical to our awareness of them.

(5) We have first-person authority with respect to our own thoughts and feelings when, and because, our pronouncements on those thoughts and feelings are mere expressions of them, and so cannot be false or unjustified.

(6) We have first-person authority with respect to our own thoughts and feelings when, and because, we express them by avowing them.

The first four chapters of Finkelstein’s book are mostly devoted to arguing against (1)–(5). The last two chapters argue in favor of the sixth account, which I will call the “Neo-Expressivist Account.” (“Neo-Expressivist” is not his term—I take it from Bar-On and Long [2001], who use it as a label for the view that they and Finkelstein defend.)

In this review, I will not examine Finkelstein’s arguments against the accounts that he does not hold. (I should mention, however, that I find Finkelstein’s arguments against Crispin Wright’s version of [3] and also his arguments against John McDowell’s version of [4] quite promising.) Here, I confine myself to spelling out Finkelstein’s version of Neo-Expressivism and to raising some questions about it.

Finkelstein’s account comprises four claims.

(a) I have first-person authority with respect to my own thoughts or feelings on just those occasions, and just because, I can express those thoughts or feelings by self-ascribing them. (For instance, I can express my desire for nabeyaki udon by saying “I’d really like some nabeyaki udon right now!” just as I can express it by hungrily eyeing a bowl of nabeyaki udon. In contrast, I cannot currently express my childhood desire for macaroni and cheese by saying “I used to love macaroni and cheese.”)

(b) Although my expressive self-ascriptions of my own thoughts or feelings are truth-evaluable assertions, they are not made on the basis of (and do not need to be backed up by) grounds or evidence of their truth.

(c) A thought or feeling of mine is conscious just in case I am able to express that thought or feeling by self-ascribing it: thus, given (a), I have first-person authority toward all and only those of my states that are conscious.

(d) My expressive self-ascriptions help to constitute the context within which those thoughts or feelings occur; and those thoughts or feelings are what they are partly by virtue of occurring in that context. So there is a very
indirect and partial constitutive relation between my expressive self-ascriptions and the thoughts or feelings that they ascribe.¹

Finkelstein’s account invites many questions: Doesn’t it trade in the question why we have first-person authority for another question, namely, why am I the only person able to express my thoughts or feelings by self-ascribing them? Why can’t you express my thoughts or feelings? Is this latter question answerable by appeal to the nature of the expression relation? If so, then what is the nature of the expression relation to which Finkelstein is appealing in this account? And finally, what connection is there supposed to be between the expressive power of my self-ascriptions and their epistemology? Why is it supposed to be impossible for me to express a state of mine that I can responsibly self-ascribe only on the basis of grounds or evidence?

I will not pursue any of these questions here: they are questions that confront any Neo-Expressivivist account of first-person authority. I will instead raise a question about Finkelstein’s distinctive claim (c). In a footnote, Finkelstein entertains the following objection to (c): Imagine that you occasionally express your unconscious anger toward your sister by speaking in a peculiar, clipped tone of voice. One day, while speaking in this tone of voice, you say, “My therapist tells me that I’m unconsciously angry with my sister, and I suppose she must be right.” [Thereby] … you express your anger toward your sister in a self-ascription of it, even though the anger is unconscious. (120)

In response to this objection, Finkelstein says:

When I say that someone’s state of mind is conscious if he has an ability to express it merely by ascribing it to himself, I mean this: the sort of ability at issue is one that enables a person to express his state of mind in a self-ascription of it, where what matters—what carries the expressive force—isn’t his tone of voice … but simply the fact that he is giving voice to his sincere judgment about his own state of mind. That I might manage to express my unconscious anger in a self-ascription of it via a clipped tone of voice doesn’t show that I have the relevant sort of expressive ability. (120)

Now, Finkelstein’s point is not that it is impossible to express one’s unconscious anger by self-ascribing it in a clipped tone of voice—it’s rather that

¹. This way of stating Finkelstein’s point involves some interpretation on my part. Finkelstein’s own formulation of this point employs the phrase “unit of intelligibility” and the verb “contextualizes,” and I am not entirely certain just what he means by either of these terms. Consequently, I am not entirely certain that (d) is an accurate rendering of his view. But it’s the best I can offer.
the expressive power of that kind of self-ascription doesn’t suffice for the self-ascribed anger to be conscious. What would suffice for the self-ascribed anger to be conscious is if it were expressed by the self-ascription, *issued simply so as to give voice to one’s sincere judgment about one’s own state of mind.*

But how should we understand this last claim? Suppose that Jones’s unconscious fear of members of another ethnic group causes her to be much too easily convinced that members of that group do harmful things. On one occasion, Jones has become convinced, on the basis of virtually no evidence, that members of that group are poisoning the local water supply. If you ask Jones why she believes this hypothesis, she will say “I believe it on the basis of my very careful and objective study of the evidence. It’s not that I have any axe to grind: it’s just that the evidence quite clearly proves that those people are poisoning the local water supply. In particular, they’ve contaminated it with a drug that causes people to fear members of that very group. I’m quite sure that I’ve been affected by this contaminant and that I too must, at this very moment, fear members of that group. But of course I am not allowing my judgment to be guided by that fear.” In this case, Jones self-ascribes fear of members of that ethnic group, and she is also acting in a way that expresses her unconscious fear of members of that ethnic group. But is Jones’s self-ascription of fear *issued simply so as to give voice to her sincere judgment about her own state of mind?* If so, then does she express her fear by avowing it? If the answer to both of these questions is “yes,” then Finkelstein’s view implies that Jones’s fear is conscious. But clearly that is wrong: even if Jones is conscious of her fear, her fear is not conscious. So Finkelstein needs to say that, in the case that I’ve described, although Jones is avowing her fear, she is not expressing her fear merely by avowing it, and her self-ascription is not issued simply so as to give voice to her sincere judgment about her own state of mind. But what grounds might be offered for these verdicts?

Finkelstein’s book opens up new and promising directions of thought on some old philosophical topics. I hope eventually to see a fuller treatment of his fascinating account of consciousness.

**Reference**


Ram Neta
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

DOI 10.1215/00318108-2007-045

313