

Consider the following passages:

"There must be some way of identifying an authoritative utterance; and it cannot be the content, since to judge the utterance on the merits of its content is not to follow it as authoritative" (Watt: 39).

"An expert need not give the reasons for [her or] his pronouncements—indeed, [she or] he is most clearly functioning as an authority when [she or] he makes pronouncements without giving reasons, and if [she or] he were to communicate [her or] his reasons in full at the time, then it would no longer be on [her or] his authority that [her or] his pronouncements were accepted" (46).

"[O]nce we have worked through a proof or examined the evidence for ourselves, then not merely have we no further need of an authority as the reason for our belief; rather, it is no longer possible to accept it on the authority of someone else, for we have become authorities ourselves" (47).

"To obey a command is to accept the command as a reason for acting as commanded, indeed, as a stronger reason than one's own judgement or preference. Conversely, to follow one's own judgement or preference, to act for that reason, is not to obey an authority" (84)

"[T]hough we could not understand or recognize an authority for which there was no kind of reason, we do not expect to see these reasons recapitulated at length on every occasion when the authority is consulted, deferred to, followed, or obeyed. Indeed, it is a more typical instance of compliance with authority to stop because a policeman has put up a traffic sign than to stop because he has explained exhaustively the plan for diverting the traffic, and in some [*sic!*] cases authority cannot function once there has been a complete explanation of the matter in hand: a person who understands a pronouncement completely, with all the reasons for it, can no longer accept it on authority (though [she or] he may still accept it), and Dr. Johnson's dictionary cannot be consulted as an authority by Dr. Johnson" (106).