The Pot Paradox

Reshef Agam-Segal
agam-segalr(at)vmi.edu

Abstract

Logical criticism can seem strange: If successful, it can prove its target illogical, i.e. not fully logically integrated. This can implicate the critic in a kind of paradox, however, which I call 'pot paradox' after a short story by Sholem Aleichem: for, if the target view is not logically integrated, is it really there in the first place – even to be criticized? – I propose a way to avert the difficulty: Logical criticism should avoid pronouncing views nonsensical and rather ask for clarifications and propose re-interpretations. I capture a moral aspect of this by borrowing Gabriel Marcell's notion of 'availability': a kind of sharing in the confusion we wish to criticize and taking ownership of the difficulty. My main testcase is 'impartialism'. I examine Alice Crary's apparent logical criticism of impartialism, which maintains that moral justifications require a vantage point outside individuals' affective lives. I discuss ways of handling impartialism in a philosophically available manner, namely without pronouncing it confused or nonsensical. Here, I'm aided also by Wittgenstein's 'Lecture on Ethics', in which, or so I claim, he puts forward a kind of impartiality view. I offer a reading of parts of the Lecture.

Keywords: Impartialism, Logical Criticism, Philosophical Availability, Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics.

Introduction

Philosophers criticize views sometimes for being meaningless or absurd. Take this from Aristotle:

> People who object that what all things aim at is not good are talking nonsense: whatever seems to all to be the case, we say is the case. And the person who attacks this belief will not generally have anything more convincing to say. If it were creatures without intellect that desired pleasures, there might be something in what they said; but if intelligent beings do so as well, what sense can be made of it? (2004, 1173a)

We could read this as claiming that a view is false, perhaps even crassly false. But suppose we want to be more ambitious and take or make such criticism literally. Our claim would then be that a view is not merely false but nonsensical, totally meaningless and logically incoherent. – Can we do that? Can such criticisms ever be successful? – Ultimately, I will want to defend an affirmative answer. Logical confusion is a real phenomenon, and I'll discuss what is involved in the treatment of such confusions and propose safety measures.

I begin with a difficulty, however, because such criticisms may seem inherently self-defeating. Here is why: claiming that a view is logically confused seems to be saying, in effect, that it hasn't the logical integrity that would allow it to fully make sense. This, in turn, raises a worry about the very possibility of thinking the view through – about it offering us any thinkable content to entertain. If so, however, how is it even possible to make contact with such confusion, even if only to criticize it? How can we identify a target for our criticism if the entire point of our criticism is that what we are targeting has no coherent logical (what else?) identity?

Ultimately, as I mentioned, I'll claim that it is possible to coherently make such criticisms, and to support that, I adopt a somewhat wider perspective, since the question touches on some basic issues in philosophy in general. Philosophy is sometimes about constituting our mind, giving it shape and form. Some even say that philosophers are a bit like children – for better or worse (see Plato 1997, 484c-485e; Wittgenstein 1998, 24). And this suggests a way of understanding the difficulty a bit differently. From this perspective, the difficulty is this: Can we meet another's mind even when their thoughts are not fully coherent – when, so to speak, their mind is not fully there to be met? – My proposal is that logical-philosophical criticism, somewhat like talking with children, often requires a certain kind of openness, patience, and even a certain vulnerability. Gabriel Marcel's calls it '*availability*' (see Bollnow 1984), and my goal will be to clarify this and demonstrate how criticizing *availably* in philosophy may affect the views we come to accept.

I approach in §1 via Alice Crary's criticism of *impartialism*, a view that maintains that moral justifications require an abstract vantage point outside individuals' affective lives. Crary argues that the impartialist's abstractions rob us of the very basis for moral judgments, which in turn threatens the coherence of those judgments. In this way, Crary's criticism seems logical. §2 puts

impartialism aside and discusses logical criticisms in general. If not careful, I argue, such criticisms could lead to a kind of paradox – a 'pot' paradox, which I so name after a short story by the Yiddish storyteller, Sholem Aleichem: undermining the very conditions of the meaningfulness of the criticism. The logical critic may thus turn out to be as confused as those they criticize. The rest of the paper discusses what safe logical criticism would require. First, in §3, I recommend that we view logical confusions as involving lapses in first person authority. §4 discusses in general how to deal *availably* with what appears to involve logical confusions. For one thing, I argue, it would be *un*available to issue this as a verdict in the third person. Acknowledgement of a logical confusion should rather only be made in the first person, i.e. about one's own views. §5 closes the circle by demonstrating what such a treatment may amount to in the case of impartialism. Among other things, I suggest that Wittgenstein, one of Crary's sources of inspiration, puts forward a sort of impartiality view in his Lecture on Ethics (Wittgenstein 1965).

1. Alice Crary's over-criticism?

In *Beyond Moral Judgment*, Alice Crary criticizes what she calls 'impartiality views', which attempt to adopt a perspective on our moral life and sensibilities that is somewhat external to this life – a vantage point from which to criticize and judge. Kant, for instance, is often read as an impartialist. Since they are made from an external perspective, Crary thinks, the impartialist's judgments threaten to be foreign, remote, and ultimately irrelevant. So far, her arguments follow others who make similar claims (e.g. Williams 1985), but Crary goes even further. She emphasizes that even critics of impartialism sometimes fail to completely disown the idea of such an external perspective. They claim that moral philosophy should not neglect those aspects of life that the impartialist tries to abstract from, but they make this claim from a point of view that is itself abstract. Criticizing this, Crary writes:

> *there is something confused about the very idea of a vantage point outside individuals' affective lives* from which to determine that moral responsibility calls for bringing these lives within morality "from the beginning." (Crary 2007, 207; my italics)

It is not implausible to read this, at least initially, as logical criticism – specifically as saying that there is something logically confused about the very idea of such a vantage point: The impartialist's abstractions undermine the very basis for making moral judgments, which, in turn, threatens the coherence of

those judgments, and this vantage point idea remains incoherent also in the hands of critics of impartialism, who supposedly argue from such a vantage point that our affective lives and sensibilities need to be brought within morality from the beginning.

Crary then makes a second claim:

> demands for regulating the play of sensibility in accordance with prior moral judgments represent an unqualified and entirely general threat to the development of moral understanding. (Crary 2007, 207–8; my italics)

Crary's claim here is apparently moral and her target is both the impartialist and the critic of impartialism who clings to the vantage point idea: the vantage point idea poses a threat to the development of moral understanding.

What, we may now ask, is the relation between the two claims – the (apparently) logical and the moral? – At least apparently, there could seem to be tension between the claims, for if Crary's (apparently) logical claim is right and the idea of a vantage point beyond life is indeed confused, then any demand that depends on them – impartialist or anti-impartialist – should not make sense either. If so, however, then this is also a problem for Crary, because she wants to criticize those demands. She says that they are "unqualified" and that they threaten "the development of moral understanding." But if a demand is indeed incoherent, or if it logically rests on an incoherent claim, as Crary at least seems to be saying, then is it even a demand in the first place – either good or bad? Does it even have enough sense in it to allow it to meet the criteria for being a demand? What else remains there but confusion? – On one reading, then, Crary's criticism seems to criticize a view for a kind of logical incoherence, but then comes back to criticize it again, this time morally, as if it survived the logical criticism. This itself seems a bit incoherent.

The discussion below proposes a way to deal with (apparent) logical confusions in a way that evades the difficulty. I'll also make a suggestion about how to understand Crary's criticism. But before I do all that, I should mention, or rather acknowledge, one more layer of the difficulty. For notice something about my own worries here. Afterall, they too form a kind of logical criticism. And if so, how should I understand my own claims in criticizing Crary? By pointing out the logical difficulty for Crary, that is, my argument very much seems to suggest that the logical critic, here Crary, has lapsed into incoherence, that she is confused. If that is the case, however, and if there really is no coherent claim here for me to criticize, then what exactly am *I* criticizing? –

The appearance is that by merely trying to point out the risk of logical incoherence, *I* have entangled *myself* in a paradox of my own. The incoherence seems to be contagious, and one may begin to suspect that there is something about the very attempt to logically criticize that generates the danger of paradox.

2. The pot paradox

It would be premature to conclude that there is an unmanageable fault in Crary's argument. In fact, the discussion in §§3–5 suggests a way out of the difficulty – or rather, a way not to get in. But to do so, I shall first put Crary's argument aside and impartialism too, for I wish to use that discussion as a steppingstone to something more general. I come back to impartialism in §5. I would now like to characterize the kind of difficulty I detected for logical criticism in general; one seemingly shared by Crary's criticism; one seemingly shared also by my own criticism of Crary. The difficulty is this: logical criticism may destroy its object completely, thereby leaving itself nothing to criticize in the process, and thus undermining itself. Arguably, this also involves a failure to make contact with the criticized view, for, or so goes the criticism, there is no view to make contact with in the first place, only confusion. This at least looks self-defeating.

It might help to capture the difficulty with an image, so let me mention a somewhat reminiscent moment from a short story by Sholem Aleichem, "The Pot," written in Yiddish in 1901. In the story, a Jewish poultry and egg merchant, Yenta the henwife, asks permission from the Rabbi to use a meat pot to cook some goose broth for her son. The pot may have gone unkosher because some milk may have touched it. She would have used her other meat pot, she says, but Gnessy, her sassy and inconsiderate neighbor, borrowed it, and returned it busted. She complained to Gnessy:

> Well, I say to her, I says, "So what's this pot you give me?"… Says she: "Why, that's your pot!"… Says I, "So why you give me a busted pot if the pot you got was a whole pot?"… Says she: "Oh shush! And I'll thank you to keep your voice down, 'cos it only get on a body's nerves! Now then, in the first place, I give you back the whole pot; in the second place, when you give me that pot it were busted already; and in the third place, I never took your pot 'cos I got my own pot, so leave me and there's a end! (Sholem Aleichem 2000, 15–16)

It can be comical for a claim or a thought to undermine itself – lapse into incoherence with a straight face; it can be similarly comical when a logical critic (Crary?) says: "The view I'm criticizing is morally problematic, busted; and anyway, there really isn't a view here at all, but only logical incoherence." Call such situations 'pot paradoxes'.

Let us look a bit closer at what gives rise to pot paradoxes. So far, I mentioned (1) cases that explicitly present us with two mutually incompatible claims: one claim that declares a view nonsensical, and the other that criticizes the view as faulty in some way, e.g. false or immoral. This incompatibility generates the paradox, and Crary's case may be a case in point. (2) In other cases, however, the situation is more delicate and interesting, for in such cases, the criticism consists of only a single claim that declares a view to be nonsensical; in such cases, that is, there is no explicit second claim as in the first kind of cases. My criticism of Crary is a case in point. (And if we take Crary's second moral criticism of impartialism to be unrelated to the first, perhaps as belonging to a different grammar and language-game,[1] then Crary's first claim on its own might be a case in point as well.) Now, the matter with cases of the second sort is subtle because they are not obviously paradoxical. In itself, there is nothing paradoxical about pointing out that some utterance is incoherent or nonsensical. Still, it is often at least natural to take, or indeed make, such criticisms in a way that nevertheless suggests a paradox. For, when one argues that some utterance view proposition or claim is nonsensical, it is not unnatural to understand them as arguing that *what the utterance says* (or view, or proposition, or claim) is nonsense. For otherwise, *what* are they criticizing? – Call this 'the natural understanding'. (It is even more natural to see matters in this way if we imagine ourselves into the perspective of the target of logical criticism. Because, when criticized, we naturally take ourselves to have said something – something with sense (what else?), something that the logical critic now wants to criticize.) And this adds an implicit second sentence, which creates a paradox: for, to paraphrase, the natural understanding seemingly implies that the view under criticism nevertheless says something – something that may be criticized. And, assuming that it is a condition for saying something, as opposed to just uttering gibberish or emitting random noises, that what one says makes some sense, then, combined with the first explicit

[1] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for pointing out this possibility. See, however, Stanley Cavell on how certain segregations of language-games are 'Manichean' (Cavell 1969, 47) and Diamond 2012, who expresses closely related worries.

claim, the logical criticism boils down to something like: 'the sense that the view under criticism makes is nonsense'. And this is manifestly paradoxical. (Compare PI §500.)

A bit more generally, if we are criticizing something, then there needs to be something for us to criticize. Logical criticism, however, seems to challenge that precisely. In fact, a logical criticism of the relevant sort suggests that there is nothing there in the view under criticism: no sense is being made, nothing is said; that's the whole point of the criticism; arguably, that's what makes the criticism specifically *logical*. If so, however, i.e. if there is indeed no coherent view, then there is also nothing to criticize, and if so, then how can there still be room for criticism in the first place? Again, the criticism seems to pull the rug from under its own feet. As in the more straightforward cases of paradox above, so in the latter cases: if the logical criticism is successful, it self-defeats, and it self-defeats precisely by leaving itself nothing to criticize.

Can logical criticism evade the difficulty? – Below, I propose a way around the difficulty that rejects the natural understanding of logical criticism – the one on which logical criticism criticizes what some utterance says. I develop such an understanding in §§3–5. Before I do, however, let me point out that the matter has some urgency, because threats of pot paradoxes – at least threats, if not fully developed paradoxes – can be found all over western philosophy. Such threats are generated whenever some idea is declared nonsensical, incoherent, confused, absurd, unintelligible, or the like, and this happens quite frequently:

> VISITOR: For heaven's sake, Theaetetus, do you understand anything of what they mean each time one of them says that many or one or two things are or have become or are becoming, or when another one speaks of hot mixed with cold and supposes that there are separations and combinations? Earlier in my life I used to think I understood exactly what someone meant when he said just what we're confused about now, namely, this is not. You do see what confusion we're in about it? (Plato 1997, 243b)

> But the following absurdity goes with both this account [Plato's account of the soul in the Timaeus] and most of those that concern the soul. They attach the soul to the body and set it into it, determining no further what the cause of this is or what the condition of the body is […] (Aristotle 2001, 4071b 13–15)

> But what shall I say, when it is clear to me that I remember forgetfulness? Should I affirm that what I remember is not in my memory? Or should I say that

forgetfulness is in my memory to the end that I should not forget? Both of these views are most absurd. (Augustine 1955, 216)

No man therefore can conceive anything, but he must conceive it in some place; and endued with some determinate magnitude; and which may be divided into parts; nor that anything is all in this place, and all in another place at the same time; nor that two or more things can be in one and the same place at once: for none of these things ever have or can be incident to sense, but are absurd speeches, taken upon credit, without any signification at all, from deceived philosophers and deceived, or deceiving, schoolmen. (Hobbes 1996, 19)

For it is impossible to {clearly and distinctly} conceive of dividing anything without knowing, from that very fact, that it is divisible; because if we were to judge that same thing to be indivisible, our judgment would be in disagreement with our knowledge [of it]. (Descartes 1982, 49)

An extension, that is neither tangible nor visible, cannot possibly be conceived: And a tangible or visible extension, which is neither hard nor soft, black nor white, is equally beyond the reach of human conception. Let any man try to conceive a triangle in general, which is neither *Isoceles* nor *Scalenum*, nor has any particular length or proportion of sides; and he will soon perceive the absurdity of all the scholastic notions with regard to abstraction and general ideas. (Hume 1977, E 12.15)

There is already a contradiction in introducing the concept of existence – no matter under what title it may be disguised – into the concept of a thing which we profess to be thinking solely in reference to its possibility. (Kant 1929, A597/B625)

[M]oral judgments can never be taken literally: literally, they always contain nothing but nonsense. (Nietzsche 1997, 38)

I do not want to say it is false to assert about an object what is asserted here about a concept; I want to say it is impossible, senseless, to do so. (Frege 1951, 175)

[T]he whole question of whether a class is or is not a member of itself is nonsense, i.e., that no class either is or is not a member of itself, and that it is not even true to say that, because the whole form of words is just a noise without meaning. (Russell 2010, 101)

Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only point out that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language. (Wittgenstein 1961, §4.003)

As a result, intellectualist analysis ends up making incomprehensible the very perceptual phenomena it was designed to clarify. While judgment loses its constituting function and becomes an explanatory principle, the words "seeing,"

"hearing," and "sensing" lose all signification, since the slightest glance goes beyond the pure impression and thereby falls under the general rubric of "judgment." (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 58–59)

Just like the examined examples "principle" and "God," most of the other specifically metaphysical terms are devoid of meaning, e.g. "the Idea," "the Absolute," "the Unconditioned," "the Infinite," "the being of being," "non-being," "thing in itself," "absolute spirit," "objective spirit," "essence," "being-in-itself," "being-in-and-for-itself," "emanation," "manifestation," "articulation," "the Ego," "the non-Ego," etc. […] The alleged statements of metaphysics which contain such words have no sense, assert nothing, are mere pseudo-statements. (Carnap 1959, 67)

[It] is supposed that my being conscious of my mental states and operations either is my knowing them, or is the necessary and sufficient ground for my doing so. But to say this is to abuse the logic and even the grammar of the verb 'to know'. It is nonsense to speak of knowing, or not knowing, this clap of thunder or that twinge of pain, this coloured surface or that act of drawing a conclusion or seeing a joke; these are accusatives of the wrong types to follow the verb 'to know'. (Ryle, 1949, 143)

[T]he adoption of the utilitarian principle would lead to an incoherent conception of right. (Rawls 1971, 294)

To repeat, this notion [that it is a contingent property of pain that it is a mental state] seems to me self-evidently absurd. (Kripke 1972, 147)

We cannot give sense to the idea that our communal speech habits pursue objective tracks which we laid it down as our intention to follow. (Wright 1980, 390)

It is false, indeed incoherent, to suppose that every desire aims at pleasure (Williams 1985, 49)

It would seem that such an idea of deviation in logic is absurd on the face of it. (Quine 1986, 81)

'[F]ormal statements' […] neither say nor show anything. They do violate the rules of logical syntax, for they wrongly employ formal concepts [...] the 'formal' statements that use them are nonsense. (Hacker 1987, 25–6)

I think that this view [that a personal relationship is an affectional tie – one loves or likes the other, where that is thought of as being some sort of an emotion] is mostly nonsense. In the first place, the contrast on which it draws – the contrast between being motivated by reason and being motivated by affection – is, on my view, incoherent. (Korsgaard 1996, 127)

> It is natural to wonder whether the idea of transcending special points of view really makes sense. Surely any conception of reality we could achieve would still be *our* conception of reality, from a point of view we occupied; the idea of a view from nowhere is incoherent. (McDowell 1998, 118)

> Libet's experiments have produced reams of neurobabble. But the conclusion depends on forgetting what the question might have been. It looks significant only if we assume that an event in a brain is identical with a decision of a person, that an action is voluntary if and only if preceded by a mental episode of the right kind, that intentions and volitions are "felt" episodes of a subject which can be precisely dated. All such assumptions are incoherent […]. (Scruton 2012)

I should emphasize that it is not my claim that any of these philosophers are guilty of saying something paradoxical (and to forestall suspicion, this equally applies to Crary). Some of them might be so guilty, but even those that aren't are still playing with fire – flying close to paradox. For they all formulate logical criticisms, and if I'm right, logical criticism by itself puts us in close proximity of paradox. In what follows, I discuss how to avoid the natural understanding and evade the paradox.

3. Philosophy and the absence of first-person authority

Is the whole business of logical criticism bankrupt? – I've highlighted one suspicion; Charles Pigden adds another. He mentions that logical criticism is often coupled with positive claims about how language ought to be used, which, he believes, comes close to authoritarian language policing:

> The tactic of consigning the utterances of one's opponents to the linguistic garbage-bin and then enforcing – sorry encouraging – the use of a language in which deviant thoughts, or pseudo-thoughts cannot even be expressed smacks of totalitarianism. (2010, 155)

Still, logical confusions are real, and philosophy should be able to say something about them, perhaps even offer help. What could philosophers possibly offer, however, if whenever we even try to identify a view as logically incoherent, we risk incoherence ourselves? Is there a different way to understand logical criticism? In particular, is there a way to understand the logical critic not as arguing that some claim is incoherent? – I believe so. Specifically, we can sidestep the natural understanding of the critic by understanding them alternatively as saying that they cannot identify a claim or get one into sharp enough focus. We may thus understand the logical critic as

expressing their own failure and inability to understand. Thus understood, logical criticism is a much more modest and even humble project. True, such criticism has a sharp edge: the critic is also implicitly raising a (skeptical) question about whether there is a claim there to identify in the first place, and that sounds more ambitious and less modest. But the question here may very well be an honest one; it does not have to be taken as rhetorical or as a claim in disguise; rather, it merely points out the possibility that someone might not be saying anything or be logically disoriented without realizing that they are – asking, not determining. And so understood, there is nothing incoherent or paradoxical about what the logical critic is doing. Stanley Cavell generalizes the point:

> "Not saying anything" is one way philosophers do not know what they mean. In this case it is not that they mean something other than they say, but that they do not see that they mean nothing (that they mean nothing, not that their statements mean nothing, are nonsense). The extent to which this is, or seems to be, true, is astonishing. (Cavell 1979, 210)

And no one is in principle immune: neither philosophers nor their logical critics.

Here is another important side of the issue: I pointed out above that if you argue that I'm speaking nonsense, it will be hard for me not to understand you as criticizing *what I'm saying*. That is, it will be hard for me not to understand you also as accepting that I am saying something, meaning something – something that you want to criticize. Suggesting that I may not even realize that I'm not saying anything, meaning anything, that I'm in effect not in possession of myself, feels like a low blow. It is part of Cavell's claim here, however, that there is no *a priori* guarantee that there really is something for me to mean. For your criticism to be justified is for me to be under the impression that there is something for me to mean when there in fact isn't. *If* there is something for me to mean – which is not guaranteed – then, pending the fulfilment of some other conditions, I may get to decide if I mean it or not; I have that much first-person authority. But I don't get to decide whether there is something to mean in the first place; that's an objective matter and not up to me. And this also suggests that if your logical criticism of me is justified, then a necessary condition for my having first-person authority – for my meaning something – does not obtain. I therefore suffer from a local lapse of first-person authority; I am under the false impression that I believe something,

mean something, or have a view. Indeed, this is what it means to be inside the pot.

The logical critic, then, may safely – namely, without implicating themselves in a paradox – be pointing out the theoretical possibility that their target is logically disoriented. But can they do more – be more ambitious and less modest? Can we ever be certain that someone, maybe a philosopher, is indeed not saying anything or that they suffer from such disorientation and lapse of first-person authority? Can we *determine* that someone is logically confused? – I believe not, or more precisely, not at first; not unless *they* say so in the first person about themselves. To say such a thing about oneself is to abandon the attempt to say something, to recognize that one has nothing to say. Until then, however, all that the critic may be certain of is their own inability to understand what their target is saying. This, I suggest, is what (safe) logical criticism may amount to, and part of what makes it safe is that it is more of a claim that the critic is making about themselves. In any case, from one person's inability or failure to understand another it doesn't follow that this other is not saying anything.

Does logically criticizing and claiming that what another says makes no sense boil down to merely saying that we don't understand them? – Not quite; logical criticism is a more specific speech act. We may fail to understand others for all sorts of reasons: we may not be familiar with a word they are using, or not hear them well enough, or hear them out of context, or maybe we simply don't care enough. Some such cases may be relatively trivial, and, with the proper motivation, understanding may be achieved relatively easily. This is not the case when serious logical criticism is merited, however. Serious logical criticism implies care; it implies thought and effort, even a commitment to understand. The failure of a serious logical critic is hard-eared; it comes after many honest attempts to understand. And, assuming that such a commitment is not the kind of thing that easily fades away, the serious, i.e. committed, logical critic cannot afford to just stop at saying that they don't understand. They would rather keep asking: 'Might this person whose words seem to me meaningless or absurd nevertheless be saying something? Might there be something where all I can see is nothing?' Failures to understand that merit logical criticism are thus failures that cannot be easily remedied. In this way, I suggest, serious logical criticism comes with an intimate acquaintance with, as well as recognition and appreciation of, the difficulty to understand in its

different dimensions. It is a testimony of having experienced that difficulty firsthand.

Before I move on, it might be useful to point out a connection to a more general philosophical situation. I have in mind here the relatively prevalent situation in philosophy that we may characterize as one in which we feel that we don't know what words mean: for example, what 'meaning' means when it comes to the philosophical talk about the 'meaning of life'; what 'causation' comes to in the case of 'mental causation', what 'seeing' means when philosophers talk of 'introspection', and even what 'exist' means when it comes to God's existence, and so on. And it might also be useful to mention that certain moral cases involve similar sorts of disorientation concerning meaning. Such is, for instance, the difficulty in debates about what to call something: 'embryo' or 'unborn baby', 'marriage' or 'civil union', 'food' or 'animal remains on a plate', etc. Arguably, what makes up the difficulties in such cases, and partly what makes them philosophical or moral, is our sense that we don't know how to fully 'mentally own' things, how to logically orient ourselves towards them. And this is arguably reflected in that feeling that we – proficient and educated language speakers such as we are – don't quite know what the words mean in such cases. My point now is that it is an aspect of having such difficulties that we don't fully own ourselves: don't fully know what *we* can, or even would like to, mean and what the words in our mouths actually say. In any case, a good reason to enter the discussion about logical criticism is not merely, or even primarily, to criticize confused philosophers. Rather, a better reason is that it gives us the opportunity to explore our own minds, reflect on what we would like to mean, examine our own orientation to things, and recognize our own vulnerabilities.

4. Philosophical availability

The discussion above has an interesting implication: Even though we are not contradicting ourselves when questioning whether someone said anything, and even though doing this is in itself logically safe, when coming in contact with someone who we think might be deeply logically confused, some of the problem nevertheless rubs off on us. For note what happens when we try to make contact with them: doing so is putting ourselves in a position where *we* cannot fully be sure of ourselves – of our own ability to say what makes sense

and what doesn't. In other words, when criticizing logically, we put ourselves in a position of vulnerability disorientation and uncertainty with regard to the extent of our own first-person authority. Such, it appears, is the intersubjective makeup of the space of reasons. Logical unclarity really is contagious.

Now, the idea that logical safety may require that we put ourselves in an intellectually vulnerable position is at least worth further investigation, and I want to briefly propose a beginning for such an investigation by putting the matter alongside the notion of *availability* or *disposability*, which I'm borrowing from Gabriel Marcel. The notion has a central role in many of Marcell's writings, early and late; see discussion in Bollnow, 1984.

I'll be mostly interested in philosophical availability, and even more specifically insofar as availability concerns logical incoherences. First, however, availability is not only or even primarily a philosophical matter. According to Marcel, availability "is exemplified in the fact of dedicating oneself to a person, to a cause" (Marcel 2002, 77). It involves orienting ourselves towards them, committing and opening ourselves. A good image of availability, I think, is what is often demanded by toddlers of their parents, e.g. when playing together – sometimes inconveniently. What is demanded is a certain more or less selfless responsiveness, an open-ended readiness to yield oneself, a sizeable load of patience, and above all *presence* – not merely to supply the toys and passively supervise, but to actively participate, bring oneself to see things in a toddler-like manner, and take imaginative active part in the play. What is demanded, that is, is that I "make room for the other in myself" (ibid. 88), be permeable to them, so to speak. And this is not always easy. Parents are sometimes unavailable to their kids, indisposed, feeling too grownup, too unnatural playing with dolls or trains, or too bored. And I should also mention that, as this image suggests, availability does not depend on being reciprocated.

Reciprocal availability is also not something that we can always expect in philosophy. Here, I wish to argue that availability primarily means being present to a philosophical problem and to the person who has it, and this requires willingness to own the problem: be vulnerable to it and have it too. It also requires willingness not to remain passive in the face of the problem, readiness to be moved by it, a certain initiative, creativity, and sometimes even imaginativeness. It may thus require taking intellectual risks. The best philosophical image of that, I think, is in Plato's allegory of the cave. I have in mind here the philosopher going back to the cave, re-exposing themselves to

illusion, putting themselves in intellectual peril – not mansplaining, not remote, not standing at the mouth of the cave and yelling at the people inside to come out, but going inside, becoming one of them, and making the journey out with them. For Plato, at least, the very act of philosophy is risky, and philosophy requires someone who's available to do it with, call it a friend. I should also mention that, although Marcel talks about absolute availability, and although the philosopher in Plato's allegory too seems totally committed, availability is not necessarily an all-or-nothing business but admits of degrees. Just like a tired parent after a long day at work, we may be more and less philosophically available at different times and in different cases.

Now, when it comes specifically to dealing with what appears to us nonsensical – and especially in philosophical contexts – availability requires, in addition to the above, willingness to stretch ourselves intellectually to come up with proposals for how to understand what we now can only see as nonsense, ways of reinterpreting and possibly reformulating what an apparently confused philosopher is saying, and wait for them to accept. And the more willing we are to keep trying, the more available we are. Furthermore, and as I already mentioned, philosophical availability here may require willingness to accept the possibility that some of the logical confusion rubs off on us, and that we ourselves cannot be fully sure what makes sense and what doesn't. To that extent, it involves willingness not only to take intellectual risks, but to question our own first-person authority. Here is an example of a philosopher expressing commitment to such philosophical availability:

> People who make metaphysical assertions such as "Only the present is real" pretend to make a picture, as opposed to some other picture. I deny that they have done this. But how can I prove it? I cannot say this is not a picture of anything, it is unthinkable, unless I assume that they and I have the same limitations on picturing. If I indicate a picture which the words suggest and they agree, then I can tell them they are misled, that the imagery in which they move does not lead them to such expressions. It cannot be denied that they have made a picture, but we can say they have been misled. We can say "It makes no sense in this system, and I believe this is the system you are using". If they reply by introducing a new system, then I have to acquiesce. (Wittgenstein 1979, 27; see also discussions in Minar 1998, 350, and Witherspoon 2000, 345.)

As this example suggests, and this is worth emphasizing, an available logical criticism in such situations would typically be reluctant to dismiss forms of words as hogwash – utterances like "I wish I could be in two places at once,"

"I know I'm in pain", "I'm taking a view from nowhere", or even "Caesar is a prime number". It would be unavailable, that is, to determine in the third person that these forms of words can or do only convey nonsense. It is the very opposite of the kind of totalitarian language policing Pigden criticizes (2010; incidentally, Pigden accuses Wittgenstein too of such policing).

5. How to understand the impartialist?

Is it possible to make contact with a supposedly confused impartialist? To recall, Alice Crary ascribes a confused idea to both the impartialist and to the critic of impartialism: "there is something confused about the very idea of a vantage point outside individuals' affective lives […]". Now, Crary doesn't say enough that I can see about how she would deal with the threat of paradox in which this could entangle her; she has other business to attend to. But I do not wish to claim that there is no room for Crary's criticism. I argue, rather, that there are different ways of clarifying the impartialist claim, and therefore different ways of clarifying Crary's criticism of it – different things it may amount to. I would like to mention a few possibilities in this section – all somewhat tentative and incomplete, as they await the impartialist's input and endorsement. The discussion cannot and is not meant to be comprehensive; other suggestions can be made about what impartialism is. And I offer no silver bullet: other cases of apparent confusions would require their own separate discussions. My discussion below mainly aims to demonstrate philosophical availability in the face of one apparent logical unclarity.

a.)

One way to clarify the impartialist claim is to argue that enough sense can be made of the idea – the image – of that 'vantage point outside individuals' affective lives' from which moral understanding is supposedly possible. The claim would be that there is nevertheless a coherent idea there somewhere, perhaps some minimum subset of moral sensibilities that can ground a narrow, perhaps even skeletal, yet coherent kind of moral understanding – perhaps something along the lines of Bernard Williams' notion of Kantian morality (1985, chapter 10). We would then have to examine what exactly this basis encompasses, what it excludes, and whether this basis is sufficiently substantial for moral life as we need it to be: whether it is something in which we can recognize, and which we are willing to call, moral life.

b.)

A second way to make sense of the idea of 'a vantage point outside individuals' affective lives', is admittedly at some distance from what impartialists typically aim at, but might nevertheless be worthwhile mentioning. On this view, the point of calling upon the image of an external vantage point would primarily be to call into question, reject, and move beyond, conventional value systems. Here is one example:

> If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke, 14: 26)

And here is another:

> [W]e need a critique of moral values, the value of these values themselves must first be called in question [...]. (Nietzsche 1967, 20)

The point of such assertions is at least initially negative: not to recommend some alternative already existent space of practices thoughts and values from which to draw our moral judgments and on which to base them, but to call for reflection and questioning of existing values and move to or create new ones.

More positively, one may argue that if we are to metaphorically 'go outside' our conventional, traditional, or customary space of practices thoughts and values, then we need somewhere else to go to – even if only as a temporary basis for reflection. One suggestion here could be to base the reflection, the revaluation of values, on something more primitive and pre-cultural, maybe something like our natural, instinctive, unacculturated, raw, even pre-linguistic, reactions – reactions to such things as suffering, vulnerability, power, and deception, among other things. Such primitive reactions, one may plausibly argue, are part of the psychological anthropological and historical bed in which our conventional moral system developed, and they might allow the development of new and different values. Nietzsche for one thus argues that revaluation of values requires "knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which [conventional values] grew, under which they evolved and changed" (Ibid.). At any rate, such a perspective gives us something we might be willing to think of as an external vantage point for moral thought – external to conventional thought anyway – and it is at least available to the impartialist, if

they so wish, to try and develop an understanding of that perspective as 'impartial'.

c.)

A third potential way to understand the impartialist takes them to attempt a sharper break with the affective lives of individuals. In one extreme sort of case, this may amount to a kind of setting human finitude aside, trying to metaphorically transcend it, or at least imagine doing so: imagine a kind of moral thinking that happens from the point of view of eternity or from an absolute nowhere and saying that anything short of this is not 'genuinely pure' moral judgment. This does not have to be objectionable. It may, for instance, express a kind of humility, perhaps by adding that 'only God may judge'. Nevertheless, and although not necessarily objectionable, this arguably still threatens to leave 'genuinely pure' moral judgment opaque and quite enigmatic, as it also doesn't fully identify anything specific as genuinely pure moral judgment: doesn't yet give full content to the idea, but merely metaphorically hints at it. It specifically leaves how God judges, and even what exactly judging comes to when God does it, unspecified. If the view is to be explanatory, however, the metaphor needs to be clarified. But I see no reason in principle to think that this can't be done. The view may yet be coherently substantiated.

I should mention a risk here, however: Setting human finitude aside could come to express or deteriorate into a kind of unhappiness in the Tractatus sense (Wittgenstein 1961 §6.43): "If this is what our moral life is like," an unhappy impartialist might say, "if moral judgment is essentially rooted in the messy and petty particularities of human affective life and cannot remain pure, then I do not want to have anything to do with it." Such unhappiness would be somewhat comparable to refusing to accept the measurements that a carpenter makes because their measuring tape is not absolutely rigid, saying that 'one might as well measure with a rubber band!' If one then takes note of the fact that the very idea of 'an absolutely rigid measuring tape' is unclear, e.g. because there is nothing that such a tape may possibly be made of, one may find oneself unable to accept any measurement that anyone has ever made of anything. Arguably, this would be opting out of the common practice of measurement altogether. In Stanley Cavell's terms, this construes "a metaphysical finitude as an intellectual lack" (1969, 263), and in Stephen Mulhall's terms, it treats limits as limitations, conditions as constraints (2005,

94). Such unhappiness amounts, that is, to an apparent refusal to accept, not logical, but yet transcendental conditions on what it is for us (who else?) to make moral judgments, and how the contingent – messy, sometimes petty – makeup of human life is internal to that. This, just as it is a transcendental condition on the practice of measuring that the measuring tapes need to be made of something.

In any case, although this attempt at a sharper break with individual's affective lives is not in itself confused illogical or incoherent, it nevertheless still stands in need of some further substantiation. We specifically need to know what positive idea of such transcendent moral judgment is being endorsed here and recommended, and we should withhold judgment until this is clarified. I should also say that it is possible to read Crary's criticism in such a way, i.e. not as pointing at a logical confusion, but as drawing attention to the transcendental conditions of moral thought.

d.)

Lastly, I want to mention a view that can count as a brand of impartialism and is presented, or so I'll claim, in Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics (1965). Like the views discussed in §5c, the view in the Lecture involves a kind of transcendence and break with the affective lives of individuals; unlike those views, however, the coherence of the view in the Lecture does not depend on further positive characterization of transcendent moral judgments. Rather, according to this view, a certain kind of transcendence is descriptive of our moral discourse as it already is. Let me explain.

Wittgenstein makes a basic distinction in the Lecture between relative and absolute values. Moral values, he claims, are absolute. Relative values are so called because they are measured by relativizing, namely comparing: A measuring tape, for instance, functions as a standard of evaluation when we measure things relative to it: when we determine their length by putting them against it. Or again, some road is *right*, for instance, relative to our destination; if we're going elsewhere, that road is wrong. This is a relative use of 'right'.[2] In

[2] Standards of measurements, e.g. the measuring tape, are beyond measuring so long as they function as standards, play the role of 'that by which we measure' rather than of 'that which is being measured'. In this sense, we may say that the standard itself is here beyond measurement and evaluation. (I take this to be part of Wittgenstein's point about the standard meter, 1953, §50.) This may suggest a sense of 'absoluteness', separate from the one I'm discussing, which may be reminiscent of some elements in

contrast, what has absolute value is precisely that which we can't measure in any such way, for it transcends any standard of evaluation. The absolutely right road, for instance, "would be the road which everybody on seeing it would, with logical necessity, have to go, or be ashamed for not going" (Wittgenstein 1965, 7).

Now, it is an essential, i.e. not contingent, feature of absolute values that there is no standard for their measurement. But this makes the very notion of absolute value puzzling, for it sounds equivalent to a notion of a length to which it is essential that it cannot be measured, which is absurd: If it can't be measured, what could it possibly mean to say that it is a value? And so, Wittgenstein asks,

> what have all of us who, like myself, are still tempted to use such expressions as 'absolute good', 'absolute value', etc., what have we in mind and what do we try to express? (ibid.)

One may answer by saying that those who are so tempted don't really have anything in mind, except some delusion perhaps. Philosophical availability, however, dictates that we can't say it for them; they'd have to say it in the first person, and Wittgenstein, being one of them, doesn't want to say this. Instead, he goes on to search for alternatives for what such language could mean – to 'logically analyze' them, as he calls it.

As it turns out, all the alternatives Wittgenstein examines fail. One of them, however, is of special importance and worth mentioning: the suggestion that talk of 'absolute value' is figurative, merely a 'simile'. According to this, the language of absolute evaluation indeed connotes the idea of comparison, a putting of something against a standard of measurement. This is just pretend, however, for there is no standard relative to which we evaluate in absolute evaluation, not really, which makes such talk figurative. This raises the question, however: if the evaluation in absolute evaluation is not made by comparison, how is it made? What is the simile of evaluation by comparison a simile for?

Kant's moral philosophy – specifically, the idea that our value as moral agents and judges lies precisely in the fact that we judge, not merely are being judged. For Kant, in other words, we are bestowers of value, not merely things on which value may be bestowed, and that itself, he suggests, is a transcendent kind of value: a source of value. Although this may be consistent with Wittgenstein's claims in the Lecture, it is not the direction in which Wittgenstein is going.

> [A] simile must be the simile for something. And if I can describe a fact by means of a simile, I must also be able to drop the simile and to describe the facts without it. Now in our case as soon as we try to drop the simile and simply to state the facts which stand behind it, we find that there are no such facts. (Ibid., 10)

And so, Wittgenstein rejects this suggestion:

> what at first appeared to be a simile now seems to be mere nonsense. (Ibid.)

And when all his other attempts fail too, he declares defeat:

> [We] have not yet succeeded in finding the correct logical analysis of what we mean by our ethical and religious expressions. (Ibid., 11)

Now, one may expect this to be the end of Wittgenstein's discussion, but it is not. For he immediately springs back and turns the defeat on its head:

> Now when this is urged against me I at once see clearly, as it were in a flash of light, not only that no description that I can think of would do to describe what I mean by absolute value, but that I would reject every significant description that anybody could possibly suggest, *ab initio*, on the ground of its significance. That is to say: I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence. (Ibid.)

This a remarkable statement! At first, however, Wittgenstein sounds like a sore loser, saying that it is not defeat if it is intended. Going beyond significant language, Wittgenstein says here, going beyond the measurable and relative, is not here a sign of confusion, nor is it a sign of unhappy treatment of limits as limitations. Rather, he says, it is intentional. It is part of the very point of the utterance: namely, to go beyond what is significant, to be nonsensical. And again: When he uses that language, so Wittgenstein says, he means to utter nonsense; he means to fail. And he doubles down and says this in the first person:

> For all I wanted to do with them was just *to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond significant language. My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. (Ibid., 11–12)

To emphasize, there is supposedly an important difference, for Wittgenstein, between not saying anything or being under the mere illusion of saying something and intentionally meaning to say nothing. Supposedly, the difference is pragmatic – a difference in what one *does*: When one is under the

mere illusion that they are saying something, they are trying in vain to say something; pragmatically, this is failure. In contrast, uttering nonsense when this is what one means to do is not failure; the nonsense is meant; it is a nonsense with a purpose. (Compare Diamond 2000, 165.) I argued above that the proximity of paradox is central to much philosophy; according to the view Wittgenstein presents in the Lecture, it seems that a kind of flirting with paradox is central to ethics too.

Is Wittgenstein really being a sore loser here? – It has been argued that "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics is undoubtedly one of the shoddiest things ever written on the subject" (Klemke 1975, 118). But, and if only out of patience and philosophical availability, there might yet be something worthwhile about his arguments in the Lecture. To see what I have in mind, recall the suggestion mentioned above that Wittgenstein rejects, namely that talk of absolute value is figurative. As we saw, Wittgenstein argues that similes must be similes for something, and he points out that this is not the case with absolute evaluations. Now, I want to suggest that Wittgenstein has a special reason here for rejecting the analysis: He rejects it, I believe, not because he believes that it is absolutely impossible for anyone whatsoever to point out what, for them, absolute evaluation is a simile for; believing that would arguably be philosophically unavailable. Alternatively, we can take Wittgenstein to be only speaking here for himself; when he uses the language of absolute evaluation, he says, he isn't willing to replace it with anything nonfigurative. And this gives him a rather different and special reason for rejecting that analysis: What Wittgenstein is saying here in essence is that no other language would convey his intentions in such cases; or so he insists.[3] And if we read Wittgenstein this way, an interesting possibility emerges: The simile of absolute evaluation, for Wittgenstein, is an essential simile, an ineliminable simile that cannot be "translated" into nonfigurative language.

But is this plausible? Admittedly, this idea of a simile that does not (logically) behave as similes should – a simile that is not a simile for anything – sounds strange. Let me therefore put the present case alongside some others in which we may not express ourselves nonfiguratively, and hopefully thereby

[3] Admittedly, Wittgenstein here uses the first-person plural: "in *our* case as soon as *we* try to drop the simile and simply to state the facts which stand behind it, *we* find that there are no such facts" (1965, 10; my italics). Still, given his emphasis later on to Waismann about the importance of speaking in the first person in the Lecture (Waismann 1965), I suggest that we take him to be speaking invitationally here: to be primarily speaking for himself and inviting others to recognize similar tendencies in themselves.

clarify matters a bit. Admittedly such cases are not very frequent. For instance, we sometimes talk of time as 'flying', moving faster than usual – when we have fun for instance. This is obviously not meant literally, for there is no implication here that time has a measurable speed; what would that even mean? And yet, there is arguably no way to capture our intention here without the image – here of something moving faster than usual. Or again, we talk of melodies being 'plaintive'. Once more, there is no implication here that melodies have a psychology or that they may be consoled. Still, we need the idea of being plaintive. We "want to use these words (with their familiar meanings) here" (Wittgenstein 1953, 216). Arguably, then, the similes in such cases are an essential part of what we are trying to convey, even though in an important sense they are not similes for anything. We cannot drop the similes and describe the facts without them. (I believe that this is what later Wittgenstein would call 'secondary uses' of linguistic expressions, and this special ineliminable kind of figurative language involved is one of their central features. For further discussion, also regarding the connection to absolute senses, see Diamond 1991.)

The suggestion then is that, when it comes to absolute evaluation, an essential, ineliminable, simile is involved – typically, an image of transcendence into a higher realm of facts. This, at any rate, is apparently how things were for Wittgenstein. In some cases – possibly also in Wittgenstein's – the imagery may get even more complex: it may, in addition, involve an image of a language in which truths about that higher realm may be captured and solutions to higher enigmas and riddles may be formulated, a book in which the sentences of this language are written, perhaps also a higher form of first-person authority and a higher life. All that imagery may be felt to be ineliminable. And I should also mention that, as rich as this imagery may be, it does not rigidly determine its own employment. This imagery, that is, may be employed in expressing different attitudes: One may imagine, for example, that in using the language of absolute evaluation in such a way, a higher authority is thereby vested in them from beyond; they may feel as if channeling superhuman truths. Alternatively, one's attitude may be that of deferentially borrowing words from a higher language that they don't have full authority to use. They may feel, that is, that all they may express is their linguistic non-authority, that they are not fully in charge of their own speech and meaning, as if 'speaking in tongues' and waiting, hoping, for someone else on the other side of the barrier to charge their words with significance.

It might be useful to say, in closing, that it is not my claim here that all speakers who employ the language of absolute evaluation are conscious of the figurative nature of their utterances. The sincere speaker here does not have to be a philosopher and may not be fully aware of the logical-grammatical situation or endorse the idea that they are purposefully trying to utter nonsense. Having said that, however, it is not farfetched to say, I think, that speakers who employ such language in moral and religious contexts are typically conscious of an intention to say something with a special force, as if crossing a barrier and penetrating a realm of significance that everyday speech cannot access, for instance: 'This genocide is horrific! utterly and *absolutely* bad!' which doesn't mean bad like the weather, or as a sewage system might be inefficient; the genocide doesn't fail to meet some standard – falls short of being a good genocide(!). And the point I want to stress now is that such intentions, in whole or in part, are commonly present in the words of people who use the language of absolute evaluation; this image of crossing a limit, that is, is an already existing feature of (some) moral discourse as we know it. And if this is true, and if such tendencies are indeed an already existing feature of at least some moral thought and talk, then the impartialist could recognize themselves as giving voice to or as attempting to capture these or similar tendencies, if they so wish.

References

Anscombe, Elizabeth (1959), *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*. New York: Harper and Row.

Aristotle (2001), *On the Soul*, J. Sachs (trans.). Santa Fe: Green Lion Press.

Aristotle (2004), *Nicomachean Ethics*, R. Crisp (trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Augustine (1955), *Confessions and Enchiridion*, A. C. Outler (ed.), A. C. Outler (trans.). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Bollnow, Otto Friedrich (1984), "Marcel's Concept of Availability". In: *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, Schilpp, P. A. & Hahn, L. E. (eds.). La Salle, IL: Open Court, 177–199.

Carnap, Rudolph (1959), "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language". In: *Logical Positivism*, A. J. Ayer (ed.). New York: The Free Press, 60–81.

Cavell, Stanley (1969), *Must We Mean What We Say?* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Cavell, Stanley (1979), *The Claim of Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Crary, Alice (2007), *Beyond Moral Judgment*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Descartes, René (1982), *Principles of Philosophy*, Miller V. R. and Miller R. P. (trans.). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Diamond, Cora (1991), "Secondary Sense". In: *The Realistic Spirit*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 225–241.
Diamond, Cora (2000), "Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's Tractatus". In: *The New Wittgenstein*, Crary, A. and Read R. (eds.), London: Routledge, 149–173.
Diamond, Cora (2012), "The Skies of Dante and Our Skies: A Response to Ilham Dilman". *Philosophical Investigations*, 35(3), 187–204.
Frege, Gottlob (1951), "On Concept and Object". *Mind* 60(238), 168–180.
Hacker, Peter (1987), *Insight and Illusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hobbes, Thomas (1996), *Leviathan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hume, David (1977), *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
Kant, Immanuel (1929), *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kemp-Smith N. (trans.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Klemke, Elmer D. (1975), "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics." *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 9(2), 118–127.
Korsgaard, Christine (1996), *The Sources of Normativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kripke, Saul (1972), *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.
McDowell, John (1998), "Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World". In: *Mind Value and Reality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 112–130.
Marcel, Gabriel (2002), *Creative Fidelity*, Rosthal, R. (trans.). New York: Fordham University Press.
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (2012), *Phenomenology of Perception*, Landes, D. A. (trans.). London: Routledge.
Minar, Edward (1998), "Wittgenstein on the Metaphysics of the Self: The Dialectic of Solipsism in *Philosophical Investigations*". *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 79, 329-354.
Mulhall, Stephen (2005), *Philosophical Myths of the Fall*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967), *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Kaufman, W. (trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
Nietzsche, Friedrich (1997), *Twilight of the Idols*, Polt, R. (trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett.
Pigden, Charles (2010), "Coercive Theories of Meaning or Why Language Shouldn't Matter (So Much) to Philosophy". *Logique & Analyse*, 53(210), 151–184.
Plato (1997), *Complete Works*, Cooper J. M. (ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett.
Quine, Willard Van Orman. (1986), *Philosophy of Logic*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
Rawls, John (1971), *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Russell, Bertrand (2010), *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*. London: Routledge.
Ryle, Gilbert (1949), *The Concept of Mind*. London: Routledge.
Scruton Roger (2012), "Neurononsense: Why Brain Sciences Can't Explain the Human Condition". *ABC Religion And Ethics*, https://www.abc.net.au/religion/neurononsense-why-brain-sciences-cant-explain-the-human-conditio/10100564.
Sholem Aleichem, (2000), "The Pot". In: *Nineteen to the Dozen: Monologues and Bits and Bobs of Other Things*, Ken Frieden (ed.), Ted Gorelick (trans.). Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 3–16.
Waismann, Friedrich (1965). "Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein". *The Philosophical Review*, 74(1), 12–16.
Williams, Bernard (1985), *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Witherspoon, Edward, "Conceptions of Nonsense in Carnap and Wittgenstein". In A. Crary & R. Read (eds.), *The New Wittgenstein*. London: Routledge, 2000, 315–349.
Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. Anscombe G.E.M., and Rhees R. (eds.), Anscombe G.E.M. (trans.). Oxford: Blackwell.
Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1961). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Pears D. F. & McGuinness B. F. (trans.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1965), "A Lecture on Ethics". *The Philosophical Review*, 74(1), 3–12.
Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1979), *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932–1935*, Alice Ambrose (ed.), Amherst: Prometheus Books.
Wright, Crispin (1980), *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Biographical Note

Reshef Agam-Segal is a professor of philosophy at the Virginia Military Institute. He specializes in Wittgenstein and in moral philosophy, and has written, among other things, on Immanuel Kant, Elizabeth Anscombe, and Cora Diamond. He is the author of *The Public Mind: A Hylomorphic Exploration of Consciousness* (forthcoming), *The Philosophy of Aspects* (forthcoming), and the co-editor of *Wittgenstein's Moral Thought* (Routledge, 2018).