

## RESPONSE TO REFEREES

### REFEREE 1

#### ROUND 1

- (1) Motivate, clarify, and defend what is being done at each stage of discussion. Introduce logical sign-posting.
  - I have done this throughout. Please consult the track changes. I have added several passages with motivations and logical sign-posting. I have clarified many passages that upon second reading I have also found to be less than clear.
- (2) Change “analytic philosophy” to “analytical philosophy” throughout.
  - I have made this change. I noticed that in the posting for the special issue the term “analytic philosophy” is also used. The editors may want to keep the special issue consistent in this regard.
- (3) Distinguish between morality, moral judgments, and moral responsibility.
  - Excellent point. I have made the appropriate changes and clearly marked off where moral judgments are being discussed and where the focus is on moral responsibility. I have introduced a paragraph highlighting their relationship in Kafka’s work.
- (4) More fully explicate the two opposing concepts of the introduction.
  - I have introduced new material to achieve a better explication. I found Heidegger’s concept to be particularly helpful in explaining the ‘conscience’ concept of the introduction and have therefore left some Heidegger in the discussion (see next point).
- (5) Delete (or make more helpful) the reference to Heidegger’s *Dasein* and to guilt.
  - As the referee suggested, I have deleted the reference to *Dasein* to make the text less stilted. I have, however, retained the concept in order to retain the comparison of approaches that I am pursuing in the paper. Heidegger does not play a major role, but he provides a useful foil to understand better what Strawson (versus Heidegger) means by moral necessity and why the de-transcendentalizing project is not universally shared (Heidegger is a counterexample).
- (6) Show clearly what Nietzsche/Kafka/Foucault contribute to the question at hand.
  - I have added substantial amounts of explanations and new material to give a comprehensive view of Nietzsche/Kafka/Foucault’s contribution. I am hoping that the text, as a consequence, has not become unnecessarily lengthy, but I am encouraged by the referee’s comment that greater length and more substance would aid the flow of the paper. I consider it to be a much better paper now, even at the expense that it will take a few minutes longer to read.
- (7) The idea that the concept moral responsibility in contemporary life has collapsed requires detailed strong argument.
  - I have taken this comment very seriously. I agree that it was not well-argued in the original paper. I have added a whole section outlining what I see to be Kafka’s contribution to what this “collapse” may mean. I have introduced five focus points: hierarchical organization, integrity of the self, possibilities for self-knowledge, the supremacy of reason over the will, and the assumption that the establishment of norms and values is primarily an exercise in metaphysics. None of these are original to Kafka, but Kafka demonstrably uses them to give a description of what he considers a collapse of moral agency (I give a lot of examples in the revised paper).
- (8) The conclusion seems to introduce at the last minute constructions that could have been helpful if deployed earlier in the discussion.

- With the logical sign-posting and the more detailed explanations in the body of the paper, I have taken up some of the constructions in the conclusion and hopefully added those helpful points well before they appear again at the end.

---

## ROUND 2

n/a

## REFEREE 2

---

## ROUND 1

- (1) The paper, as it stands, is textually too dense, and conceptually too sprouting.
  - I have reduced the number of concepts (for example, I have deleted reference to Heidegger's Dasein) and introduced more explanatory material in order to reduce the impression of density. For example, I have added new material (following another referee's advice) explaining what I mean by "collapse of moral agency in modernity" to be more precise and less suggestive about such substantial claims. I have introduced paragraphs that are more explanatory and lay out the organization of the paper in greater clarity.
- (2) There is a substantial mismatch between what the author promises to do and what s/he says in the conclusion.
  - I have introduced a significant amount of material to address this reservation. Please consult the track changes to view several places in which I have tried to address specifically the promises that I make in the introduction and in the abstract for the paper.
- (3) Link the paper to contemporary debates.
  - I have throughout the paper added references to more current debates in contemporary analytical philosophy. Please consult the track changes in the bibliography for an overview of the material that I have introduced. The paper has a historical approach considering developments in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—I have tried to be subtle in making the debate relevant for philosophers who currently do work in ethics; I am confident that the question of necessity in ethics and the impact of historical contingencies on ethics is relevant in contemporary ethics.
- (4) The presentation of Kafka's view is too brief to be helpful.
  - I have made substantial changes and additions to address this shortcoming. One whole section is now devoted to translating Kafka's position into a coherent philosophical position about moral agency and adducing textual evidence in Kafka for this position.
- (5) Replace a misguided popular image of Foucault's work by a more accurate and more subtle account.
  - I am grateful for this comment because I whole-heartedly agree that this didn't come off well in the original paper. I have tried to be more careful in my exposition and used the referee's comment to underline that Foucault is not a moral iconoclast but meticulously and in an original style details the consequences of historical contingencies for concepts that have traditionally been considered invulnerable to historical determinants. I have toned down my language around the idea of "collapse" with respect to moral responsibility and moral agency.
- (6) Could this more subtle Foucault have a role in the debate with Strawson, and if he could, what would that role be?
  - My hope is that with the extensive changes that I have made to the paper it has become more transparent how Foucault's and Kafka's work undermines Strawson's picture of the necessity of

certain moral features in modern life. In keeping with the topic of this special issues, I have tried to show how philosophical positions outside analytical philosophical discourse can create interesting arguments in analytical terms, such as questions about the role of necessity and historical contingency in ethics.

---

## ROUND 2

- (1) The author has made substantial changes to the text in order to streamline it, to state more clearly what he is doing, and to connect it to recent debates in moral philosophy. An elaboration of Kafka's "philosophy" has been added.
  - I have streamlined the paper even further as well as clarified and sharpened the argument in various places (consult track changes).
- (2) There is still too much going on in the text, too many contrasts, too many heterogeneous positions to be fitted into such a short text. Thus the author fails to make a credible case for the staged dialogue between Strawson, Kafka and Foucault. Is it really the case that the latter would deny what the former claims (e.g. that moral judgments are "participant attitudes" and that this is something fundamental for humans (and for what we mean by morality)). Are they not concerned with rather different things: e.g. the historical forms and practices in which such attitudes are shaped (Foucault) or the loss of moral coherence and meaningful authority in modernity (Kafka)?
  - There are two points to address here, the justified criticism that the text is "too sprouting" and the premise that the core argument of the paper is faulty, namely that Strawson's and Foucault's positions are mutually inconsistent. As for the first point, as in round 2 I have tried in this round to streamline and clarify the argument. I have cut several passages and relegated several trains of thought to parenthetical comments in order to hit home the one point: that Foucault's and Kafka's description of the modern world undermines Strawson's idea that on account of its autonomy morality trumps any other metaphysical theory, even Foucault's and Kafka's "historical metaphysics."
  - As for the second point, I must defend the main point of my paper: even though Foucault and Kafka do not draw normative implications from their observations and even though they in no way question the salience of moral questions in the modern era, they do undermine the idea that moral responsibility is invulnerable to metaphysical and epistemological attack. As skeptical as Nietzsche and Foucault may have been about the metaphysics and epistemology of "philosophy," they use them (and sometimes the way in which they undermine themselves) to ask probing questions about morality.
- (3) The interpretive issues concerning Foucault in the previous version remain. The author has added a few observations on Foucault, but still claims that Foucault's historical take undermines morality. His work does indeed have implications for the possibility of ahistorical moral truths. But this does not necessarily place him at odds with Strawson, whose problematization is quite different, emerging from the analytic philosophers' insistent concern for objectivity. Thus there is much more proper philosophical work to be done by the author to make this work. No mere revision of the text will fix the current problems.
  - I agree that Strawson's problematization is quite different. I was hoping to contribute to Professor Haaparanta's special issue "Philosophy in the 1900s" with an emphasis on a fruitful interaction between analytical and continental philosophy; some of this fruitful interaction is lost in translation, so I admit that trying to make a continental thinker such as Foucault commensurable with an analytical thinker such as Strawson may result in inaccuracies. Referee 2 has asked earlier to "link the paper to contemporary debates." I have tried this by identifying a

group of very current analytical moral theorists (ethical intuitionists such as Robert Audi), with whose position I pointedly disagree. In many ways, Strawson prefigures their approach to moral epistemology. I hope the referees will recognize this addition as an attempt to clarify the dividing line between the contrasting sides and make it more relevant to analytical philosophy today.