

# 13 Silence and Salience

## On Being Judgmental

*Neal A. Tognazzini*

### 1

Begin with a familiar maxim: just because you think something doesn't mean you should say it. Failure to adhere to this maxim often constitutes tactlessness and can cause offense, even if you have good reason to think what you think, and indeed, even if what you think is true. Speaking your mind may even, in certain circumstances, be not just imprudent but a moral mistake. To take a much-discussed recent example: there may be certain facts about you that make it morally inappropriate for you to call someone out for a misdeed even if you have good reason to believe they have done it, and indeed, even if they *have* done it. If, for example, you are yourself guilty of the same (or a similar) transgression, then to call someone else out while ignoring one's own wrongdoing would seem to involve making a groundless exception for oneself: the Kantian hallmark of moral impropriety.

Even if hypocritical blame isn't a moral mistake, though, there certainly seems to be something "off" about it. At the very least, the person being blamed seems entitled to raise a distinctive sort of objection, often voiced as a question: "Who are *you* to blame me for this?" The implication is that even if your blame doesn't involve a factual mistake, in any case it involves *some* sort of mistake. If you're no better than I am on this issue, best to keep silent.

Identifying this mistake, and making sense of it, is the project of several recent writers who are interested, broadly speaking, in the *standing to blame*.<sup>1</sup> This is not my topic, but it is related, and in any case it is helpful to point out that the best accounts of what goes wrong in cases of standingless blame (like our hypocrite) apply most naturally to blame that has been *voiced* or otherwise explicitly addressed to the wrongdoer. Since being the target of expressed blame is such a common and uncomfortable feature of our lives, it is certainly worth getting clear about. But *unexpressed*, or private, blame also seems potentially problematic, though making sense of the mistake seems a bit trickier (since its target may be unaware of being targeted). Whether someone might lack the

standing even to *feel* blame is a question even more intimately related to my topic, though my interest is not restricted to the mental state of *blame* in particular.

What I'm interested in exploring is not the maxim with which we began, but a closely related and more controversial one, namely: just because something's true doesn't mean you should think it. Cases of standingless unexpressed blame – if such cases exist – would be examples of this maxim at work, but I'm inclined to think there are other examples as well. The one I'd like to explore here is the case of the judgmental person. My questions: what exactly is it to be judgmental, and why is it bad? My suggestion: the judgmental person thinks things that, even if true, they shouldn't be thinking.

## 2

Let's start with a case and a theory. First, the case: a young married couple moves into their first house and begins the familiar fight against entropy known as home ownership. They manage to keep their house and property in adequate shape, certainly nothing that's going to get them featured in a home and gardening magazine, but at the same time nothing that will get them in trouble with the city or even their neighborhood association. The yard, in particular, is kept mown but not treated or watered, with the result that it goes partially brown in the summertime, and its spring growth ebbs and flows with the life cycles of the various lawn-like substances (grass, weeds, flowers) that constitute the yard. This doesn't bother the couple in the slightest – in fact, they rather like the natural look – but the couple's parents feel differently (pick a set of parents, it doesn't matter which). In their view every yard should have sod (or at least look that way) and it really ought never to appear brown, even in the summer. Of course, they tolerate the suboptimal yard owned by their children and hardly ever say anything about it, except perhaps the occasional passive-aggressive remark, which everyone knows is a parent's prerogative in any case. Still, every time they visit the house they are struck with wonder at how anyone can look at the state of the yard and not put re-landscaping toward the top of the to-do list.

It's a good question – one to which we will return – why paradigm cases of judgmentalism so often involve parents and children, but for now let's simply accept that this is indeed a paradigm case of judgmentalism. What exactly is it about these yard-based judgments that makes them different from, say, the judgment that the house is made of red bricks? Why does making the latter judgment not count as being judgmental, whereas making the former judgments does? And what exactly is wrong with making those judgments? (Or are we wrong in the first place to suppose that judgmentalism is about what judgments one makes?)

Now, the theory. Not my theory: Gary Watson's. Watson has suggested that judgmentalism is a second-order vice: a vice "pertaining to how we respond to the moral shortcomings of ourselves and others" (Watson 2013: 283). In Watson's view, judgmentalism manifests in two fundamentally connected ways: as *interpretive ungenerosity*, on the one hand, and as *being too unaccepting of faults*, on the other. At bottom, both are about unacceptance leading to interpersonal distance or hostility, and it is this that makes being at the receiving end of judgmental remarks so painful. In light of this account, Watson advocates acceptance as the non-judgmental ideal. Let me say a bit more about each manifestation and about how they are connected.

Consider interpretive ungenerosity first. The thought here is that many cases of judgmentalism involve overlaying a particular interpretation onto the words or actions of another when there is another, more generous, interpretation that is equally consistent with the evidence. Consider an example that Watson invokes, namely the hurt and anger that Beethoven expressed in the Heiligenstadt Testament, after his hearing had begun to fail him and yet he felt obligated to keep it a secret: "Oh you men who think or say that I am malevolent, stubborn or misanthropic, how greatly do you wrong me. You do not know the secret cause which makes me seem that way to you" (Swafford 2014: 302). The interpretively ungenerous person is disposed to jump to unflattering conclusions or perhaps simply fails to see that less damning conclusions are available. Of course, not every false interpretation is necessarily ungenerous – perhaps in the case of Beethoven the men in question were being as generous as the evidence allowed – but what Watson seems to be suggesting here is that one way to fight against becoming a judgmental person is to cultivate an active imagination that allows you to avoid adopting the theory of least resistance and applying it wholesale to your understanding of the person. As Watson says, "the interpretively generous person will be more hesitant to epitomize" another person in the terms of even a generally accurate interpretation (Watson 2013: 291).

On Watson's account, the second way judgmentalism manifests is through being too unaccepting of the faults of others – or, perhaps better, being too unaccepting of the *perceived* faults of others. In many of our relationships we adopt implicit standards, or expectations, that need to be met in order for us to be on "fully good terms" with the person (Watson 2013: 293), and while this is mostly unproblematic, the vice of judgmentalism shows itself when we adopt standards that are unreasonable or too exacting. As an example, Watson offers the pacifist father who uses his daughter's decision to join the military as a reason to cease communicating with her. The question of military service may be a deeply important, morally weighty issue for both of them, but we view the father as judgmental to the extent that we think him unreasonable for letting that issue be the litmus test for being on good terms with his

daughter. (As Watson points out, claims that someone is being judgmental will often be controversial in a way that mirrors controversy about moral questions more generally.) The problem here isn't that the father overlays onto his daughter's decision an uncharitable interpretation, but rather that he lets that decision completely color his vision of her character. His judgment that she is doing something morally objectionable may even be correct, but it's the way that judgment about her decision leads him to a judgment about *her* that makes his reaction a vice.

I said earlier that for Watson, these two manifestations of judgmentalism are connected. The connection is that when an ungenerous interpretation counts as judgmental, it is because the interpretation "serves as a prelude to and a pretext for a dismissal or rejection" of the person whose actions are being interpreted. The interpretation is "in effect [a] brief for nonacceptance, for a stance of rejection if not hostility, or at least for maintaining the distance of superiority" (Watson 2013: 291). So at its heart non-judgmentalism is about acceptance; it's about the demands we place on our relationships with others and about how we evaluate whether the other person has met those demands (Watson 2013: 294).

With Watson's account in hand, return now to the case of the parents and their yardwork-eschewing children. It's easy to see this as a case of being interpretively ungenerous: the parents view the state of the yard as resulting perhaps from laziness on the part of their children, when in reality the children just prize a more "natural" aesthetic or perhaps think that using sprinklers is a waste of water or perhaps just don't have the time to worry about their yard since they have a newborn baby in the house. A differently kempt yard certainly isn't sufficient evidence of a negligent homeowner and even more certainly isn't sufficient evidence of any sort of character flaw.

It's perhaps more difficult to see how the case might be embellished to fit with the idea that judgmentalism involves non-acceptance – how the parents could think that their relationship with their children is somehow on less than fully good terms because of their yard – but it helps to recall Watson's remark that non-acceptance might manifest as "maintaining the distance of superiority." The passive-aggressive remarks ("Oh did you want me to put out the sprinkler this morning?" "No, mom, we don't own sprinklers, remember?") are hurtful precisely because they imply a judgment of inferiority. And to the extent that this causes alienation or emotional distance, it seems as though the parents have not fully accepted the perceived faults of their children.

Summarizing his account, Watson says that "we should locate the primary vice of judgmentalism in the faulty ways in which one's judgment conditions one's relations with others" (Watson 2013: 287), where the judgment in question is a sweeping overall assessment of the person on the basis of a perceived (perhaps ungenerously interpreted) fault, what

Watson calls a “verdictive” judgment (292). This account strikes me as illuminating, helpful, and compelling.

## 3

Still, Watson’s account doesn’t seem quite right, and reflecting a bit further on the case of the parents can help us to see why. Watson’s claim is that judgmentalism involves noticing an alleged fault about someone and then holding that fault against them. Judgmental people are alienated or at an emotional distance from those they judge, on Watson’s account, because that alienation is simply part of what it *is* to be judgmental. While I don’t deny that alienation is often a consequence of judgmentalism, I’m skeptical that it is required. What if, instead of thinking themselves superior to their children in the arena of homeownership, the parents and the children managed to remain on fully good terms with each other? Even if the parents don’t hold the state of the yard *against* their children in any verdictive way, wouldn’t they still count as judgmental simply by virtue of always *noticing* the state of the yard, as though it were something worthy of notice?

Watson does draw a distinction between someone who is merely *hypercritical* and someone who is *judgmental*. In his view, since criticism may originate from a place of love, and need not imply that the criticizer views the relationship as in any way impaired, the hypercritical parent need not count as judgmental. But it strikes me as a false dichotomy to claim that either criticism comes from a place of love or else it is used as the basis for distancing oneself from the person being criticized. It seems as though there is a variation on the case of the parents and children according to which the parents’ judgments neither originate from a place of love, nor are used as a basis for dismissal or distance. What strikes me as judgmental in this case isn’t that the alleged fault is noticed and then held against the children. The mere fact that it is noticed seems to be enough.

## 4

To see the point more clearly, let’s talk for a minute about pudding. In a wonderful scene in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*, the Cratchit family is just sitting down for their Christmas feast, the one time each year that the family “splurges,” though their poverty would make their splurge meal look rather more like a snack to Ebenezer Scrooge (and, let’s face it, to most of us). There’s nothing but effusive praise for the meal all around, and dessert is the *pièce de résistance*:

Oh, a wonderful pudding. Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her

mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

Dickens 2004: 103

Anyone at that table would have been able to report on what was *not said*, but only the omniscient narrator of the story can also inform us about what was *not thought*. And in this scene, the Cratchits don't just fail to *say* that the pudding is small, they also fail even to *think* it. To say or think such a thing would have been heresy.

Why heresy? Well, if orthodoxy is a set of beliefs or attitudes prescribed to the members of a group, then a member of that group is heretical when they hold (or espouse) a belief or attitude that is "out of bounds." The Cratchit family is such a group, and it would be inconsistent with full membership in that group to show oneself ungrateful for rare treats like Christmas pudding. And notably, what would count as ungrateful isn't just complaining about the size of the pudding; it's even *thinking* that the pudding is small. In other words: being a member of the Cratchit family involves a certain *orientation*, or frame of mind, that draws one's attention toward, and away from, certain aspects of the world.

Watson uses the term "fault-finders" for those who are "inordinately preoccupied with the putative misdeeds of others" (Watson 2013: 291), and he suggests that fault-finding has its source in fault-tracking. The problem with fault-tracking, Watson suggests, is that it is often in the service of forming a verdictive judgment – the sort of judgment that may, if the circumstances are right, constitute an expression of judgmentalism. I agree that fault-tracking is problematic because it is often a prelude to a verdictive judgment, but it seems to me that sometimes, regardless of the overall verdict, merely tracking a fault is problematic on its own. This, I suggest, is what gives the pudding scene its warm glow: the Cratchits don't simply refuse to come to a verdictive judgment about their parents' ability to provide; they aren't even tracking the alleged fault that could lead to such a judgment. In other words, not only are the Cratchits obeying the maxim not to say everything they think; they are also obeying the maxim not to think everything that's true. And as I suggested at the outset, it's *this* maxim that takes us to the heart of a more complete account of judgmentalism.

## 5

I suggested previously that being a member of the Cratchit family involves an *orientation*, and I suspect that's generally true for relationships. But what exactly is an orientation? I'm not entirely sure, but I will try to say

a few helpful things. At the most basic (and yet metaphorical) level, an orientation is something like a *way of seeing* the world, a lens through which you see things. And that lens, that orientation, makes certain aspects of your environment *salient* while at the same time forcing other aspects of your environment to go *silent*.

Consider, for example, Wittgenstein's response, at *Philosophical Investigations* II.iv, to the problem of other minds: "My attitude toward him is an attitude toward a soul. I am not of the opinion that he has a soul" (Wittgenstein 1953: 152). One way to understand this cryptic remark is as expressing the view that there's a difference between the beliefs we form, on the one hand, and the background framework we (already) occupy when we form beliefs, on the other. Anti-solipsism is not a proposition to marshal reasons in favor or against; it is part of the framework, the lens through which we experience the world. When I'm thinking of orientations, I have something like this in mind.

Less cryptic is the broadly perceptual theory of emotions favored by Robert C. Roberts (2003), according to which they are *concern-based construals*. When you fear the spider, for example, you are experiencing an amalgam of a perception-like state (a construal that the spider is dangerous) and a desire-like state (a concern not to be harmed). Notably, the notion of a construal is subjective, in the sense that you and I might construe the very same object in radically different ways without either construal having to be incorrect. Like a duck-rabbit, the world often admits of more than one Gestalt. Also, although Roberts thinks that emotions are associated with characteristic judgments, they are not identical to any judgment. As many of us know well, fear of something may persist despite a wholehearted judgment that the thing feared is not dangerous, and a natural way to make sense of this is to conceptualize emotions as *construals*, ways the world *seems*, even if we know that's not the way the world *is*. Again, when I think of the praiseworthy Cratchit orientation, I have something like this in mind.

Helen Longino (1979) points out that what aspects of our environment we are inclined to count as *evidence* – and what theories they count in favor of – depends crucially on the paradigms we bring to an investigation. She points out, for example, that if we are working within a geocentric paradigm, the datum that night follows day with predictable regularity will count as evidence for the conclusion that the sun circles the Earth at a regular rate. But if we are working within a heliocentric paradigm, the very same datum will count in favor of the conclusion that the Earth circles the sun at a regular rate (Longino 1979: 42). And of course it's only if we already have some conception of celestial bodies at all that we will be inclined even to count the regularity of the night/day pattern as evidence for anything at all. Longino is making a point about how evidence is treated in scientific inquiry, but the general point holds true further afield. Background frameworks and implicit general

understandings are what guide our eye toward certain aspects of our experience and away from others. What I want to suggest is that our interpersonal relationships work in a similar way: our orientation toward others guides our eye toward some aspects of them and away from others.

What I'm driving at is similar to ideas found in Margaret Olivia Little's (1995) work on caring and Troy Jollimore's (2011) work on love. In developing an account of the epistemic significance of emotions, Little makes the point that what we *see* reveals how we *care*. She says:

What one is attentive to reflects one's interests, desires, in brief, what one cares about. [ . . . ] More generally put, if one *cares* about something, one is prepared to respond on its behalf, and preparedness to respond is intimately linked with awareness of opportunities to do so.

Little 1995: 122

Jollimore makes a similar point in developing his perceptual model of love. Here's the way he puts it:

Personal relationships [ . . . ] form part of the background against which practical reasoning, including the perception of one's reasons, takes place; what counts as a reason is determined largely by the relationships and value commitments one brings to the situation.

Jollimore 2011: 115

Instead of focusing on the salience of certain reasons to believe a scientific theory about the solar system, Little and Jollimore are pointing out that one's background framework (one's emotions, one's standing relationships) can make salient certain practical reasons as well. And it's not just that you wouldn't have *noticed* that you had those reasons for action without the relevant background; rather, it's that, without the relevant background, certain facts wouldn't even have *counted* as reasons for action at all.

Both of those things – counting and noticing – are relevant to the point I want to make about the Cratchit family. Whereas the size of the pudding may count as a reason for you and I to complain or feel disappointed (which is part of what gives our view on that scene its poignancy), it certainly doesn't count in that way for members of the Cratchit family. And *because* it doesn't, they don't even notice the size. It's not that they notice it and yet manage to avoid being disappointed; it's that the size is not even on their radar to begin with.

I have a suspicion that many aspects of our interpersonal relationships can be understood as a type of orientation: not just love (as Jollimore argues) but also blame and forgiveness, perhaps even faith. But that's a project for another time. For now I hope these remarks have made



tolerably clear what I have in mind when I speak of an orientation. I now want to take this idea back to our discussion of judgmentalism.

## 6

Recall that according to Watson, a judgmental person is one who is disposed to draw alienating verdictive judgments about others, where those judgments are the result either of unreasonable demands placed on the terms of a relationship or else of unreasonable assessments of whether the others have met those demands. My case of the parents and their yard-neglecting children was meant to suggest that there is a strand of judgmentalism not captured by Watson's account – in particular, the sort of judgmentalism that consists of taking certain facts about others to be a relevant basis on which to form judgments at all, even of the non-verdictive variety. In fact, I wanted to suggest something even a bit stronger than that, namely that judgmentalism might manifest as the mere *noticing* of certain facts about others, regardless of their perceived relevance to judgment-making.

With the notion of an orientation in hand, we can now accommodate these suggestions: to be judgmental is to make judgments (where this can include explicitly forming beliefs or perhaps just patterns of noticing) whose presence is (or whose consequences are) inconsistent with the orientation that constitutes the type of relationship in question, whether or not those judgments are alienating or verdictive. Judgmentalism, then, stems ultimately from disorientation.

I don't mean to suggest, though, that judgmental people are always disoriented through their own culpable ignorance or incompetence. An orientation is a relation, which means that there are two ways to be (or become) disoriented: you may have gotten yourself lost through your own movements, or you might have become lost due to the movements of the world around you. Relationships are dynamic things, and I suspect that many examples of judgmentalism are simply instances where someone has failed to keep up with the dynamism, perhaps even failed to realize that things have changed.

This, I think, is why the most ready-to-hand examples of judgmentalism are examples involving parents and children, as mine was. (Watson gives four examples in his paper; three involve parenthood and the fourth involves an implicit age gap.) As children grow, the nature of the parent/child relationship changes (should change, anyway) radically, and it can be hard for parents to keep up. It's hard to think of a compelling case of parental judgmentalism when the child is a newborn baby, for example. Why is that? One reason is that judgmentalism most often manifests itself in judgments about how one lives one's life, and babies aren't really "living a life" in the relevant sense. But arguably, it is also because the nature of the parent/child relationship, especially in the early stages, involves an

orientation where every fact about the child, no matter how “personal,” is fair game for the parental eye to notice and take into consideration. This all-encompassing orientation, in fact, is part of what allows parents to be *good* parents.

But this all-encompassing orientation very often overstays its welcome as children grow and begin making their own decisions about how to live their lives. When children are young, there’s nothing judgmental about a parent noticing a messy room and encouraging their child to clean it. But I hope messy rooms are something that I stop even thinking about once my daughter reaches adulthood. It’s not just that her room becomes her business in a way it didn’t used to be, so that I should keep my mouth shut; it’s also that, in a manner of speaking, I should keep my eyes shut.

Of course there is a worry that by adopting an orientation that dampens my awareness of certain facts, I’ll perhaps miss important indications that not all is well with a friend or a child. That messy room, after all, might be a sign of trouble. And of course it is important to be attuned to what counts as “business as usual” for a friend, but this idea of attunement also seems to be a matter of background understanding and not something that necessarily crosses one’s conscious radar, unless something is “off.” It’s not as though I need to pay attention to the state of my friend’s room whenever I’m there: even off-radar facts can rise to consciousness when they present a breakdown in background understanding. On the other hand, it may just be that this is one more item to put on the list of vulnerabilities that we are susceptible to as a result of being involved in intimate relationships.<sup>2</sup> Deep trust in the faithfulness of one’s spouse doesn’t just involve refraining from always asking them what they are up to when they are out with friends; it also involves not even considering the possibility that they might be up to no good. (Unless and until one is forced to consider that possibility by something out of the ordinary.) That opens one up to being seriously hurt, true, but it’s hard to see why that should be a reason to look for a different account of trust.

## 7

I turn, finally, to the question of what exactly is wrong with judgmentalism. On Watson’s account, judgmentalism is a second-order vice: to be judgmental is to be disposed to respond in faulty ways to the perceived faults of others. On my expanded version of the Watsonian account, too, judgmentalism is a vice, it’s just that it can also manifest by being disposed even to perceive the faults of others, or to perceive them *as* faults. But I’m not sure that calling it a vice exhausts what’s ethically problematic about being judgmental. In particular, a judgmental person hasn’t just failed to live up to certain ethical ideals; they have also often wronged the person

about whom they are making their judgments. And it's not clear that a mere vice can constitute a *directed wrong*.

Of course, Watson does say that a judgmental disposition will tend to lead to alienation and estrangement, and these ways of holding something against someone can easily fit the mold of directed wrongs, especially when they are due to placing unreasonable standards on acceptance. But I have maintained that someone can be judgmental even without their judgments leading to alienation and estrangement, so how can *I* make sense of the apparent directedness of the wrong involved in being judgmental?

Angela Smith (2011) draws a distinction (the formulation of which she attributes to Laurence Bonjour) between “merely behavioral friendship,” on the one hand, and “attitudinal friendship,” on the other. Whereas the former merely has the outward trappings of friendship, the latter involves, in addition, “the presence of attitudes of sincere care and concern” (Smith 2011: 251). In Smith's view, true friendship is attitudinal:

The relation of being a friend, I would contend, is a relation with certain normative demands, expectations, and responsibilities built into it. These demands, expectations, and responsibilities pertain not only to one's outward behavior, but to one's attitudes, as well. We reasonably expect our friends to have attitudes of care and concern for us, to respect us, to take pleasure in our accomplishments and feel sadness in our losses. Indeed, when we speak of the “duties of friendship,” we have in mind this whole complex of behavioral and attitudinal demands and responsibilities.

Smith 2011: 251

But how exactly can the failure to have certain attitudes constitute a failure of an obligation that we *owe* to our friends? Set aside the question of whether we have the right sort of control over our attitudes for them to be the proper target of responsibility attributions (though see Smith (2005) to clear up any misconceptions on this score). The question now is how the failure to have a certain attitude (or the having of a certain attitude) can count as a directed wrong.

Smith argues that adopting a contractualist moral framework can help to make sense of this. On a contractualist framework, moral principles are principles that no one could reasonably reject being bound by. So the question would be whether anyone could reasonably reject a principle requiring friends or intimates to have certain *attitudes* toward each other in addition to treating each other well. Plausibly, the answer is no, in which case you could manage to wrong a friend even if you don't treat them badly, but merely fail to have attitudes that are required by the relationship in question (or, I suppose, have attitudes that are inconsistent with the relationship in question). Of course, the contractualist

framework is controversial, but it does provide a nice framework with which to make sense of the claim that to be judgmental is not just to exhibit a vice but also sometimes a way of wronging the person you are judging.<sup>3</sup>

## 8

One efficient way to come across as condescending is to take up what P. F. Strawson calls “the objective attitude” toward one of your friends or loved ones. This is a stance – or, perhaps, an orientation – from within which you view another person as an object “to be managed or handled or cured or trained” rather than taken seriously *as a person*.<sup>4</sup> The objective attitude isn’t a bad thing in itself: as Strawson points out, it’s often exactly what’s called for in clinical contexts, or as an emotional escape from “the strains of involvement.” But to treat your spouse’s anger as, say, being fully explained by their hunger instead of by their justifiable objection to being mistreated, is to use the objective stance as a pedestal on which to stand in superiority.

In a way, I think that a judgmental person is often guilty of a similar offense. When we are fully immersed in a relationship – “involved,” as Strawson would put it – we are inside of a framework, operating within an orientation that screens off certain facts about the other person. But those facts become salient as we detach, as we begin to use a more objective eye to look upon the other person, and take the measure of their idiosyncrasies. In the right context – say, the clinical context – taking such measurements need not amount to being judgmental. You are meeting with the therapist precisely so that they can take the measurements and help you make sense of them. But the people in our lives we view as judgmental deserve the label in part because they are *not* our therapists; they are our friends, parents, loved ones. And in the context of those intimate relationships, being treated like a patient is bound to hurt our feelings.

This idea – that being judgmental involves inappropriate detachment and measurement-taking – provides another explanation of how someone might unwittingly, almost innocently, become judgmental. (The first explanation, offered, was that parents have a hard time keeping up with the way their relationship with their children changes as their children grow.) In brief, the idea is that judgmentalism is one of the hazards of striving for an authentic existence.

To see what I have in mind, consider a distinction offered by Heidegger which is similar to Strawson’s. Heidegger distinguishes between a stance we take up toward other people (what he calls “Being-with”) and a stance we take up toward objects (whether those objects are approached as “ready-to-hand” tools or as “present-at-hand” items fit for scientific inquiry). For Heidegger, this way of encountering other people is built into the framework, into our very nature as the sorts of beings we are,

and it's what dissolves the alleged problem of other minds (Heidegger 1927: 153–163). (Recall from earlier Wittgenstein's remark in response to the problem of other minds: "My attitude toward him is an attitude toward a soul.") But on Heidegger's view, this deep fact about us – that we are "always already" oriented toward other people *as people* – also brings along with it the threat of *inauthenticity*, the threat that this involved stance toward other people will leave us with no one in particular to be (we end up being absorbed into what Heidegger calls "the they," the crowd).

So how to avoid absorption and inauthenticity? For Heidegger, the answer is to become keenly aware of one's own mortality, but that's not exactly a cheery solution, so here's an easier way out: remind yourself of all the ways that you differ from others, mark contrasts, develop a sense of your own inner identity over against the identities of others. Discover who you truly are, as they say. Well and good, except that the project of finding contrasts with others requires *taking notice of* and *measuring* the qualities of others, so that you can use those measurements to carve out a distinctive place that's all yours. Thus embarking on the project of becoming a self of one's own – an authentic individual – seems to require a measure of detachment and so brings in its wake the risk of judgmentalism. It's a dilemma I'm not entirely sure we can escape.<sup>5</sup>

## Notes

1. For details, see Tognazzini/Coates (2018, especially section 2.3).
2. On this theme, see Cocking/Kennett (2000).
3. On the question of how beliefs can *wrong* people, see also Basu (2019).
4. Strawson (1962), as reprinted in Watson (2003: 79).
5. For helpful comments on this project, thanks very much D. Justin Coates and Sebastian Schmidt. I presented an early draft of these ideas at the University of Puget Sound, so I'd also like to express my gratitude to the philosophers and students there, especially Sara Protasi. Finally, thanks to the editors of this volume for inviting me to contribute.

## Bibliography

- Basu, Rima (2019): "The Wrongs of Racist Beliefs", *Philosophical Studies* 176, 2497–2515.
- Cocking, Dean/Kennett, Jeanette (2000): "Friendship and Moral Danger", *The Journal of Philosophy* 97, 278–296.
- Dickens, Charles (2004): *The Annotated Christmas Carol*, ed. by Hearn, New York: W. W. Norton & Co, Inc.
- Heidegger, Martin (1927): *Being and Time*, transl. by Macquarrie/Robinson, New York: Harper & Row 2008.
- Jollimore, Troy (2011): *Love's Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Little, Margaret O. (1995): "Seeing and Caring: The Role of Affect in Feminist Moral Epistemology", *Hypatia* 10, 117–137.

- Longino, Helen (1979): "Evidence and Hypothesis: An Analysis of Evidential Relations", *Philosophy of Science* 46, 35–56.
- Roberts, Robert C. (2003): *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Angela (2005): "Responsibility for Attitudes", *Ethics* 115, 236–271.
- Smith, Angela (2011): "Guilty Thoughts", in: *Morality and the Emotions*, ed. by Bagnoli, New York: Oxford University Press, 235–256.
- Strawson, Peter F. (1962): "Freedom and Resentment", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48, 1–25.
- Swafford, Jan (2014): *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Tognazzini, Neal A./Coates, D. Justin (2018): "Blame", in: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), ed. by Zalta, URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/blame/>.
- Watson, Gary (ed.) (2003): *Free Will, 2nd ed.*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Watson, Gary (2013): "Standing in Judgment", in: *Blame: Its Nature and Norms*, ed. by Coates/Tognazzini, New York: Oxford University Press, 282–301.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1953): *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Blackwell 2001.