

Priests of the Absurd: What Are Stand-Up Comedians Doing When They Invite Us to Laugh at Their Failures?

LUCY O'BRIEN

Abstract

Self-deprecating, self-belittling, stand-up comedy is a staple. Comedians invite their audience to laugh at them, and their failures. If they are successful, they will report on their failure in a way that is amusing, and the audience will laugh. In this paper, I want to think about such invitations. I will try to characterise what the stand-up comedian might be doing when they do that: what are they doing? I also want to ask why they are doing it, and why are they doing it before an audience. I argue that a self-deprecating performance is a highly distinctive form of reflective activity that allows a comedian to ministrate in the philosophical task of exploring, and guiding their audience in, the art of human existential absurdity. Their being able to do this is one of the reasons we value such comedy as the artform it is.

1. Introduction

Self-deprecating, self-belittling, stand-up comedy is a staple. A familiar scene on a stand-up comedy night will involve a comedian presenting a routine that emphasises their weaknesses, faults, slips, and ugliness on some dimension. They express their own pretensions and aspirations – and confess in the many ways they have fallen short of realising them. They invite their audience to laugh at them, and their failures. If they are successful, they will report on their failure in a way that is amusing, and the audience will laugh at them, and their failures.

In this paper, I want to think about such invitations to laugh at one's failure. In particular, I will try to characterise in some more detail what the stand-up comedian might be doing when they do that: *what* are they doing? I also want to ask: *why* are they doing it, and why are they doing what they are doing *before an audience* – what do they intend in having an audience, and what does the audience get out of it?

doi:10.1017/S1358246124000304 © The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Royal Institute of Philosophy This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

143

Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 96 2024

In considering what sort of answers we might be able to give to these questions I want to underscore three features of the activity we need to keep in view: that it results in laughing directed at a person, the laughing is directed at a person's failure, the laughing at a person's failure is an invited laughing by the person herself.

Before directly tackling the questions that frame the paper, I want to make a methodological point to manage expectations about the kind of answer we are able to give these questions.

The first thing to say is that there is no *one* thing a stand-up comedian inviting laughing at their failure might be doing – even given a single such invitation at a time. It is clear that a comedian might be doing any number of things when they invite an audience to laugh at their faults and failures – they might be earning money, they may be teaching students stand-up comedy, they may be expressing their frustration and distress, they may be warming up their vocal chords, and so on. Actions are wonderful heavy-lifting psychological phenomena: given a single concrete action there are many acts that you can be carrying out at the same time. They are multi-faceted, and a single action can realise multiple activities.

The second thing to note is that something that the comedian may be doing in inviting laughing at failure could be done in other ways. Acts that we carry out by doing one thing could be carried out by doing another – they are *polymorphous*. The comedian may be teaching students stand-up comedy in running through a self-deprecating routine – but they might have taught them another way – by playing them a clip, or by instructing them to perform, or any number of other things (see Sibley, 1970).

So, in asking a question of the form 'what is someone doing when they are ψ -ing?' and giving an answer of the form 'perhaps they are χ -ing' the aim is not to offer a hypothesis that all, or indeed most, ψ -ings are χ -ings, nor that all, or most, χ -ings are ψ -ings. Given the dependence of what is being done on the context, any such broad generalisations are more than likely to be false. The acts that a given concrete action realises will be highly sensitive to the particular occasion on which it is carried out. This does not, however, mean that it cannot be philosophically, psychologically, and socially illuminating to identify the possibility of ψ -ing by χ -ing, or uncovering the fact that, often, when we are ψ -ing one of the things that we are doing is thereby χ -ing. Making sense of much of human ingenuity, and peculiarity, depends on making sense of the patterns whereby we do some things by doing other things – and that is true in the absence of any law-like, or broad, generalisations covering such kinds of doings being available.

Here, in asking the question ‘what are stand-up comedians doing when they invite us to laugh at their failures?’ I am doing so with the aim of bringing into view *one particular kind of answer to it* – an answer that I think makes sense of there being a distinctly philosophical dimension of such practices, and make sense of partly why we value them as we do. I want to answer the question by suggesting that whatever else the comedian may be doing, and whatever else they may normally do in doing that, one of the things they may be doing is facilitating a form of existential philosophical reflection. Moreover, it is a form of reflection that is hard to do, but is a form that that they have developed the format and skills to make possible.

2. Fight Club

The philosophy of laughter tends to start with Aristotle. Aristotle says that ‘the laughable... consists in some blunder or ugliness that does not cause pain or disaster’ (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449a). But why do we laugh at failures such as blunders or ugliness? There is not a lot of philosophy written on the nature of laughter, as opposed to humour or comedy, but an exception is Paul Carus, author of ‘The Philosophy of Laughing’. It is slightly hard to determine why Carus thinks we laugh at failure, but one clear suggestion is that our laughing at another’s failure is a celebration of our comparative strength:

Can it be anything else than a shout of triumph, the loud announcement of a victory, and an expression of joy at success of some kind. (Carus, 1898, p. 261)

This accords with the superiority theory of humour – we find funny that which elevates us relative to others, and laughing is an assertion, and consolidation, of that superiority. The view can also explain why we tend to not like being laughed at for our failures. As Roger Scruton puts it:

If people dislike being laughed at it is surely because laughter devalues its object in the subject’s eyes. (Scruton, 1986, p. 168)

Taking these remarks together they suggest something like the following two claims:

Devalue

Laughing at failure devalues, diminishes its target. And mutual recognition between two people of a failure is not enough. The

act of laughing *itself* plays a role in socially devaluing the laughed at.

Competition

Competition for social superiority between individuals gives us an explanation for why A laughs at B's failures: in laughing at B, A is both devaluing B, and expressing delight in, and securing, their own relative success.

This framework invites the thought that when human beings get together, and allow each other to laugh at our failures we might be involved in some form of competitive sport – a kind of funny fight club? This kind of mutual diminishing by laughing at each other's failures is not uncommon. There are cases where the laughed at does not issue any explicit invitation, nor do they identify the failure, but there is an agreement that mutual mockery – 'bants' – will be tolerated, even welcomed. This is what might also be going on with 'what am I like' sessions with my friend, where explicit invitations to laugh at a failure, identified by the person being laughed at are issued. However, a crucial element of the stand-up comedian's routine is not just that the laughing at the failure they identify is invited by the comedian, but that is unilateral, and non-mutual. We, the audience, laugh at the comedian and their failure. We do not invite them to laugh back. Competitive chuckle club is obviously a possible human activity, but does not seem plausible as a distinctive or common use of the art of the stand-up comedian. That is not to say that there might not be a 'failure competition' involved at some comedy nights – the comedians themselves might compete for the amusement of the audience, trying to outdo each other in making the audience laugh at worse and worse confessed indignities. In which case one of the things that a comedian might be doing in getting people to laugh at their failure is to compete for social value with other. However, here the competition would be for the amusement of the audience, and would rely on the relation the comedian sets up – albeit with in a series of sets by other comedians – with their audience. The asymmetry, and non-mutuality, in that relation stands. So, we still need to understand what is going on in the simple comedian to receiving audience case.

3. Self-Harm Night

Perhaps, it might be suggested, what is often going on is indeed something unilateral and asymmetric, but that it still involves laughing as a form of devaluing, and celebration of superiority, with the

concomitant social harms to the laughed at. Perhaps the stand-up comedian, in inviting the audience to laugh at their failures, is engaged in an act of self-harm, which the audience enjoys and benefits from. Something like this is suggested, although, I think, not asserted, by Hannah Gadsby, in her stand-up show *Nanette*. She says:

I've built a career out of self-deprecating humour ... and I don't want to do that anymore. Because do you understand, do you understand, what self-deprecation means when it comes from somebody who already exists in the margins? It's not humility. It's humiliation. (Hannah Gadsby, *Nanette*)

Gadsby explains her doing it anyway by adding: 'I put myself down in order to speak, in order to seek permission to speak.'

On the self-harm explanation watching stand-up is a kind of blood sport – where the comedian invites us to witness, and enjoy, their acts of diminishing self-harm. Indeed, it can be. However, it is not, I think, often what is going on. Even in the case of Gadsby it would be naïve and simplifying to read this as her full view, or even as an assertion of part of her view. She makes these remarks, after all, in the context of a *performance* in which she is inviting us to laugh at her failings and failures – at the same time as reflecting before us on why she is doing this, and making her audience think about why they are laughing, without allowing the audience to cease laughing – because she keeps being funny.

If public self-harming were generally what the stand-up comedian were doing, then we would think twice about going to see them. We would be facilitating an act of self-harm, while benefitting from it in our own sense of superiority and enjoyment. We would be allowing the comedian to use themselves as a social lightning rod for their harm, and our gain, which would not be nice. The thought here is not that we do not, or would not, go to see such performances – we are often not very nice. The thought is that if this were often what is involved there would be a much more common narrative of guilt or, at least, recognition of the dependence of our amusement on the pains of the comedian. We do not, however, tend to think of the enjoyment of such performances as a dubious pleasure.

4. I am Spartacus: Resisting Standard Norms of Social Evaluation

The problem with both the explanations of what we are up to when we go to a stand-up comedy night is that they fail to make sense of the

extent to which such events are properly enjoyed, and can constitute a social good. We think of stand-up comedy as an educative experience in the human condition – not merely as a witnessed self-flagellation. These explanations, also, I think, ignore a particular feature of laughing-at-oneself comedy that I have not so far emphasised.

Consider the case when I laugh at my own failures when I am on my own. When I laugh at myself, in contrast to when I laugh at another, I take up a first-person reflective point of view from within which I both note a failure, and in laughing, celebrate its existence. This might involve some internal social competition, and reflexive-harms and gains – like some Chaplin-style performance of my punching myself, and glorying in the landing of it – but more likely the reflection involves me acknowledging my faultiness, at the same time as resisting it as a grounds for a diminution in my value. In being self-directed, freely exercised, and enjoyed, my laughing no longer functions as means of diminution – self-inflicted or otherwise.

Now consider the case of my inviting *another* to laugh at my failures. In doing so, I can invite the other to witness such a process of first-person reflection. In so doing:

- (i) I reveal my failure, but can also thereby express my insouciance in my preparedness to share it.
- (ii) I can neutralise the power of others to diminish by laughing at failure: it can be a way of declaring that 'failure is not socially diminishing around here'.
- (iii) I exploit a universality of the first-person reflective point of view, and implicitly invite, others to reflect on their own condition, and laugh at themselves and their faultiness.

Now consider the case of the stand-up comedian. They can function as a form of social resistance – in standing up and laughing at themselves, and inviting us to laugh with them, for a supposed failure, they can execute a kind of social directive, or at least proposal, to not let failures of that kind be determinative of social value: 'I am short, fat, and laughing at it, and asking you too, so it must be okay to be short and fat'.

The social resistance work of the stand-up comedian, whether in this form or others, is real. However, it is also highly implausible – and indeed funny – to think that this is its central work.

Bo Burnham invites us to laugh at him for supposing he is 'Healing the world with comedy ... Systematic oppression, income inequality ... the other stuff'. It being 'the only one thing that I can do about it while being paid and being the centre of attention' (Burnham, 'Comedy', *Inside*).

His invitation to laugh at his failures in relation to ‘systematic oppression, income inequality ... the other stuff’ is not itself an act of social resistance or recalibration. He is not ‘I am Spartacus-ing’ when he says – inviting us to laugh at him – that healing the world with comedy is ‘the only one thing that he can do about it while being paid and being the centre of attention’. He is doing something else: he is mocking himself, and his need to tend to both his vanity and his practical needs, in the face of recognition of the serious difficulties of the world.

5. Self-Therapeutic: Shame Dissipation

Should we rather think of the stand-up comedian as utilising their performance as a form of confessional, or as therapeutic shame management? Simon Amstell claims that this is part of his motivation for his stand-up comedy:

Part of what I get out of [stand-up comedy] is freeing myself of embarrassment and shame. So, I tend to say things out loud that I’m worried about ‘saying out loud’... By saying the thing that I’m most embarrassed about on stage, I end up witnessing the fact that it isn’t a problem. People don’t usually walk out, when I say the thing that I’m deeply ashamed of. (Amstell, *Buzz Magazine* Interview, 2021)

There are two elements to what Amstell claims here that we can distinguish. The first is that the public declaration of the thing he is ashamed about – the ‘saying out loud’ – gives him information about what is a problem and what is not. If people do not walk out maybe the thing is okay. The second is that in giving expression to what he is ashamed about, and getting that information, he can free himself from his shame; it makes him feel better.

However, this account of things ignores a key aspect of the normal context operative in a stand-up comedy setting. The stand-up comedian is given the role as a performer in charge of the social space; they are the king or queen of the room during their set. Things have gone very wrong when the stand-up loses control. If someone walks out it is not merely disagreement, or critical judgement, it is insurrection. Moreover, the comedian – if they are assured and funny enough – can determine what is a problem, and what is not. The thrill and difficulty of a stand-up routine to some extent lies in this social power. The comedian can lead the audience to laugh at things that it is problematic to laugh at, and to condone things that

are not condonable. Indeed, the fact that comedians have the power to guide and fashion what social norms are being taken to be operative in the context is what makes the suggestion that they are able to function as resisters to standard social norms make sense.

If the above is right, then any account of what a stand-up comedian is generally doing must be sensitive to the formal aspects of the stand-up comedy context – the distinction between performer and audience, between agenda setter and recipient, between artifice and reality. A comedy stand-up routine is not an amusing interpersonal chat between friends – the comedian relies on a temporary hierarchy in which they play a role on behalf of their audience, for their audience. Whatever form of therapeutic relief they may get will be secondary to the undertaking of this social role.

6. Reflections on the Absurd

To be human is to act, and to act is to act towards a goal, with a purpose. Human goals are set in many ways, but reflection on whether they are *really* meaningful, or pointful, can quickly lead us to a kind of existential vertigo. Does reality provide me with any secure reason to do the thing I am now doing assiduously and with care – to fold up my pyjamas, to write philosophy, to heat up my coffee. Doesn't life inherently involve an absurd discrepancy between the seriousness with which we live it, and any defence of its meaningfulness, required by that seriousness, that we are able to give. Here is Nagel on this phenomenon:

Most people on occasion feel that life is absurd, and some feel it vividly and continually ... In ordinary life a situation is absurd when it includes a conspicuous discrepancy between pretension or aspiration and reality: someone gives a complicated speech in support of a motion that has already been passed; a notorious criminal is made president of a major philanthropic foundation; you declare your love over the telephone to a recorded announcement; as you are being knighted, your pants fall down ... If there is a philosophical sense of absurdity, however, it must arise from the perception of something universal – *some respect in which pretension and reality inevitably clash for us all*. This condition is supplied ... by the collision between the seriousness with which we take our lives and the perpetual possibility of regarding everything about which we are serious as arbitrary, or open to doubt. (Nagel, 1971, pp. 716–18, my emphasis)

This sense of absurdity is born of *first-personal self-conscious reflection*. Nagel asks ‘Why is the life of a mouse not absurd? The orbit of the moon is not absurd either’. Neither the mouse, nor the moon, pursue their course with self-conscious commitment while regarding the principles on which they act as open to doubt. It is also born of the recognition that each of us is subject to such absurdity. The person who thought that only *they* were liable to a perception of the absurd, when they reflected on the meaningfulness of their activities, would not be understanding absurdity in the philosophical sense. It would be a kind of self-obsession. They would need to think of others either as quite different from themselves, like the moon or the mouse, unable to think self-consciously about their condition, or as incapable of being troubled by the contingencies that ground our goals and purposes.

How could we explain, and more importantly for my task here, explore, express, and manage, such ‘universal’ perceptions of absurdity? As Nagel points, it would be ‘useless to mutter: “Life is meaningless; life is meaningless . . .” as an accompaniment to everything we do. In continuing to live and work and strive, we take ourselves seriously in action no matter what we say’. It would also be absurd; it is funny to think of a self-conscious reflective agent thinking that she had solved her existential problem by a running commentary on the pointlessness of her activity, as she folds her pyjamas, writes her philosophy, and heats her coffee.

There are, of course, many ways in which we explore, express, and manage, such ‘universal’ perceptions of absurdity. We can cry, read Camus, write stories, tell jokes, do philosophy. However, one activity, more than any other, characteristically constitutes an expression of our perception of the absurd – that activity is laughing at oneself. As John Ohlinger claims, laughing at ourselves ‘can be seen as the mood where we’re conscious at the same time of our importance and of our insignificance’ (Ohlinger, 1990, p. 32, quoted in Gordon).

However, when I, now, at my desk, laugh at myself – still in my pyjamas, with cold coffee – and express my sense of the absurdity of my trying to write a philosophical article that captures the serious business of what we might be doing when we laugh at ourselves, what I do is a personal business. What is the difference between the person privately laughing at herself, her absurdities, and failed aspirations, for herself, as an expression of her ‘mood’, and the publicity of a stand-up comedian inviting a general laughing at their failures, and foiled aspirations? I am coping – giving expression, and salve, to my personal existential angst. The professional comedian, in charge of a room, with its norms and hierarchy, is, in contrast, capable of being tasked

with, and aiming at, the creation of a shared public social good. They can secure a shared social recognition of our situation, on our behalf.

Think of the stand-up comedian publicly and self-consciously, reflecting on their own failures, issuing the invitation to an audience to laugh at them also. Here we have someone engaged in deliberately displaying to the audience an exploration of the absurdity of human life that must come, originally, from first-personal self-conscious reflection. In doing this, they secure the possibility of exploring reflections of this kind on behalf of all of us. The stand-up comedian is, during their set, the director of operations, the sovereign of the space. They have the floor and get to determine what we, the audience, are all doing. They lead the audience in the skill of identifying the dislocation between aspiration and attainment, and in the skill of seeing the funniness inherent in the human effort to transcend itself. In doing this they are able to realise the nature, perils, and absurdity, of critical first-person self-conscious reflection for themselves. However, they are also able to realise the philosopher's project of communicating the universality of the nature of such first-person self-conscious reflection – they can show, by being a performing exemplar, that each of us, busy with the serious business of living, is subject to the same reflexive self-understanding, or rather self-confusion, and sense of absurdity. Moreover, they can show that our understanding of each other depends also on our appreciating the kinds of self-reflection we are all subject to. If we understand what is being done, we will come to realise that each of us, in thinking about ourselves, lives with a sense of absurdity. We *each* do this, in our own case, together.

A self-deprecating comedian might often be engaged merely in self-harming, competitive or otherwise, they may be engaged in self-therapy, or in aiming to resist and reform evaluative norms. However, a distinctive, and difficult, activity they can lead us in the art of is the self-conscious activity of exploring and experiencing the hilarity inherent in the human condition.

Although we very likely do not explicitly think of it in those terms, I want to propose that the fact that the self-deprecating comedian is able to lead us in this kind of distinctly human self-conscious philosophical activity, is part of why we value their work in the way we do, and think of it as a social good to be engaged with, supported, and promoted. It is work that can shift the self-conscious subject's relation to herself as she laughs. Funniness is, no doubt, the primary social good, but funniness of a form that also brings to light, and gives expression to, a core existential difficulty in being human, is sublime.

I was talking to my colleague, Rob Simpson, about the idea of the stand-up comedian leading an audience in the exploration of first-person absurdity. He asked ‘Catholic or Protestant?’ He explained that what he was asking was ‘is the comedian doing something any member of the audience could do just as well do for themselves, or does the comedian have a particular insight into, or relation with, the absurd that they can then communicate to others?’

Well, it takes training, practice, wit, specificity, keen observation, linguistic skill, honesty, to bring out the absurdity of an ‘immanent, limited enterprise like a human life’. Not everyone is able to appreciate the complexity and layers of ridiculousness, and fragility, inherent in most human lives – some of us are too embedded in our serious intents to be able, or willing, on their own to transcend them.

So, to that extent the stand-up comedian functions as a priest of the absurd. However, if I am right, what they are communicating is not fully understood unless it is understood as something also about each of our relationships to ourselves. The audience member who leaves thinking ‘well, she lives absurdly, I am glad I do not’ will have missed the point if the stand-up is aiming at the philosophical end that I am suggested that they may be.

In describing the activity involved as an exploration of first-person absurdity we might wonder whether many art forms are not similarly engaged in such work. Is the self-reflective poet or novelist not often engaged also in inviting the reader – the consumer – to be led in their own self-explorations? Do not some songs or paintings also serve to shift the subject’s self-conscious relation to herself? Yes, they may, but in not quite the same way. There is something very particular about self-deprecating live stand-up comedy. It has three features that rarely come together: (i) the comedian presents themselves as to be laughed at by performing an act of self-reflecting in a form that is accessible to others; (ii) the laughing audience laughs at a person knowing that person will experience their laughing at them, and others will experience that person being laughed at; (iii) even if it is an artifice, the self-deprecating comedian presents themselves in their own name – they invite laughing at ‘me’ – not a fully fictionalised character being played. An autobiographical text can do (i) and (iii); and comedy drama can do (i) and (ii). However, the self-deprecating stand-up comedian secures all three. It is the fact that it is, very directly, made common knowledge that they are involved in a public display of a reflection on their faults and failure, such as to be laughed at, that allows for the group recognition that we are all – each in relation to ourselves – absurd.

Let me end, on a darker note, by observing that the structure of the genre does mean that it also comes with distinctive costs and risks.

First, the comedian preforming may pay in offering up their faults and failures as the basis of their performance, and the target of laughter. Many of us would not be willing to use our own failures in the way the self-deprecating stand-up comedian does. Such public self-reflections come with the risk of pain, humiliation; the use of one's own pain and oneself as a conduit for the illumination of the audience can be psychologically costly. We see this vividly expressed in the quotation above from Gadsby. These costs are adverted to by Rosie Wilby in her *The Breakup Monologues* (2021, p. 17). An authentic act of self-deprecation for the illumination, and delight, of an audience can bruise the comedian themselves – because they are there, in their own name, being laughed at for their absurdities. Second, and contrastingly, the comedian can use the resources of the interpersonal structure I have described to launder their own wrongdoings, and make it common ground that hilarity, not punishment, is warranted. They can present the audience faults and failures as to be laughed, as part of ordinary human absurdity, rather than as wrongs that warrant shame. This is the other side of the power, discussed above, of the successful comedian to resist or reject norms, or to manage their unwarranted shame. Imagine a comedian, let's call him Louis Rebrand, who uses a confessional, self-deprecating, routine to make egregious mistreatments of others seem to be merely instances of the evitable gap between human aspiration and reality. Louis takes the power he can exercise in the room, and the skill he has developed, to reframe his faults and failures. Both kinds of risks are evitable concomitants of the three features characteristic of the genre – the comedian uses themselves as the conduit, and chooses what failures to focus on, leaving scope for them to get hurt or get free.

The self-deprecating stand-up comedian may be self-harming, earning money, getting therapy, resisting norms, just being funny, fault laundering, or any combination of the above. However, if I am right, the *form* of the self-deprecating performance also allows the comedian to ministrate in the philosophical task of exploring, and educating their audience in, the art of human existential absurdity. Their being able to do this, I suggest, is one of the reasons we value such comedy as the vital artform it is.

References

Simon Amstell, Interview in *Buzz Magazine*, 8 September 2021, accessed 15 April 2024, <https://www.buzzmag.co.uk/simon-amstell-interview/>.

- Aristotle, *Poetics*, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 23, W.H. Fyfe (trans.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1932).
- Bo Burnham, 'Comedy', *Inside*, Netflix 2021, accessed 15 April 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GR6QuCf-Ww>.
- Paul Carus, 'On the Philosophy of Laughing', *The Monist*, 8:2 (1898), 250–72.
- Hannah Gadsby, *Nanette* (Netflix, 2018 [2017]).
- Mordechai Gordon, 'The Nature of Laughing at Ourselves', *Philosophy Now*, no. 111 (2015), accessed 15 April 2024, https://philosophy.now.org/issues/111/The_Nature_of_Laughing_at_Ourselves.
- Thomas Nagel, 'The Absurd', *Journal of Philosophy*, 68:20 (1971), 716–27.
- John Ohlinger, 'Forum: You Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make you Laugh', *Journal of Adult Education*, 19:1 (1990), 25–34.
- R. Scruton, 'Laughter', in John Morreall (ed.), *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 156–71.
- F.N. Sibley, 'Ryle and Thinking', in O.P. Wood and George Pitcher (eds.), *Ryle, Modern Studies in Philosophy* (Palgrave: London, 1970), 76–104.
- Rosie Wilby, *The Breakup Monologues: The Unexpected Joy of Heartbreak* (London: Bloomsbury, Green Tree Imprint, 2021).