Blame and Moral Indifference

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Thanks to the super intelligent women who helped me get to where I am today.

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Introduction

Imagine a grocer, one who is always honest with her customers, and one who does so because acting in accordance with morality is her primary motive. This grocer cares about profiting from her vending as much as the next grocer, but performing the right act is what motivates her to be honest with her customers. If being honest with her customers were not as profitable as cheating her customers, this *good-willed grocer* would still treat her customers with honesty and fairness where other kinds of grocers might not. Many of us are inclined to think that this good-willed grocer is praiseworthy for being honest with her customers, and we would probably think of her acts as having moral worth. Philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant and Nomy Arpaly support our intuitions about the good-willed grocer. I will talk about how these philosophers justify our attributions of praise, or blame as the case may be, later on in this paper.

Now, imagine a second grocer. She is a malevolent merchant, who lies to and cheats her customers for the sake of doing so, or merely for the pleasure she derives from participating in and causing inequities. This *malevolent merchant* might not even particularly care about profits; she engages in vending activities just because she knows that being a grocer gives her the opportunity to steal from and hurt unsuspecting customers. Many of us are inclined to think that the malevolent merchant's acts have a type of negative moral worth, and we would consider this grocer to be blameworthy for cheating her customers. We might take her to be blameworthy because she is performing wrong acts precisely because they are wrong.

Even though the acts of these two grocers differ in the extent to which they are right or wrong, we could imagine these two grocers being equally responsive to moral considerations when they act. This is to say that the acts of these grocers differ in their level of moral desirability, but the grocers themselves could be equally responsive to the moral reasons in favor

of or against their performing those acts. The good-willed grocer identifies the fact that cheating one's customers will cause them harm and determines that she ought not cheat her customers. The malevolent merchant identifies this very same fact and determines that she should cheat her customers. Each agent takes moral considerations to be reasons for acting; they just differ in how they think they should respond to these reasons.

An act might be morally desirable and lack moral worth. Some acts appear to have moral worth and some do not. While many of the acts performed by moral agents are in accordance with morality, not all of them seem to commend themselves to praise in the way that the good-willed grocer's act does. Kant suggests that we imagine a third grocer: one who is always honest with his customers, but who is only honest with his customers because it is prudent to do so.[1] If this *prudent grocer* were to cheat his customers, he would probably lose business; he is always honest with his customers because it is good for his profits. If cheating one's customers were not bad for business, this grocer might not care about fair pricing, but he cares about it for now because it is beneficial for him to do so.

The prudent grocer clearly acts in accordance with morality, but, as Nomy Arpaly notes, we cannot help feeling that his performing the right act is somehow accidental.[2] For the prudent grocer, honesty is the means to some end, rather than the end itself. The fact that he is honest has more to do with his interest in profits than his interest in morality and, while we are happy that the prudent grocer is fair to his customers, we do not believe he is praiseworthy for his behavior, nor do we think that his act has moral worth.

I take the prudent grocer to be a type of morally indifferent agent. A morally indifferent agent is an agent who, on my view, acts without regard for moral reasons. This is to say that a

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[1] Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993) 10.
[2] Nomy Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

morally indifferent agent is an individual who, typically, does not take moral reasons to be reasons for acting when he actually acts.

When the prudent grocer is honest with his customers, he does not take any moral reasons in favor of his being honest with his customers under consideration, nor does he respond to them if they occur somewhere in his psyche; moral reasons simply do not exist on his horizons. By contrast, the good-willed grocer has moral reasons on his cognitive horizons, and it is precisely these reasons that move him to treat his customers fairly. The prudent grocer is comparable to the good-willed grocer in that they both perform the right act, but he is different in that he does not care about morality when he acts, while the good-willed grocer does seem to care about morality. For Arpaly, this regard for morality, or this propensity for responding to conscious or unconscious moral reasons, when performing an act is key to an act's having moral worth and an agent's being a potential candidate for praise and blame.

So far, my accounts of the grocers have not been all that interesting. Good-willed grocers are individuals whom we consider praiseworthy and malevolent merchants are individuals whom we consider blameworthy. The prudent grocer we regard with a general attitude of neutrality. I would like to compare the case of the prudent grocer to the case of a fourth grocer: he is a *beguiling grocer*. The beguiling grocer is much like Kant's prudent grocer; he has a desire for profit, and he acts on prudential motives, but his act is ultimately the morally wrong act. This grocer desires profit and, while pursuing profit, cheats his customers.

The beguiling grocer is like the malevolent merchant in that they both perform the wrong act; they both cheat their customers, but the beguiling grocer is like the prudent grocer in that, when he acts, he does so without regard for moral reasons. This is to say, the beguiling grocer, like the prudent grocer, is a morally indifferent agent. When the beguiling grocer cheats his

customers, he does not take moral reasons in favor of his being honest with his customers under consideration, nor are his actions responsive to them when they occur somewhere in his psyche. Moral reasons for acting are not on his cognitive horizons. The fact that he cheats his customers has more to do with his interest in profits than his interest in morality. The prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer are equally responsive to moral reasons when they act in the sense that both are equally non-responsive to moral reasons when they act.

Most people would probably consider the beguiling grocer to be morally blameworthy for cheating his customers. This judgment corresponds to a common way of regarding morally indifferent individuals. We tend to think of people who act without regard for others as blameworthy. However, we seem to engage in a type of asymmetry in our judgments of praise and blame. While we care about what kind of act an agent performed, right or wrong, when we assess her praiseworthiness or blameworthiness, we seem to be more interested in the reasons for which the individual in question performed that act. When we consider the good-willed grocer, the malevolent merchant, and the prudent grocer, we take a look at the reasons for which they were actually acting when we make judgments about their praiseworthiness and their blameworthiness.

However, when we make judgments about the blameworthiness of the beguiling grocer we are not attending to the reasons for which he actually acted, we only seem to be interested in the reasons for which we take him to be failing to act. Namely, the beguiling grocer is failing to act for moral reasons in favor of his being honest with his customers and we think he is blameworthy for this. If we were to attend to the reasons for which he was actually acting, we would have to regard him with the same moral attitude that we regard the prudent merchant. After all, they acted for identical profit-driven reasons. If we were to attend to the reasons for

which the prudent grocer was failing to act, namely, moral reasons in favor of his being honest with his customers, then we would have to regard him with the same moral attitude that we regard the beguiling grocer. After all, the beguiling grocer and the prudent grocer were equally unresponsive to the relevant moral reasons in favor of their being honest with their customers. Herein lays the asymmetry in our judgments about blame and praiseworthiness.

If we think that agents can be ascribed praise or blame merely on the basis of the right or wrong acts that they perform, then we would not make a distinction between the prudent grocer and the good-willed grocer when assigning praise. They both perform the right act and so they are both praiseworthy. This asymmetry in our judgments about praise and blame prompts a question for me. When we make judgments about potentially praising or blaming the prudent grocer, we determine that there is nothing special about his motives, his reasons for acting, that merits his being a potential candidate for our moral attitudes. The mere fact that he performed a right act is not enough to merit praise, and we think his motives are lacking. What then is so special about the beguiling grocer that he merits blame? The mere fact that he performed a wrong act is not enough to merit blame because we do not think that the rightness or wrongness of the act is what makes an agent blameworthy or praiseworthy, but neither are his motives all that interesting. The beguiling grocer does not act with malicious intent, meaning he does not cheat his customers with the purpose of harming his customers in mind. Rather, the beguiling grocer, just like the prudent grocer, is responsive to the profit motive, which is not in itself morally problematic or we would think of the prudent grocer as blameworthy as well.

My Project

My question is whether we are right to think that the beguiling grocer is a potential candidate for blame. Are morally indifferent agents blameworthy when they perform wrong

acts? Arpaly clearly thinks that morally indifferent agents are blameworthy when they act wrongly, and, appealing to our intuitions and actual practices, she thinks that this is because they are not responsive to moral reasons when they perform wrong acts.

In the first section of my paper, I am going to introduce Nomy Arpaly's theory of moral worth. I will take some time to distinguish Arpaly's view from Kant's in order to show the reader how Arpaly's view more successfully accommodates our intuitions about how we actually ascribe praise or blame. I introduce Arpaly's view with the praise-blame asymmetry that I have already mentioned in mind. I take Arpaly's theory of moral worth to be one that attempts to justify the actual asymmetrical judgments that we make when ascribing praise and blame, and I want to ultimately use Arpaly's view as a vehicle for demonstrating how we go wrong when we claim that morally indifferent agents are blameworthy when they perform wrong acts.

To reach my conclusion, I have to explore Arpaly's criteria for assigning blameworthiness to a morally indifferent agent when he performs a wrong act. This is more difficult than it seems. Arpaly's criteria for blameworthiness are ambiguous at times, and so my project in section 2 is an interpretive one. I will undertake to determine the necessary and sufficient criteria for ascribing blame to a morally indifferent agent on Arpaly's view. I ultimately determine that Arpaly thinks that it is sufficient for an agent's being blameworthy that he is insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons when he performs a wrong act.

From here I set out to explore what Arpaly means by insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons. If I can show that morally indifferent agents are not insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons when they act, then they are not blameworthy. This would be the case even if the morally indifferent agent performed wrong acts. To make this move, I establish criteria for reason responsiveness on Arpaly's view in section 3. I call this the

rationality requirement. If a person is to be considered reason responsive, then she must be capable of perceiving the relevant reasons for acting and she must be capable of being motivated to act on the relevant reasons for acting. I also make a distinction in this section between having a reason and having reason all things considered, a point that will be very important to my view.

I also go more in depth into the praise-blame asymmetry in this section, and point to the fact that, when we engage in actual moral judgments about praiseworthiness and blameworthiness, we attend to motivational versus normative reasons for acting. I bring this up as an empirical phenomenon, and I remind the reader of the cases of the four grocers that I described in the introduction. In the cases of the good-willed grocer, the malevolent merchant, and the prudent grocer, we attend to the motivational reasons for which they actually acted when we determine their praise or blameworthiness. In the case of the beguiling grocer, we attend to the normative reasons for which he is failing to act when we determine his praise or blameworthiness. However, when we appeal to the normative reasons for which the beguiling grocer is failing to act, it is possible that we are making claims about reasons that the beguiling grocer is failing to act for that he simply does not have, and I suggest that normative reason claims can look a little bit like external reason claims.

With this, I transition into Bernard Williams' distinction between internal and external reasons, and I take the time to describe what it means to have an internal reason, looking specifically at the beguiling grocer.[3] I note here that Arpaly takes herself to be an internalist about reasons, but suggest that she sometimes looks like she is making external reason claims. In this section I show that whether or not we take the beguiling grocer to have internal or external reason for acting, he is not actually insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons when

[3] Bernard Williams, "Internal and External Reasons," *Moral Discourse and Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches*, Eds. Stephen Darwall, Allan Gibbard, and Peter Railton, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 363 – 371.

he performs a wrong act. If the beguiling grocer is not actually insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons when he performs a wrong act, then he is not blameworthy on Arpaly's view.

Still in section 3, I offer up my claim that we are unjustified in blaming morally indifferent agents for performing wrong acts in general. In other words, my conclusion is not exclusive to Arpaly's view. This is because, if my description of the psychology of the morally indifferent agents is correct, and if we really are attending to the normative reasons for which we think the beguiling grocer is failing to act, then we are making reason claims about morally indifferent agents that either do not exist or that the morally indifferent agent could not have responded to differently. This means that our actual judgments about the blameworthiness of morally indifferent agents are unjustified.

In the final section of the paper, I note that I have undertaken a curious project by stating that morally indifferent agents are blameworthy for performing wrong acts on Arpaly's view and then showing that they are not. The point is that Arpaly consistently misapplies her view and most certainly does not think she has. This misapplication of her view comes about as an attempt to accommodate our actual moral judgments about praise and blameworthiness, which, as I will demonstrate, are unjustified. It is also the case that I think Arpaly incorrectly describes the psychology of her morally indifferent agents. In this section I address three cases of moral indifference that Arpaly thinks is blameworthy and show how Arpaly gets them wrong. I will show that these agents are not blameworthy.

Section 1: Arpaly on Moral Worth

As I have previously mentioned, people tend to engage in asymmetrical judgments when assigning praise and blameworthiness in cases like the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer. Any good theory of moral worth is going to demonstrate where our intuitions go wrong in these cases or it will accommodate them. As a matter of fact, ethicists and lay people tend to bestow praise and assign blame asymmetrically.

In her book Unprincipled Virtue, Nomy Arpaly creates a theory of moral worth that accommodates both our asymmetrical judgments about praise and blameworthiness as well as our intuitions that people are potential candidates for praise and blame on the basis of the reasons for which they act. I think her view also does a good job of including information from the field of psychology to better explain when we think people can be potential candidates for praise and blame.

Ultimately, I want to use Arpaly's view on moral worth as one example of how we make asymmetrical judgments about praise and blameworthiness and I am going to criticize this view, showing where our judgments, in this asymmetry, go wrong. Many philosophers come to similar conclusions about praise and blameworthiness in their theories, but I think that Arpaly's view expands potential candidacy for praise and blame in a way that makes escaping it more difficult. Since I want to offer a sincere challenge to this praise-blame asymmetry, I wanted to put my views up against a theory of moral worth that successfully appeals to both our intuitions and actual human psychology.

Arpaly's View

Arpaly's project consists of two important parts. First, she shows that an agent can be more rational by acting against her best judgment than she would have been if she had been

acting in accordance with her best judgment. Second, she shows that an agent can be praise or blameworthy just in case she is acting for certain reasons. The connection between these two parts is that if we can claim that a person who is acting against her best judgment is in fact acting for reasons, then she is a potential candidate for praise and blame when she acts. This view expands the realm of potential candidacy for praise and blame to anybody who can act for reasons, no matter how irrational she may take herself to be. On this view, the act of anybody who is acting for the relevant moral reasons has some moral worth, and the agent who performs the act is an appropriate candidate for praise or blame.

In this section, it is going to be important for me to explore a number of concepts in order to better explain what Arpaly's view of moral worth actually is. First, I must distinguish between different types of acts. Some acts are morally required and some acts are morally irrelevant, and this distinction is going to play an important role throughout this paper. Second, I will follow Arpaly and make a distinction between moral desirability and moral worth. Where these two concepts come apart is a central point that I will get back to in later sections.

Next, I will explore the concept of moral worth, showing how two different philosophers, Kant and Arpaly, have handled it and demonstrate where Arpaly's view has an advantage. Reason responsiveness is a central concept to Arpaly's view, one that I will take the time to explore a little in this section and in greater depth in the next section. Finally, I will address the question of negative moral worth and candidacy for blameworthiness, which is the topic of this paper. My description of Arpaly's view on negative moral worth and blameworthiness is partly an interpretive project. This is to say that her view is unclear in some places, and I will set out to determine what I think her view actually is, or, at least, what would be the strongest position for her to hold.

Types of Acts

As I have already noted, I am first going to address the topic of types of acts in order to get a better idea of when we are going to think of an agent as a potential candidate for praise or blame. Typically philosophers make a distinction between right acts and wrong acts. Right acts are acts that are in accordance with morality and wrong acts are acts that are not in accordance with morality. Furthermore, right acts are morally desirable and wrong acts are not. Right acts are morally required and wrong acts are morally prohibited. Acts that are neither morally required nor morally prohibited are morally permissible. The good-willed grocer acts in accordance with morality and is performing the right act by treating her customers fairly, and the malevolent merchant acts contrary to morality and is performing the wrong act by cheating her customers.

Moral Desirability versus Moral Worth

Certain acts are more morally desirable than others are. Following Nomy Arpaly, I will make a distinction between an act's moral desirability and its moral worth or moral value.[4] The extent to which an act is right or wrong determines the act's moral desirability. By the moral desirability, I also mean the extent to which an act is in accordance with the requirements of morality. In other words, moral desirability admits of degrees. An act that involves more right-making features than wrong-making features is more morally desirable than an act with more wrong-making features than right-making features. The good-willed grocer's act of honesty is morally desirable and the malevolent merchant's act of cheating is not morally desirable. In popular discourse, telling the truth is more morally desirable than telling a white lie, but telling a white lie is more morally desirable than telling a lie that is hurtful.

[4] Arpaly 69.

Two acts of comparable moral desirability can, however, differ in terms of their moral worth, so two individuals might perform the same morally desirable act, and yet these acts might have different moral worth. Suppose two different women provide their school-age children with lunches. One woman provides her children with lunches because she loves them and deeply cares about their well-being. The second woman provides her children with lunches because she wants the other mothers to think well of her. While both women perform the right and equally morally desirable acts of providing their children with lunches, the first mother's act has greater moral worth than that of the second mother. This is an important distinction because one of the goals of this paper is to demonstrate that morally undesirable acts can lack any (negative) moral worth.

Kant and Arpaly: The Question of Moral Worth

Questions about moral worth have been addressed by a number of philosophers, and many philosophers come to the same conclusions about the potential praiseworthiness or blameworthiness of certain agents. On the accounts of Kant and Arpaly, for example, the good-willed grocer is praiseworthy for being honest with her customers, but the prudent grocer is not. Even so, Kant's and Arpaly's views are importantly different. Kant suggests that an act that has moral worth is a right act done from the motive of duty.[5] This means that an act that has moral worth is a right act performed by an agent for precisely the reason that it is believed by the agent to be the right act. On this view, the motive of duty is a moral reason for acting. Hence, for Kant the good-willed grocer's act has moral worth because she treats her customers honestly as a result of believing treating her customers honestly is the right thing to do. By contrast, though the prudent grocer treats her customers honestly, Kant says her act lacks moral worth, and the prudent grocer is not praiseworthy.

[5] Kant 10.

An agent who chooses her act because it is the dutiful act is different from an agent who performs the right act out of an inclination. Only the agent who acts from the motive of duty is a potential candidate for praise. This distinction is similar to the one between the agent who acts from the motive of duty and the agent who acts from the motive of prudence. While visiting one's mother in the hospital is a very nice thing to do, Kant's view, the act only has moral worth if the act is chosen from the motive of duty. This is not to say that the dutiful agent cannot derive pleasure from performing the right act, so long as the motivation for an agent's choosing the pleasant act is foremost the fact that it is the act that accords with one's duty.

Like Kant, Arpaly thinks the dutiful grocer is praiseworthy and thinks that the prudent grocer is not praiseworthy. Even so, her account is importantly different from Kant's. Arpaly believes that acts that have moral worth are right acts that are performed by an agent for the relevant moral reasons. Agents who perform morally right acts for the relevant moral reasons are praiseworthy.[6] She takes responsiveness to relevant moral reasons to be an agent's desire to perform actions with the appropriate right-making features and to perform actions without wrong-making features. I will talk more about reason responsiveness later. Arpaly calls this *Praiseworthiness as Responsiveness to Moral Reasons* (PRMR), and she calls the motive from which praiseworthy actions arise *good will*. On both Kant's and Arpaly's views, acts that have moral worth have it in virtue of the agent's having the right motive when she acts.

As noted, Kant's and Arpaly's views differ in important ways. Arpaly's view, but not Kant's, allows for degrees of moral praise. Arpaly offers a revised version of the PRMR, which includes the importance of degrees of moral concern in our judgment about moral praise.[7] Her ideas on depth of moral concern are consistent with our intuitions that people can be more or less

[6] Arpaly 72.
[7] Arpaly 84.

motivated by the moral reasons that count in favor of or against their performing certain acts. The *merely morally-inclined individual* and the *moral enthusiast* might both be responsive to relevant moral reasons that count in favor of their visiting their mothers in the hospital, but only the moral enthusiast is motivated to perform the right act by these considerations. The merely morally-inclined individual might visit her mother for some moral reasons (compassion for suffering people) and some not-so-moral reasons (the expectation of an inheritance). The merely morally-inclined individual might not show up to the hospital if she feels stressed out about work, or if the traffic is heavy. The moral enthusiast is very motivated to act in accordance with morality, she is acutely responsive to moral reasons, and she always shows up to the hospital regardless of inheritances, stress, or heavy traffic.

The merely morally-inclined individual does act for relevant moral reasons; she does care about her mother, but these considerations can be outweighed by other kinds of considerations, meaning her concern for moral considerations are not so very deep that they successfully motivate her whenever she is faced with a moral decision. She is still praiseworthy for visiting her mother in the hospital. She performs the right act for relevant moral reasons. It is just the case that she is not as praiseworthy as the moral enthusiast.

On Arpaly's view, agents are more praiseworthy the more concerned they are with morally relevant reasons.[8] She takes moral concern to be the extent to which someone is concerned with actual moral reasons rather than reasons he believes to be moral reasons. An actual moral reason for acting is a reason that corresponds to the morally relevant features of an act, whereas a reason that is believed to be a moral reason may or may not correspond to the morally relevant features of the act. We can be mistaken about the truth of our beliefs. Arpaly's

[8] Arpaly 84.

understanding of degrees of moral concern will be very important when we discuss her conception of the blameworthiness of moral indifference later on.

Acting for Reasons versus Acting from the Motive of Duty

A second factor that distinguishes Arpaly's from Kant's view of moral worth, is that, on Arpaly's view, the praiseworthy agent, though she must be reason responsive, need not be consciously aware of the reasons that moves her to perform the right act.[9] Arpaly takes acting for moral reasons to be different from acting from the motive of duty.[10] An act performed from the motive of duty is an act performed by an agent because the agent believes it to be the right act. Once again, an act performed for the reasons for which it is a right act is an act that is performed for the actual reason that exists in favor of pursuing it. Acts performed from the motive of duty actually have the potential to be contrary to the requirements of morality because our beliefs about what is in accordance with our duty can be mistaken.

To demonstrate how actual moral reasons can be different from beliefs about one's duty, Arpaly cites the example of Huckleberry Finn.[11] He is a boy who has internalized the values of his era, and, among the values that he has internalized, is the belief that slaves are property. Huckleberry runs away from home at the same time as the slave Jim is running away from captivity. Huck finds himself in a moral predicament because he believes that he ought to turn Jim in to the authorities, believing that returning him to his owner is the right thing to do, but the idea of doing this is troublesome to him. Huck struggles with the idea of doing the act that he takes to be his duty. After spending some time with Jim, Huckleberry is reluctant to turn Jim in, determines that he is unable to do so, and eventually resigns himself to the belief that he is just a bad boy when he ultimately fails to turn Jim in.

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[9] Arpaly 51.
[10] Arpaly 73.
[11] Arpaly 75.

Huckleberry's actions are contrary to what he takes to be his duty and yet, Arpaly thinks, we are likely to be sympathetic with his plight and we are likely to think he is praiseworthy in spite of what he takes to be his weakness of will. This is because we take Huck Finn to be responsive to actual moral reasons for not turning Jim in to the authorities, even though he is not actively aware of these reasons. Upon spending so much time with Jim, Huckleberry is able unconsciously to recognize that Jim is a person rather than property, an individual deserving respect rather than imprisonment. Without this piece of knowledge floating into his active deliberations, he acts on a reason that he has for not turning Jim in, even though it is contrary to his expressed beliefs about what is right.

Huckleberry Finn could have turned Jim into the authorities, and it was his consciously held belief that doing so would have been the right act. Acting from the motive of duty could easily have caused Huck to act contrary to morality. Arpaly characterizes acting from the motive of duty as "acting for reasons *believed* or *known* to be moral reasons," rather than acting for actual moral reasons.[12] Acting from the motive of duty, as Kant would require of his agent, may not always results in one's performing a right act. By contrast, one who acts in response to relevant moral reasons is always acting in accordance with morality and, ultimately, is praiseworthy.

The case of Huckleberry Finns also serves to demonstrate Arpaly's idea that a person can be responsive to reasons for acting without deliberating. A person can be responsive to reasons for acting without ever being conscious of the existence of the reasons for which he or she acts, and a person can be responsive to moral reasons even when he is under the impression that his actions are contrary to the reasons he takes herself to have.

Reason Responsiveness and Acting Rationally without Deliberation

[12] Arpaly 73.

Let us leave Kant behind now to examine more closely Arpaly's concept of reason responsiveness. Arpaly contrasts her view on reason responsiveness with the standard view of rational deliberation, so we will start by describing rational deliberation and explaining how her view differs. Rational deliberation is the activity we engage in when we are reflecting on and evaluating reasons for acting and making judgments about which acts are the best to perform. Making choices often involves deliberation; often we use deliberation to put our instincts and intuitions in check, and deliberated upon decisions tend to hold some kind of special rational standing compared to other kinds of decisions. Arpaly argues that, while deliberation is helpful when making decisions and commonly utilized in our decision making processes, it is unnecessary to grant it any kind of special rational status.

Let us suppose a rational agent, Harriet, whose circumstances require of her that she make a choice. In cases of what we take to be rational deliberation, Harriet is trying to decide whether she wants to eat a snack before dinner. To make this decision, Harriet will consider all or most of the reasons that she has for eating or not eating the snack before dinner. She will think about the fact that the snack will ruin her appetite for a healthy meal later on, as well as the fact that she frequently becomes irritable when she is hungry. Since Harriet will be interacting with people before dinner and does not want her irritability to get the better of her, she decides to eat the snack.

We would say that Harriet rationally deliberated while determining whether she should eat the snack before dinner. This case is different from a case where Harriet just walks into the kitchen and unconsciously grabs a snack. Yet, in both of these cases we would claim that Harriet did in fact perform a rational act. If we were to ask Harriet, after she unconsciously grabbed the snack, why she had done it, she would probably be able to list all of the above reasons as reasons

in favor for her doing what she did; it would simply be the case that she had failed to sort through these reasons consciously before actually performing the act. Both Harriets are moved by the same reasons to eat the snack, but only the first Harriet deliberated and explicitly reflected on her reasons. This is the distinction between being consciously responsive to reasons and being responsive to reasons without deliberation.

On Arpaly's view, an agent does not have to engage in rational deliberation in order to be considered rational when acting.[13] Harriet, above, seems perfectly rational when she seeks out her snack; it is simply the case that she does not engage in deliberation while walking to the fridge and gathering up the food. When I call Harriet rational, I am saying that she has taken the successful means to her ends. To support her claim that rational action does not require deliberation, Arpaly presents examples of actions we generally think are rational but that are rarely deliberated upon. We regard actions as rational or irrational even when we know that the individual whom we are evaluating could not possibly have engaged in deliberative reasoning before the act was performed. Arpaly uses the example of good and bad plays made by expert tennis players. Expert tennis player most certainly do not have time to engage in deliberation while on the tennis court, but we feel perfectly legitimized in applauding for particularly graceful demonstrations and we feel similarly justified in yelling angrily when the tennis player has made a poor move.

Arpaly argues that we are able to make these claims about the rationality of the individual whom we are evaluating because we take this person to be reason responsive.[14] This is to say, we believe that the expert tennis player is acting for a reason when she makes a good or bad play, and we are judging the tennis player's rationality in making a particular play on the reasons for

[13] Arpaly 51.
[14] Arpaly 52.

which she is acting. As a matter of psychological fact, Arpaly notes, people frequently act for reasons of which they are not particularly aware. Anyone who has heard a popular culture reference to Freudian psychoanalysis should be able to imagine covert motivators hidden in the murky unconscious of humans, but Arpaly does not simply mean to state that we act for reasons that are always veiled in this way from the light of consciousness.

I, for example, occasionally forget the deadlines of class assignments when I am under a lot of stress, but can suddenly find myself poring through the syllabus expectantly only to realize that I had a paper due the next day. I start looking through my syllabus on the basis of an inkling or an intuition that I am forgetting something and then I realize that I am. My decision to look through my syllabus is based on a piece of knowledge that I have, but which I did not have immediate access to. I must have noticed the deadline at some point in the past and probably would have readily recalled it if I had not had three other assignments due and ample quantities of caffeine already in my system. In looking through my syllabus, I was responding to a reason that I had for looking through it, even though that reason was not apparent to me at the time.

There are a couple of questions that could be raised regarding Arpaly's understanding of acting rationally without deliberation. From a psychological, rather than philosophical, perspective, it is very hard to say whether a person would ever be able to report the actual reasons for which they were acting. Harriet, above, might never be able to tell us the real reasons she grabbed food out of the refrigerator, even though she is capable of listing off some plausible reasons for acting post hoc. There is ample empirical evidence that demonstrates how we frequently have no idea what reasons we are actually responding to when we act.[15]

[15] See Kelley J.D. Burns & Antoine Bechara, "Decision Making and Free Will: A Neuroscience Perspective," *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 25 (2007): 263–280.

In response to this suggestion that it is difficult to tell what reasons an agent actually acted for, it is important to note that this is not a problem for Arpaly. If a person was acting for reasons period, it is those reasons that the individual is acting on that we would regard with judgments about praise or blame. In fact, this reality about human psychology poses much more of a problem for any view of moral worth that requires that an agent be acting upon deliberated decisions in order to be regarded as praiseworthy because we would not know whether or not the reasons the agent in question reported were the actual reasons for which she acted.

In which case, one might wonder whether it is true that these decisions are actually made without deliberation. The deliberation was done at one point or another. One might suggest that the nearly reflexive decisions made by a tennis player on the tennis court are the result of years of conscious decision-making in the past. This means that the player is able to make fast rational decisions about what shots to take because she has already spent years practicing and deliberating upon her moves.

In fact, it is true that a beginning tennis player deliberates about what plays she should make, and, as she advances, she comes to require less deliberation when she plays. This example poses no threat, however, to Arpaly's account. On Arpaly's view, it only needs to be true that the person does not consciously deliberate when the act is performed. She would not deny that the tennis player's good playing comes about as a result of prior deliberation, but prior deliberation does not entail that deliberation occurs when the most recent act is performed. It is important to note, once again, that Arpaly's view is partially in response to the long held belief that only actions performed from one's most recent deliberations are rational actions. Clearly, the tennis player is playing rationally, even if she is not actively deliberating. This fact says nothing about prior deliberation or prior commitments to acting rationally. We want to asses the agent on the

basis of her rational processes when she performs the act because we can really only assess her potential candidacy for praise or blame on the basis of the reason for which she was acting when she performed the act.

The Moral Worth of Wrong Acts

So far, I have explained that Arpaly thinks that a person is praiseworthy when she performs the right act for the relevant moral reasons, and she thinks that a person is more praiseworthy the more she is responsive to relevant moral considerations in a given situation; this person demonstrates a greater depth of moral concern. Acting for the relevant moral reasons does not amount to acting from the motive of duty or acting on one's all-things-considered deliberated upon decisions. Acts have moral worth insofar as an agent is acting for relevant moral features of a situation. This brings us to the topic of this paper, our judgments about the moral worth of wrong acts and judgments about the blameworthiness of morally indifferent agents. The distinction between acts that have moral worth and acts that lack moral worth is not typically addressed for wrong acts. For Kant, this is because he does not address the moral worth of wrong acts. Because wrong acts are acts that are contrary to one's duty to act in accordance with morality, it is taken for granted that they lack any sort of positive moral value. He does not seem to address the existence of the negative moral value of a wrong act, even though he clearly indicates that wrong acts are problematic.

Arpaly, quite importantly, does address the moral value of wrong acts. An agent can be considered blameworthy for performing an act when she has been insufficiently responsive to moral reasons, or when she has been responsive to malicious reasons, when she has a *deficiency of good-will* or is *ill-willed*.[16] To be unresponsive or insufficiently responsive to moral reasons is to lack the desire to perform actions for their appropriate right-making features, and to be

[16] Arpaly 79.

responsive to malicious reasons is to perform wrong acts for the reasons for which they are wrong. An act with negative moral worth is a wrong act performed by an agent who has a deficiency of good will or who is ill-willed. I will call a deficiency of good will, or insufficient responsiveness to moral reasons, moral indifference.

It is difficult to discern Arpaly's view on blameworthiness. In some places, it seems like she is saying that performing a wrong act is a sufficient condition for ascribing blame, and in other places it seems as though performing a wrong act is only a necessary condition, and in others places in her writing performing a wrong act seems like neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for being blameworthy. In some places in her writing, Arpaly seems to indicate that all wrong acts have negative moral value and that moral agents who perform wrong acts are blameworthy. For example, she does not think that individuals who act out of ignorance are excused from blame when they perform wrong acts; she just thinks that individuals who act out of ignorance are less blameworthy than individuals who act for malevolent or morally indifferent reasons. Hence, it seems like Arpaly thinks that it is a sufficient condition for ascribing blame that an individual performs a wrong act. However, Arpaly also notes that individuals who are irrational in certain ways can be excused from blame because the reasons for which they act say nothing about their regard for moral reasons. This suggests that performing a wrong act is not a sufficient but a necessary condition for being blameworthy.

Arpaly's view here makes a difference because it has implication for how successful her claims about candidacy for blameworthiness will be, and Arpaly probably does not want there to be a lot of ambiguity about what her view actually is. That said, she also seems to indicate that being responsive to sinister reasons at all is something for which a person can be considered blameworthy, suggesting yet a third interpretation of her criteria for blameworthiness. An

individual who is responsive to sinister reasons, but who never acts on them and, thus, never performs a wrong act, might be blameworthy.

It seems a little strange that a person who performs no act might be blameworthy because this would make actually performing a wrong act neither a necessary nor a sufficient reason for ascribing blame. We typically blame people for the acts that they actually perform. However, if this is the view that Arpaly has, then it also provides us with an interesting way of interpreting her view. Arpaly might be more interested in assessing people on the reasons that they are responsive to than on the acts they perform. This is to say that Arpaly is more interested in the reasons that motivate an agent than the rightness or wrongness of any act he might perform. I have a suspicion that this is, in fact, what Arpaly is doing in some places in her book, even though I do not think that this is the interpretation of her view that she actually endorses. I will explore the ambiguity in Arpaly's view in greater depth in the next section.

To demonstrate how we attribute blameworthiness, Arpaly suggests that we should imagine the interactions between Jeanne and Joseph.[17] Jeanne tells Joseph to "Shut up," and her doing this hurts Joseph's feelings. While we always think that telling people to "Shut up," thereby hurting their feelings, is wrong, there are some circumstances where doing so is less blameworthy than others. In the first case, Jeanne comes from a country where telling people to "Shut up" is a common practice, and so it is not typically something that people respond to with hurt feelings. When Jeanne comes to the United States and tells her friend Joseph to "Shut up," her doing so says nothing about how concerned she is with morality. She makes what we call an honest mistake. If she had known that telling Joseph to "Shut up" would be hurtful, she would have avoided doing so. While Jeanne is probably blameworthy for performing the wrong act with negative moral worth, she is not particularly blameworthy for her offense.

[17] Arpaly 79.

In the second case, Jeanne knows perfectly well that telling her friend Joseph to "Shut up" would be hurtful, but she is just so frustrated from her day at work that she does not particularly care about how her behavior will be received. When Jeanne acts in this case, she is indifferent to the moral reasons that exist in favor of her not offending her friend Joseph, and she is, therefore, blameworthy. However, Jeanne's behavior in the second case is still less blameworthy that her behavior in the third case where she tells Joseph to "Shut up" precisely because she knows that her doing so will be hurtful to him. Joseph is a sensitive person, prone to having strong, negative responses to rudeness, and, on this day, Jeanne is taking advantage of the opportunity to get a rise out of Joseph. It makes her feel powerful when she can hurt people. Jeanne is responsive to sinister reasons when she tells Joseph to "Shut up" in this case, and this makes her blameworthy.

In case one, Jeanne is acting out of ignorance of moral reasons, in case two, Jeanne is acting out of indifference to moral reasons, and, in case three, Jeanne is acting from sinister motivations. While Arpaly seems to think that all three cases are cases of blameworthiness, she thinks that some of these blameworthy acts are worse than others. What is interesting to me about Arpaly's view is that she does not think that all cases of moral indifference are instances where the agent in question is morally blameworthy. Recall the comparison I drew between the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer. Neither agent has any desire to perform the right act, and neither agent responds to moral reasons when he performs the act, but one agent is thought to be blameworthy and the other praiseworthy on the basis that one performs the wrong act and one performs the right act.

Section 2: Interpreting Arpaly

In the previous section, I attempted to provide the reader with a brief overview of Arpaly's position. Particularly important to my paper is Arpaly's view on how we make judgments about blameworthiness. However, as I mentioned, Arpaly's written work leaves me with some interpretive issues regarding her view on blameworthiness. I will attempt to resolve these issues now. In this section I am going to try to determine the necessary and sufficient conditions for ascribing blameworthiness to a morally indifferent agent on Arpaly's view. First, I try to determine whether the actual performance of a wrong act is a sufficient or necessary condition for ascribing blame to an agent. In fact, I suggest at one point that performing the wrong act is neither, though I will ultimately determine that Arpaly takes it to be a necessary condition ascribing blame to an agent. Second, I will try to determine whether being morally indifferent when one acts is a sufficient or necessary condition for ascribing blame to an agent. The formulation of her view that I establish in this section will be the criteria for ascribing blameworthiness to a morally indifferent agent that I will use throughout the rest of the paper.

First, I am going to ask whether it is a sufficient condition for ascribing blame to an agent that he performed a wrong act. Is the beguiling grocer blameworthy just because he cheated his customers? Well, Arpaly pretty clearly does not think that the rightness or wrongness of an act alone is enough to assign praise or blame to an agent. This is to say that acts do not have intrinsic moral worth. This is why Arpaly makes a distinction between the moral desirability of an act and its moral worth.

The distinction between the moral desirability of an act and its moral worth is the reason why the prudent grocer's honesty with his customers is considered not praiseworthy. The prudent grocer is not praiseworthy for being fair to his customers, even though being fair to one's

customers is, in fact, morally desirable. This is because the reasons for which he acted were not the relevant moral reasons. In the case of the beguiling grocer, he performs an act that is morally undesirable, but not necessarily an act that has negative moral worth (an act for which he can be blamed). Arpaly seems to think that something else is required for assigning moral worth to an act and praise or blame to an agent, namely the fact that the agent acted for some relevant moral reasons. This fact is the centerpiece of her work and is contained explicitly in the PRMR. Arpaly takes a person to be a potential candidate for praise or blame when she has performed some act with certain moral reasons on her cognitive horizons.[18]

Given what I have already discussed, it looks like one would not be able to take Arpaly as saying that performing a wrong act is a sufficient condition for ascribing blameworthiness. However, Arpaly's view becomes unclear when we take a look at some of her examples. She offers the example of Boko, an individual who captures and roughly ties up a man who is sneaking around in his father-in-law's backyard in the middle of the night.[19] Boko mistakes this man for a thief; it was an honest mistake. He was unaware of some of the facts of the situation. Boko harms the man, but he was not intending to cause harm to some non-thief, and probably was not really intending to cause harm at all.

Arpaly notes that Boko is less blameworthy than people who intend to cause harm, but he is blameworthy nonetheless.[20] However, Boko acted for neither sinister reasons, nor was he particularly morally indifferent, so in this case it seems that his performance of a wrong act is sufficient to make him blameworthy. Arpaly makes similar judgments about other "ignorant" agents, taking them to be blameworthy when they perform wrong acts. However, in later sections of her book, she does note that people who are crazy in certain ways might be excused from

[18] Arpaly 72.
[19] Arpaly 102.
[20] Arpaly 103.

blame when they perform wrong acts. The example she looks to is the man who mistook his wife for a hat.[21] He mistreated his wife, but was not the type of being who could handle reasons in the right ways to be considered a candidate for blame.

I think Arpaly believes that Boko was in fact insufficiently responsive to moral reasons, that he should have known better than to cause harm to anyone, regardless of his thief status. I am just left wondering how acting from ignorance and acting from irrationality are relevantly different when Arpaly is making claims about acting for reasons. If the reasons that Arpaly wants agents to act on are not apparent or available to the agent in question, it is hard to see how the agent could have acted on them. Yet, even if the agent does not see the reasons that he is supposed to act on, Arpaly would still think of this agent as blameworthy. I can accept that Arpaly, ultimately, does not want to make the claim that the rightness or wrongness of an act is not enough to ascribe praise or blameworthiness, but I think that it is worthwhile to note where this interpretation of Arpaly's view might be met with resistance.

Let us suppose that Arpaly does not want to say that an agent's performing a wrong act is a sufficient condition for her being blameworthy. Does Arpaly take it to be a necessary condition for assigning blameworthiness to an agent that he performed a wrong act? Given the information I provided earlier in this section, this looks like it is going to be the best interpretation of her view, however, there is some room to contest this interpretation. I will discuss this inconsistency in her view and then get back to the question I just posed.

In two different chapters in her book Unprincipled Virtue, Arpaly notes that being responsive to sinister reasons, at all, is bad, indicating that being motivated by sinister reasons at all might make one blameworthy regardless of whether or not the agent in question actually acts on those reasons. In the first instance, Arpaly is explaining that having certain motivations is not

[21] Arpaly 150.

inherently problematic. Desiring money or love, for example, is not a moral problem, even if being overly susceptible to these concerns leads one to act in morally problematic ways. She states, however, that being susceptible at all to racist or hurtful motivations is always bad, even if they are never actually acted on.[22] The second time she brought up the idea that motivations themselves can make a person blameworthy she notes that acting on any sinister motivations makes one blameworthy, even when it does not result in a wrong act. Further, she states that "one can be condemned for having racist or sexist desires in the first place."[23] This interpretation of Arpaly's view might lead us to believe that actually performing a wrong act is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for ascribing blame to an agent.

To further support this interpretation, Arpaly notes, in a personal communication,[24] that she takes some thoughts to be acts, so having racist thoughts, even if one does not act on them, might make one blameworthy. The suggestion that one need not actually perform an act to be blameworthy justifies our intuitions about people who we think are blameworthy for having bad intentions, even if they are not efficacious (cases of trying and failing). A terrorist might set out to plant a bomb in a NYC subway and get distracted along the way. We still might think he is blameworthy even though he never actually followed through with his plans.

It is possible that Arpaly assumes that having certain motivations always results in one's performing certain kinds of acts, or, rather, it is possible that she assumes that having certain motivations when one actually acts always results in the performance of certain kinds of acts. A person, like the good-willed grocer, who is responsive to the relevant moral reasons, will always treat her customers fairly. A person, like the malevolent merchant, who is responsive to sinister reasons, will always cheat her customers. Assigning praise or blame on the basis of motivating

[22] Arpaly 81.
[23] Arpaly 143.
[24] Nomy Arpaly. Wheaton College. Austin House, 26 East Main Street, Norton MA. 03 May 2010. Guest Lecture.

reasons for acting would successfully ascribe praise or blameworthiness to both of these agents when they are both efficacious and not efficacious.

However, attending to motivating reasons, or the reasons for which an individual acts, will not allow us successfully ascribe praise or blameworthiness to all agents, and this is because of the praise-blame asymmetry I described at the beginning of this paper. Both the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer act for the same reasons, but one performs the right act and the other performs the wrong act. If only the reasons for which the agent actually acts matter when assigning praise and blame, then both the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer would be equally not praiseworthy or blameworthy. In other words, if we only care about the reasons for which these two agents act, then we would have to regard them with the same moral attitudes because they act for the same reasons.

If Arpaly believes that the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer should be regarded with different moral attitudes, then she must think that the wrongness of the act in question matters to some extent when assigning blameworthiness. In fact, in a personal communication, Arpaly notes that praise and blame can only be assigned to an agent for actually performing an act.[25] Agents who have good or bad intentions, but who fail to act on them, can be called virtuous or vicious but not praise or blameworthy. Thus, the racist or the sexist, who has sinister motivations, is considered vicious on Arpaly's view but not blameworthy for his sinister motivations. Getting back to my original question then, Arpaly takes it to be a necessary condition for assigning blameworthiness to an agent that she performed a wrong act.

The next interpretive problem I have with Arpaly's view is whether being insufficiently responsive to moral reasons is a sufficient or necessary condition for assigning blameworthiness to an agent for acting. I pose the question of whether it is a sufficient condition for an agent's

[25] Nomy Arpaly. Wheaton College. Austin House, 26 East Main Street, Norton MA. 03 May 2010. Guest Lecture.

being blameworthy that he is morally indifferent when he acts for two reasons. The first is that this question highlights, once again, the fact that the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer act for the same reasons, which is a topic that will get more discussion in the next section on praise-blame asymmetry. The second reason is that rejecting the sufficiency claim lends support to the interpretation of Arpaly's view that suggests that performing a wrong act is a necessary condition for ascribing blame.

In section 1, where I discussed the moral worth of wrong acts, I noted that it is Arpaly's view that an agent is blameworthy when he is insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons when he acts. I wonder whether Arpaly thinks that being insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons for acting is a sufficient condition for an agent's being blameworthy. Arpaly's view requires that being insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons for acting is not a sufficient condition for assigning blameworthiness because the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer, as I have already noted, act for the same reasons. If merely being insufficiently responsive to moral reasons, when one acts, is sufficient for ascribing blame, then we would have to think that the prudent grocer is blameworthy or that the beguiling grocer is just not praiseworthy. This is very much not what Arpaly wants to say, and it provides support for the interpretation that actually performing a wrong act is a necessary condition for ascribing blame on Arpaly's view. This is because, while Arpaly does not think that the rightness or wrongness of the act alone is enough for an agent's being praise or blameworthy, she does think that it will play a role in determining praise or blame.

The next question is whether it is a necessary condition for an agent's being blameworthy that he is morally indifferent when he acts. The answer to this question is no. This is because Arpaly very clearly thinks that agents who act on sinister reasons are blameworthy. In fact, it is a

sufficient condition for an agent's being blameworthy, on Arpaly's view, that an agent is responsive to sinister reasons when she acts. And so, while Arpaly thinks that an agent's performing a wrong act is a necessary condition for ascribing blame, she does not think that being morally indifferent is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for an agent's being blameworthy when he acts.

Now there is one question left. Does Arpaly think that it is a sufficient condition for ascribing blameworthiness to an agent that he was insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons when he performed a wrong act? This looks like the right formulation of her view. First, the individual in question is assessed on whether a right or wrong act was performed, and then the individual in question is assessed on the reasons for which he actually acted. The beguiling grocer, for example, would be blameworthy on Arpaly's account. She would determine this by pointing to the fact that the beguiling grocer cheated his customers (he performed a wrong act) and then noting that when he cheated his customers he did not act with regard for the moral reasons in favor of not cheating his customers.

Support for this final interpretation of Arpaly's view can actually be found in the PRMR. Recall that Arpaly claims that an agent is praiseworthy for performing a right act, if she has performed the right act for the relevant moral reasons. Similarly, Arpaly should think that an agent is blameworthy for performing a wrong act if she performs a wrong act with a deficiency of good will. I took the time to look at other interpretations of her view because I did not want to assume that Arpaly's view on blameworthiness was parallel to Arpaly's view on praiseworthiness.

If this is last interpretation of Arpaly's criteria for blameworthiness is the right one, then I have one further problem with her view. Depending on what insufficient responsiveness to

relevant moral reasons amounts to, Arpaly will never be able to say that a morally indifferent agent is blameworthy when he performs a wrong act. This, as I have noted, is the claim that I ultimately want to make, showing that our judgments about the blameworthiness of morally indifferent agents are frequently wrong.

If morally indifferent agents really do have moral reasons out in the world or in their heads that they should act on but choose not to act on, then it is possible that Arpaly is justified in assigning blame to these individuals when they perform wrong acts. I just think that this characterization of the morally indifferent agent is inadequate. For me to show this, I am going to have to talk about reasons and rationality. Section 3 will get into this topic in greater depth.

Section 3: Acting for a Reason

In the last section, I determined that Arpaly thinks that a person is blameworthy for performing the wrong act if he performed the wrong act while being insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons for avoiding that act. In order to address the question of what insufficient responsiveness to moral reasons amounts to, I have to backtrack a little bit and talk more in depth about reason responsiveness and rationality. This exploration is important because, if insufficient responsiveness to moral reasons is a part of the criteria for assigning blameworthiness, and if agents are not actually insufficiently responsive to moral reasons in the way that we generally take them to be, then we just might not be able to assign blameworthiness to morally indifferent agents.

In this section I am going to specify the criteria for a person's being reason responsive, and, therefore, for her being a potential candidate for praise and blame. Later, I am going to explore what we mean when we say that an agent has a reason to be responsive to. The point of this half of the paper is ultimately to show that agents that we take to be insufficiently responsive to moral reasons are really either not reason responsive, and, therefore, not a potential candidate for praise and blame, or they just do not have any reasons that they are being insufficiently responsive to.

Reason Responsiveness and the Rationality Requirement

If reason responsiveness and responsiveness to moral reasons, in particular, is a criterion for one's being considered a potential candidate for praise or blame, then it seems worthwhile to determine the conditions that an individual must meet in order to be considered reason responsive. As we have hitherto noted, on Arpaly's account, an agent might be reason responsive without deliberating about reasons or consciously acknowledging her reasons for acting.

However, it does seem likely, on Arpaly's account, that the agent must meet some minimum condition of rationality in order to be considered the type of being that acts for reasons.

In order for Arpaly's conception of reason responsiveness to be intelligible, I propose at least two conditions must be met by an agent. First, the agent in question must be capable of perceiving reasons for acting. Second, the agent must have the capacity to be motivated to act by these reasons for acting.[26] These two conditions together, I will refer to as the rationality requirement. I take the rationality requirement to be necessary but not sufficient for assessing whether the individual in question is actually reason responsive, making her a potential candidate for praise or blame. This is to say, more is required of a person than that she meets the rationality requirement in order to be considered responsive to reasons, but I do think that failing to meet the conditions of the rationality requirement would exclude one from being considered reason responsive.

I propose these two criteria because it seems like an individual who cannot satisfy either condition of the rationality requirement is not capable of rational thought as we know it. A being who fails to meet these criteria cannot regard reasons as reasons and cannot be motivated to act by these reasons even if it could recognize them. It may be that such a being is incapable of acting at all; all of its behavior might be pure impulse. Similarly, it is hard to imagine how we might describe a being that fails the first condition but meets the second. This is a being that is capable of being motivated to act by reasons, but is not capable of identifying reasons to act on.

[26] Arpaly's theory of moral worth is what David Shoemaker refers to as a "Moral Reasons – Based Theory" of moral agency. This is to say that we judge an individual's potential candidacy for praise or blame on the basis of whether or not that individual has the capacity to respond to the reasons that are provided to him in favor of or against performing some act. Most Moral Reasons – Based Theories of moral agency use some version of the rationality requirement to determine who is going to count as a reason responsive agent. See David Shoemaker, "Moral Address, Moral Responsibility, and the Boundaries of the Moral Community," *Ethics*, 118 (2007): 70 – 108; R. Jay Wallace, *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Susan Wolf, *Freedom within Reason* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990).

This would be a being who would act on reasons if he only knew that there were some available to him to act on.

It is easier to imagine an individual who meets the first condition of the rationality requirement, but who fails to meet the second condition. This would be an individual who is capable of perceiving reasons for acting, but who cannot be motivated to act by these reasons. In fact, this appears to be a form of irrationality that we encounter frequently and it baffles us. Imagine listing off reasons that a friend has in favor of staying home and getting work done, and yet they insist on going out and partying. This friend might agree with you that she has more reason to get work done than she has to go out and yet she always goes out. This is an individual who can identify reasons for acting (assuming here that we have identified all of the relevant reasons for acting), but for some reason or another is suffering from a motivational block.[27] This individual is unable to pursue the means to her own ends. Rage, depression, and drug addiction are all maladies that are known to obstruct our ability to be motivated to act by our by considerations that we take to be reasons.

Now, most people do not suffer from a complete failure on one condition or another of the rationality requirement. This is to say that most people are not globally irrational or irrational in every instance. Instead, people occasionally suffer from impediments in their rationality in certain kinds of situations or over certain kinds of considerations. For example, Arpaly thinks that there are people who fail the perception condition of the rationality requirement.[28] In particular, racists and sexists are the kinds of individuals who seem to be incapable of picking up

[27] C. Korsgaard, "Skepticism about Practical Reason." *Moral Discourse and Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches*. Eds. Stephen Darwall, Allan Gibbard, and Peter Railton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 373 – 388.
[28] Arpaly 82.

important reasons for acting regarding members of the groups against whom they are biased.[29] I will talk more about racists and sexists later on and explain exactly why they might not be blameworthy. For now, I will note that racists and sexists are not globally irrational, meaning they are very much capable of identifying reasons for acting in most situations; it just seems to be the case that they cannot perceive reasons specifically in regards to their racism or sexism.

For the most part, I am referring to this type of localized irrationality in this paper. I take the rationality requirement to account for localized irrationality as much as it accounts for global irrationality. I think that most people will experience localized irrationality at some point or another. In other words, many people are incapable of perceiving or being motivated to act on reasons with regards to particular acts. If those reasons for acting matter when the person acts, then it is difficult to talk about that person as though she had the capacity to perceive those reasons when she actually acted. This means that we cannot say that that person should have acted for those reasons for acting because it is not true that he or she could have.

Similarly, if certain reasons that a person has cannot motivate her, then she lacks the capacity to be motivated to act by those reasons. This means that we cannot say that that person should have been motivated to act by those reasons for acting because it is not true that he or she could have been so motivated. Having the capacity to respond to or be motivated by reasons means that we have to have the capacity to respond to or be motivated by all of the relevant reasons in a given situation. Being incapable of appropriately responding to some of the relevant reasons in a given situation is a failure to meet the rationality requirement when performing the act.

Sometimes this localized irrationality has moral implications, and these are the cases that I am interested in. This means that I am interested in issues regarding individuals who are

[29] Arpaly 101.

incapable of perceiving or being motivated to act on relevant moral reasons in any given situation. I have a suspicion that many cases of what we take to be an agent's blameworthy moral indifference are really cases of her failure to meet the rationality requirement. It is not the case that these individuals are insufficiently responsive to moral reasons, where they have moral reasons to respond to, could have acted on, and chose not to act on. Rather, these morally indifferent individuals are insufficiently responsive to moral reasons in that they have moral reasons to respond to that they either could not perceive or could not be motivated to act on. The moral indifference has to do with a lack of moral capacity rather than a lack of moral concern.

Arpaly, it seems would have to endorse both conditions of the rationality requirement. In Chapter 4 of Unprincipled Virtue, the section titled "Moral Worth, Autonomy, and Brute Beasts," Arpaly does in fact make note of the importance of the first criteria of the rationality requirement.[30] She thinks that beings that cannot perceive reasons for acting are not appropriate targets for praise and blame. She states that elephants, for example, cannot be blameworthy because they cannot perceive moral reasons. She seems to think that people, however, cannot fail on this requirement, which just seems wrong. Just because we are in the habit of thinking that people can perceive relevant moral reasons all of the time, does not mean that we are right about this. Surely, people can fail at perceiving or being motivated by reasons in these ways.

A Few More Comments on Rationality

The rationality requirement is a criterion for a person's being considered reason responsive, which requires that a person have certain rational capacities, namely the capacity to perceive reasons for acting and the capacity to be motivated to act by reasons that one has for acting. A person who fails at meeting either condition of the rationality requirement on any particular occasion is irrational on that occasion. This is just to say that we take someone to be

[30] Arpaly 144.

rational to the extent that she is responsive to reasons that she has for acting.[31] Or one might say, in order for someone to be considered rational she needs to have the right kind of relationship between the reasons that she has for acting and the act that she ultimately performs.

I am now going to offer further discussion on what we think it means to have a reason for acting. It is important for me to note that there is a difference between having *a* reason for acting and having reason for acting all things considered. A person can have a reason for performing an act, but still be more rational for not performing that act. For example, I might have a reason to skip class this morning. I am tired, my glasses are broken, and I have not had enough coffee (frankly, I think that any one of these facts provide me with a good reasons for not going to class). However, skipping class does not cohere with my other ends. I want to be a good student, I want to attend all of my classes in order to avoid hardship on the exam, and I really like the course material. When comparing the reasons I take myself to have in favor of skipping class (reasons that I am aware of and am responsive to, to the extent they serve as reasons for me) to the reasons I have in favor of attending class, it looks like I have more reason, all things considered, to attend class.

It is possible to have conflicting ends, and, as a result, conflicting reasons for acting. In one situation, a person might have one reason for performing act X and a whole lot of reasons for performing act Y, and so this person would have more reason, all things considered, for performing act Y. I will illustrate the distinction between having a reason and having reason all things considered by offering the case of Elenore. Suppose Elenore has some goal, namely to get to the hot dog vendor on the other side of the street as soon as possible. Then, so long as she has this goal, we would say of Elenore that she has a reason to cross the street as soon as possible. Elenore has some end, getting to the hot dog vendor, and crossing the street as soon as possible

[31] Korsgaard 379.

would be the best means for reaching that end. A person is thought to engage in successful means-end rationality if she successfully takes the appropriate means to her ends.

However, taking the swiftest or fastest route to one's ends is not always the most rational way to go about getting what one desires. This means that always doing what one has reason to do may not be the most rational thing to do. Elenore may have a reason to quickly cross the street, but it is important to note that there is a lot of traffic, that the drivers on this road are inattentive, and that the cars on this street have hit many people. These facts, coupled with Elenore's strong desire to live, means that she has greater reason to wait until a lull in the traffic or find a cross walk and not cross the street right now, even though she really wants a hot dog.

In fact, if Elenore did just run across the street to get to that hot dog vendor, we would probably think of her as impulsive – not quite rational in some way. This is because, while it is one thing to take the successful means to one's ends, it is another to perform the act that is best supported by all of the reasons, all of the means-ends pairs that one has, and these reasons include more than goals related to individual instances. This is a coherence concept of rationality. An ideally rational person would never have these kinds of conflicting reasons, but, since none of us is ideally rational, we are more rational when we perform the acts that we have the most reason to do or that we have reason to do all things considered. Huck may have some reasons to turn Jim in to the authorities, but he has the most reason to help Jim escape. Elenore may have some reason to cross the street right now, but she seems to have greater reason to wait a bit.

On some views, a person has a reason to perform an act insofar as she has some end that would be satisfied by her performing that act, and a person is means-end rational insofar as she

takes the successful means to her ends.[32] This is just to say what I have said already, a person is rational insofar as she does what she has reasons to do. These two ideas are clearly closely related. This concept of rationality shared by Bernard Williams, whose view on reason claims I will explore more in depth later. However, a person is more rational when she does what she has most reason to do; that is a person is more rational when she does what she has reason to do all things considered. This view is explicitly endorsed by Arpaly, but will also pose a problem for her view on the blameworthiness of morally indifferent individuals. I will discuss this more later on.[33]

Praise-Blame Asymmetry

I have just been talking about reasons and how they play a role in our judgments about rationality. I want to talk a little more about reasons and how they play a role in our judgments about praise and blame. While introducing the cases of the four grocers at the beginning of my paper, I brought up the empirical phenomenon of praise-blame asymmetry. In section 1, I pointed to the fact that a good theory of moral worth is either going to justify or contest our actual practices, and I stated that I take Arpaly's theory to be one that tracks and tries to justify our actual judgments about praise and blame. The primary purpose of this paper, I will remind the reader, is to show how our actual judgments that morally indifferent agents are blameworthy when they perform wrong acts is unjustified. I look to Arpaly's theory because I take it to accommodate the intuitions that are manifested in the praise-blame asymmetry, and I think Arpaly's criteria for praise and blameworthiness are harder to escape than other theories of moral worth that I have come across.

[32] Korsgaard 379.
[33] Arpaly 37.

Empirical studies show that when an agent performs some act with an unintended negative side effect, she is likely to be blamed for bringing about the unintended side effect. However, when an agent performs some act with an unintended positive side effect, she is not likely to be praised for bringing about the unintended side effect. Psychologists refer to this phenomenon as praise-blame asymmetry, and psychological researchers have observed and described this phenomenon in a number of studies.[34] This asymmetry in our actual practice of assigning blame and praise is justified on Arpaly's view. Our actual judgments about the two agents above are relevantly similar to Arpaly's judgments about the beguiling grocer and the prudent grocer.

In cases where praise-blame asymmetry has been observed, we are presented with something like the following example: There is some act A and its unintended side effect X.[35] Under condition 1, X is a desirable state of affairs. We would say that an agent, S, is not praiseworthy for bringing about side effect X while performing act A. Under condition 2, X is an undesirable state of affairs. We believe that agent S is blameworthy for bringing about side effect X while performing act A. The judgment that an agent is blameworthy for bringing about some unintended negative side effect but not praiseworthy for bringing about some unintended positive side effect demonstrates an asymmetry in our actual judgments about praise and blame. Neither of the side effects brought about by the agent were produced by her intentionally, meaning neither of the side effects were the aim of the agent's activities, but this is irrelevant to our actually praising or blaming the agent. F. Hindriks suggests that we make these asymmetrical

[34] See Joshua Knobe, "Intentional Action and Side Effects in Ordinary Language," *Analysis* 63.3 (2003): 190 – 194; David Pizarro, Eric Uhlmann, and Peter Salovey. "Asymmetry in Judgments of Moral Blame and Praise" *Psychological Science* 4.3 (2003): 267 – 272.

[35] For now, I take A to be a morally neutral or morally permissible act.

judgments about praise and blame because we are attending to the agent's motivational versus normative reasons for performing or not performing act A.[36]

Taking another look at the previous example, under condition 1, if agent S had pursued act A with side-effect X in mind, then agent S would have been praiseworthy. However, S did not pursue act A with side-effect X in mind, and so we think that S is just not praiseworthy. When making these judgments, we attend to S's motivational reasons, the morally relevant reasons for which S was actually acting, when we determine whether she is praiseworthy. In this case we determine that S is not praiseworthy for bringing about side-effect X because we believe that the reasons for which the agent was actually acting were not enough to merit her praise.

Under condition 2, we believe that the agent is blameworthy for performing an act with a negative side effect because we determine that the agent in question should have been more attentive to the morally relevant reasons that exist in favor of avoiding act A. Reasons that we think should be responded to, independent of what the agent actually does, are normative reasons. Because the agent performed act A while failing to acknowledge normative reasons that existed for not performing act A (namely that it would bring about side-effect X), the agent is considered blameworthy for bringing about side-effect X.

The more we perceive the agent as bringing about a positive or negative state of affairs intentionally, the more likely we are to judge the agent as praiseworthy or blameworthy for bringing about the state of affairs under consideration.[37] When an agent performs a right or wrong act, and we believe that the agent has performed the act intentionally, we will regard the agent as more potentially praiseworthy or blameworthy for performing that act than she would

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[36] Frank Hindriks, "Intentional Action and the Praise-Blame Asymmetry," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 58.233 (2007): 630 – 641.

[37] Yohsuke Ohtsubo, "Perceived Intentionality Intensifies Blameworthiness of Negative Behaviors: Blame-Praise Asymmetry in Intensification Effect," *Japanese Psychological Research* 49.2 (2007): 100 – 110.

have been for merely bringing about some side effect. Thinking about our intuitions on this matter, I might think my brother is blameworthy for carelessly placing my DVD in a location where it could get scratched, but I would think that he is more blameworthy for actually scratching it. This is just to say that if an agent is perceived as intentionally performing some right act for the purpose of performing the right act, then she is believed to be praiseworthy for performing that act, and if the agent is perceived as intentionally performing some wrong act for the purpose of performing the wrong act, then she is believed to be blameworthy for performing that act.

The asymmetry in judgments about acts occurs when the agent is perceived as intentionally performing some right or wrong act, and when the agent fails to perform the act for its rightness or wrongness. An agent who intentionally performs a right act without caring that the act is right is not praiseworthy for performing that act because the reasons for which she is acting do not merit praise. An agent who intentionally performs a wrong act without caring that the act is wrong is blameworthy for performing the act because she should have attended to the reasons in favor of her not performing the act.

Praise-blame asymmetry should be familiar enough by now; Arpaly seems to capture our naturally asymmetrical judgments about praise and blame in her theory of moral worth. While Arpaly does not refer to intentionality in her book, the concept can be accommodated by her use of responsiveness to moral reasons, since she has demonstrated that the intentionality or deliberated upon nature of the act is not necessary for ascribing praise or blameworthiness. If we recall the cases of the good-willed grocer and the malevolent merchant, we can note the symmetry in our judgments about their praise and blame. The good-willed grocer performs the right act for the right reasons and we think that she is blameworthy. The malevolent merchant

performs the wrong act for sinister reasons and we think that she is blameworthy. This is because we think that they performed their acts with the good making features or the wrong making features of the act in mind.

On Hindriks' view, Arpaly and the rest of us attend to the motivational reasons for which these agents are actually acting in order to determine whether they are praise or blameworthy. It is important to note here that Hindriks and Arpaly are engaged in very different projects. Hindriks is making an effort describe and explain the actual moral judgments that people make, and Arpaly is undertaking to demonstrate when we are justified in potentially praising or blaming an agent. However, these projects overlap a good deal. If Arpaly thinks that the way we actually praise and blame people is justified, then she will use the same strategy of making judgments that most people already use. One of the great merits of Arpaly's view is that it is so closely in touch with our intuitions and actual practices regarding praise and blame. That said, Hindriks argues that when we make judgments about the praise and blameworthiness of the good-willed grocer and the malevolent merchant, we attend to the motivational reasons for which these agents actually acted, and, in fact, Arpaly would assign praise and blame to these agents by attending to the reasons for which they actually acted.

However, when we consider the cases of the prudent grocer and the beguiling grocer, we judge them asymmetrically. In discussing the potential praiseworthiness of the prudent grocer, Arpaly is attending to the motivational reasons for which the prudent grocer is acting. Because the prudent grocer was honest with his customers only because he wanted to acquire profit, he is not praiseworthy for performing the right act.

In discussing the potential blame of the beguiling grocer, Arpaly appears to be attending to the normative reasons for which the beguiling grocer is failing to act while regarding the

reasons for which he actually acted, his motivational reasons, as irrelevant. It does not matter to Arpaly that the beguiling grocer cheated his customers only because he wanted to acquire profit. He failed to respond to the relevant moral reasons in favor of not cheating his customers. For this, he is blameworthy. While both the beguiling grocer and the prudent grocer act for morally irrelevant (motivational) reasons, only the beguiling grocer is determined to have performed an act that has moral worth, and this is because Arpaly attends to the normative reasons for which the beguiling grocer is failing to act.

One might ask whether the distinction between motivational reasons and normative reasons is relevant to the argument that I have made so far. I believe it is. In order to determine that the beguiling grocer, or the morally indifferent individual, is morally blameworthy, Arpaly has to adopt an alternative strategy, one that is not consistent with her own view. By this I mean to say that Arpaly fairly consistently attends to the reasons for which the agent actually acted or the motivational reasons when she makes judgments about praise and blameworthiness, but she has to make an exception to this rule in order to accommodate the view that the morally indifferent individual is blameworthy. When she appeals to normative reasons to justify blaming the morally indifferent agent, she runs the risk of appealing to reasons that the agent does not actually have in favor of acting. This just means that Arpaly might think that the beguiling grocer is blameworthy for being insufficiently responsive to reasons he never had.

I will continue this discussion by introducing the distinction between internal and external reasons for acting. I will talk about what counts as a reason for action, determining that only internal reasons can motivate a person to act. Eventually, I will take a minute to compare normative reasons to external reasons, stating that when we appeal to reasons that do not

motivate a person to act, we may just be appealing to reasons that do not exist. Ultimately, I will make the claim that the praise-blame asymmetry is unjustified.

Internal and External Reasons

Motivational reasons and normative reasons, then, appear to play a large role in our empirical practice of assessing the blameworthiness and praiseworthiness of an agent for performing an act. Since so much of the weight of our actual judgments about praise and blameworthiness is placed on these two types of reasons, I should say a little bit more about reasons. In this section, I am going to look to the work of Bernard Williams and Christine Korsgaard to explain some key features of practical reasoning. We have established that rationality is a requirement for being reason responsive. In other words an agent the must be capable of perceiving reasons for acting, and the individual must be capable of being motivated to act by these reasons. We have also established that a person does not necessarily have to engage in deliberation in order to be considered rational when she acts. We do not yet know what counts as a reason, what makes a reason a reason for acting, and we do not yet know why reasons should motivate us to act. I will address these questions in this section.

I will also address the question of whether the beguiling grocer actually has reasons to avoid cheating his customers. Arpaly would claim that he does have reasons to avoid cheating his customers, and she would claim that the fact that he fails to respond to these reasons when he acts makes him blameworthy. I want to reject these claims. First, I will investigate whether the beguiling grocer has an internal reason in favor of not cheating his customers that he is insufficiently responsive to, and I will ultimately determine that this is not the case. Second, I will investigate whether the beguiling grocer has an external reason in favor of not cheating his customers that he is insufficiently responsive to, and I will ultimately determine that this is not

the case, either. When I show that the beguiling grocer has no reasons, internal or external, that he is insufficiently responsive to, then I can make the claim that the beguiling grocer is not blameworthy when he cheats his customers.

Now I am going to look to the view presented by Bernard Williams and talk about how he identifies two types of reason statements. These are internal and external reason claims. On his view, an agent has an internal reason to PHI when we claim that the agent has a reason to PHI, and she can be motivated to PHI because the reason has support in the agent's psychology. An agent has an external reason to PHI when we claim that the agent has reason to PHI, but that reason has no support in the agent's psychology and, thus, does not motivate her to PHI. I will make an effort to offer better descriptions of these types of reason claims as I continue.

According to Williams, an internal reason statement is based, conditionally, on an agent's goals.[38] Suppose the beguiling grocer has a desire for profit and that profit could be made by being honest with one's customers. We would say that the beguiling grocer has an internal reason to be honest with his customers because being honest with one's customers is a means to satisfying his desire for profit. Our beguiling grocer, in this instance, looks a lot like the prudent grocer.

However, we can also suppose that even greater profits can be acquired by cheating one's customers, and, because the beguiling grocer wants to maximize his profits, we might then say that the beguiling grocer has an internal reason to cheat his customers because cheating one's customers is an even better means to satisfying his desire for maximizing profit. On Williams' view, we must show the relationship between the claim that the beguiling grocer has reason to be honest with or to cheat his customers and the fact that the beguiling grocer has some goal which would be satisfied by his treating his customers in a certain way. In other words, for an agent, A,

[38] Williams 365.

to have a reason to perform an act, it must be true that performing the act is related to some element, D, in the agent's subjective motivational set, S.[39]

According to Williams, the subjective motivational set, S, of an agent, A, contains all of her beliefs and desires, and other motivational elements, D. The D's of an S are largely acquired by non-rational means. The S is filled with acculturated beliefs and values and is permeable in that D's can be added to or subtracted from the S through experience and through rational deliberation. According to Williams, an agent has *a* reason to PHI just in case PHI-ing coheres with an agent's subjective motivational set.[40]

When I say that the beguiling grocer has *an* internal reason to cheat his customers, I mean only that he has *a* reason to act in this way but not necessarily reason all things considered. The question of whether the beguiling grocer has reason all things considered for cheating his customers will be addressed later on.

Williams offers four propositions that must be true of internal reason statements:

(i) An internal reason statement is falsified by the absence of some appropriate element from S.

(ii) A member of S, D, will not give A a reason for PHI-ing if either the existence of D is dependent on false beliefs, or A's belief in the satisfaction of D is false.

(iii) (a) A may falsely believe an internal reason statement about himself.

(b) A may not know some true internal reason statement about himself.

(iv) Internal reason statements can be discovered in deliberative reasoning.[41]

I will now undertake to demonstrate what it would mean for the beguiling grocer to have internal reasons to act in certain ways by appealing to the propositions that Williams offers on

[39] Williams 365.
[40] Wiliams 365.
[41] Williams 364 – 365.

internal reason statements. This matters because Arpaly makes internal reason claims about moral reasons for which the beguiling grocer is failing to act. We have to be able to identify when the beguiling grocer would actually have an internal reason for acting in order to determine whether he is actually insufficiently responsive to relevant moral reasons.

I might make an internal reason claim, stating that the beguiling grocer has a reason cheat his customers. According to proposition (i), if the beguiling grocer does not have the desire for profit, then it would not be true of him that he has a reason to cheat with his customers because he has no goal that is satisfied by his cheating his customers. In this case he has neither a reason for cheating his customers nor reason all things considered to cheat them. On the other hand, if the beguiling grocer does desire profit and profits are best acquired by cheating one's customers then the beguiling grocer does have a reason for cheating his customers. He might also have a reason for being honest with his customers but not have reason all things considered to be honest. He desires profit, which could be satisfied by being honest with his customers, but he also desires to maximize his profit, meaning he has more reason to cheat his customers than be honest with them.

According to proposition (ii), if the beguiling grocer believed it to be true that cheating one's customers resulted in profit when it was actually a false belief, then this belief does not provide the beguiling grocer with a reason to cheat his customers. This is a slightly trickier claim, but Williams demonstrates its viability using the gin and tonic example.[42] Suppose an individual has a cup of liquid. He believes this liquid is gin while it is, in fact, petrol. This person wants to drink from the cup with petrol in it, but only because he believes that the cup contains gin. The question is whether this person has good reason for drinking from that cup. One might think that he does have a reason to drink from the cup, given his beliefs that the cup contains gin

[42] Williams 364.

and that drinking from the cup would be a means to satisfying his desire for gin. His drinking from that cup would be in accordance with his belief that there is gin in the cup and his desire to drink the gin, and so, if he did drink from the cup, we would have a good explanation for his doing so.

Williams rejects the idea that this individual has a reason to drink from the cup. He believes that the individual does not have a reason to drink from the cup because the act, drinking from the cup of petrol, is not a means to any end in the individual's subjective motivational set. The belief that the cup contains gin is false, and so Williams states that this individual does not have a good reason to drink from the cup, even though he thinks he does. The individual wants to drink gin, not petrol, and drinking from the cup will not help him get any gin because it contains petrol. This individual is simply mistaken in his belief that drinking from the cup will help him satisfy his desire for gin.

The intuition that this person might have reason to drink from the cup is due to our understanding that his drinking from the cup has a good explanation, the fact that he believes that the cup contains gin and he desires to drink gin. Williams notes, however, that the fact that we have an explanation for the agent's drinking from the cup does not in itself means that it is rational for him to do so, and reasons should say something about an individual's rationality. And so, when the beguiling grocer holds a false belief that cheating his customers would help him acquire profits, he actually does not have a reason in favor of his cheating his customers because cheating his customers would not be a means to some goal of his. I am, however, going to say that, for the purposes of this paper, the belief that cheating one's customers will result in acquiring profits is true, and that the beguiling grocer does in fact have a reason to cheat his customers.

Related to proposition (ii) is proposition (iii). The beguiling grocer might believe that he should cheat his customers because he wants to profit, even though it is false that cheating one's customers actually results in profit. We could imagine that cheating one's customers actually results in a net loss of profit, even as the beguiling grocer thinks that it will help him out in his aims. In this case, the beguiling grocer really has no reason to cheat his customers. Proposition (iii) also includes the idea that the beguiling grocer may not take it to be true that he has reason to cheat his customers, even though he actually does. For example, the beguiling grocer could simply fail to see how cheating one's customers actually relates to his acquiring profits. Proposition (iii) is different from proposition (ii) in that (ii) demonstrates that false beliefs about the content of the subjective motivational set does not generate reasons and (iii) demonstrates that one can simply have a false belief about what one has reason to do.

One last proposition for what is true of internal reasons is that the beguiling grocer can acquire new internal reasons for acting. According to proposition (iv), it is possible for the beguiling grocer to apply his deliberative processes in order to discover how an act might relate to his current aims and then acquire a new motivation to do it. Arpaly might suggest that it is also possible for the beguiling grocer to become aware of a new reason to act and a new motivation to perform the act without the deliberative process. Williams would probably not deny this as a possibility, since he thinks that we can have reasons for acting with being particularly aware of them.

Reasons and Moral Indifference

I have just put forward Williams' view on internal reason claims and talked about what we would mean if we stated that the beguiling grocer has an internal reason for PHI-ing. It is important to note here that Arpaly takes herself to be an internalist about reasons, meaning that,

for the purposes of her argument in Unprincipled Virtue, she is likely to endorse the claims that Williams makes about internal reason statements.[43] This also means that Arpaly thinks that morally indifferent agents, like the beguiling grocer, must have internal moral reasons that they are failing to be responsive to when they perform wrong acts in order to be considered blameworthy. The beguiling grocer, on Arpaly's view, must have internal reasons not to cheat his customers that he is failing to be responsive to when he actually cheats his customers in order to be considered blameworthy. This makes the question of what counts as a reason for an agent very relevant to my argument.

I am going to reject the claim that the beguiling grocer is insufficiently responsive to internal moral reasons when he acts. I can do this in three ways. First, I can reject the claim that the beguiling grocer has any internal reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers. If this is the case, then there are no relevant moral reasons that he is failing to be responsive to, and so he cannot be blameworthy for being unresponsive to them. Second, I can accept that the beguiling grocer has internal moral reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers, but also demonstrate that he fails to meet the rationality requirement. If the beguiling grocer is not reason responsive, then he is not a potential candidate for blame. Third, I can accept that the beguiling grocer has internal moral reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers, but also demonstrate that he is not actually insufficiently responsive to them. In this case, I want to show that having an internal reason and not acting on it does not mean that one was insufficiently responsive to it.

Demonstrating that the beguiling grocer is not insufficiently responsive to internal moral reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers may not be enough to demonstrate that he is not blameworthy when he cheats his customers. This is because it is still possible that the beguiling grocer has external reasons, something that I will get to later in this section, in favor of

[43] Arpaly 37.

his not cheating his customers. In fact, Arpaly has provided me with some evidence that suggests that she is actually making external reason claims about moral reasons that the beguiling grocer is failing to be responsive to when he cheats his customers, even though she makes the explicit claim that she is an internalist about reasons.

If Arpaly is really claiming that the beguiling grocer has external reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers, then I can respond in two ways. First, if Williams is right, then there is no such thing as an actual external reason. Arpaly must really be making an optimistic internal reason claim, or a claim about reasons that she only hopes that beguiling grocer has. This conclusion is consistent with my first claim about internal reasons, which is that the beguiling grocer has no reasons, internal or external in this case, that he is actually insufficiently responsive to because none exist for him to be responsive to. Second, if Williams is wrong, then the beguiling grocer has external reasons in favor of not cheating his customers, but, by taking a look at Korsgaard's "Skepticism about Practical Reasons," I can demonstrate that the beguiling grocer is probably not reason responsive. This conclusion is consistent with my second claim about internal reasons, which is that if the beguiling grocer has reasons for acting, internal or external in this case, and he finds himself unable to respond to them, then he is probably failing to meet one of the conditions of the rationality requirement.

After considering whether the beguiling grocer has internal or external reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers, I will conclude that the beguiling grocer is not blameworthy for cheating his customers. This is because, regardless of whether or not the beguiling grocer has internal or external or no reasons in favor of not cheating his customers, it cannot be said that he is insufficiently responsive to moral reasons when he acts. This makes the asymmetry in our

judgments about praise and blame and the nearly universal belief that morally indifferent agent are blameworthy when they perform wrong acts unjustified.

Now, as I have described the beguiling grocer, he cheats his customers because he is trying to maximize his profits. As a matter fact, we know that the beguiling grocer has internal reasons, and probably reason all thing considered, to cheat his customers. Whether or not the beguiling grocer has internal reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers is still a little undecided. Suppose, as I have always taken to be the case, that no matter how long the beguiling grocer deliberated or how many times the beguiling grocer acted, he would never come to the conclusion that he had a reason to be honest with his customers or act as though he had such reasons. This is to say that our morally indifferent beguiling grocer could never be motivated to act on the reasons that Arpaly seems to think he has because he just does not care about morality.

When Arpaly, or anybody else, makes the claim that beguiling grocer has reasons, internal reasons, in favor of not cheating his customers, it is possible that she really means that the beguiling grocer has other goals, non-profit oriented goals, that are satisfied by his being fair to his customers. These are goals that he is ignoring or neglecting when he decides to cheat his customers. Arpaly would suggest that the beguiling grocer has morally relevant goals, like a desire not to hurt people or the desire to do what is right. This is to say that, if the beguiling grocer were aware of all of the D's in his S, he would learn that he does, in fact have reasons for acting morally that he is not successfully responsive to. It is these moral reasons that the beguiling grocer is not acting on, these reasons that he is unresponsive to. In virtue of being unresponsive to these reasons, the beguiling grocer is blameworthy for neglecting them when he cheats his customers.

Here I want to offer my first response to Arpaly's internal reason claim. It is possible that we are just wrong when we suggest that the beguiling grocer has reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers. His psychology could be structured such that treating his customers honestly is not a means to any end in his S. We could be mistaken about what goals the beguiling grocer has. I have already stipulated that, no matter how long the beguiling grocer deliberates or no matter how many times he acts, the beguiling grocer would never come to the realization that he has these internal reasons. If this is the case then, he just might not have these reasons, and he would be justified in questioning our internal reason claims.

If we know that no matter how long the beguiling grocer deliberated he would never come to the conclusion that he had a reason to be honest with his customers, then we are granting that this reason is one that will never provide the beguiling grocer with a motivation to act. The fact that he is not motivated to act is either based in the fact that the beguiling grocer is irrational or in the fact that there is just nothing there to motivate him. If I were to insist that the beguiling grocer had a reason to jump into a creek and there was nothing in his subjective motivational set that would lead him to believe that this was true, it is just possible that the beguiling grocer really just has no reason to jump into a creek.

Taking another look at Arpaly's view, an agent can be considered blameworthy for performing an act when she has been insufficiently responsive to moral reasons. Previously, we saw that the beguiling grocer was blameworthy because he was perceived as being insufficiently responsive to moral reasons that counted against his cheating his customers. If there just are no reasons for him to be fair to his customers, then he cannot possibly be insufficiently responsive to them. It is just as likely that the beguiling grocer is responsive to all of the reasons that exist

that count for or against his acting. In this case, the beguiling grocer is a reason responsive agent who performs a wrong act and fails to meet the criteria for blameworthiness.

My second response to Arpaly's internal reason claim is that it is possible for the beguiling grocer to have internal reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers, but the fact that he is not motivated to act on these reasons means that he is failing to meet the second condition of the rationality requirement. As a reminder, on Williams' view a person has a reason to act when that reason could motivate him to act if all issues of mistaken belief and problems with reasoning were resolved. However, these issues have the capacity to result in a motivational block for the agent. When an agent is suffering from a motivational block, he lacks the capacity to act on reasons that he actually has in favor of acting in a certain way. He might be able to take certain reasons under consideration, but these reasons do not have the power to move him because they lack what Korsgaard calls "motive force."[44]

If a consideration is to be counted as reason for acting, it must be capable of motivating an agent to act. This is what Christine Korsgaard calls the internalism requirement. Korsgaard states that the "motive force" that is associated with a particular end must be transferred to the means in order for this to be something that can cause a person to act. However, it is not a condition of the internalism requirement that nothing can interfere with this transfer of "motive force." The internalism requirement only demands that reason be capable motivating us to act insofar as we are rational. A failure to be motivated by a reason could just mean that the person is irrational in some way.[45]

Korsgaard suggests the idea of true irrationality in "Skepticism about Practical Reason." True irrationality is basically a failure to respond appropriately to an available reason or the

[44] Korsgaard 378.
[45] Korsgaard 378.

failure to be motivated by the knowledge that an action is the means to a desired end.[46] It seems to be the case that there are a number of things, like depression and rage, that can successfully block us from pursuing means to our ends when we are under their influence. This fact makes the existence of true irrationality a likelihood.

The beguiling grocer, even though he might have an internal reason in favor of not cheating his customer, may just not be reason responsive. If he cannot access the internal reason because he is suffering from a motivational block, then he is, as Korsgaard would characterize him, irrational. This would make the beguiling grocer an inappropriate target for blame. It is important to note here that Arpaly wants to deny this particular conclusion. In a personal communication, she clearly represented her view as one that does not generally take immoral people to be simultaneously irrational.

Because Arpaly wants to make the claim that the beguiling grocer has internal reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers, and she wants the beguiling grocer to be reason responsive, I am brought to my final response to Arpaly's internal reason claim. I can accept that the beguiling grocer has internal moral reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers, but I will demonstrate that he is not actually insufficiently responsive to these reasons. The beguiling grocer, in this case is not actually a morally indifferent agent. He has internal reasons for acting morally, and he is actually successfully responsive to them, but, from the third person perspective, he looks like he is indifferent to moral reasons because he does not perform the right act. I think that we would generally call this type of agent morally indifferent because of what his act looks like, but he is not indifferent in the sense that he does not take moral reasons under consideration when he acts; he just does not act for the moral reasons that he has.

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[46] Korsgaard 378.

I will remind the reader that being reason responsive entails responding to the reasons that one actually has. The beguiling grocer has reasons in favor of being honest with his customers and he has reasons in favor of his cheating his customers. This means that the beguiling grocer can have reasons for being honest with his customers and still have reason all things considered in favor of his cheating his customers. In fact, he can be responsive to all of the relevant moral reasons in favor of his not cheating his customers; he can give them all of their due consideration and take them as seriously as the next person and still have more reason in favor of his cheating his customers.

This individual is not insufficiently responsive to moral reasons; he is responsive to moral reasons insofar as they function as reasons for him. If the beguiling grocer were to be honest with his customers, even though he has reason all things considered to cheat his customers, we would have to think that he was acting irrationally. Even Arpaly thinks that a person acts rationally when he performs the act that he has greatest reason to do, and she thinks that it is possible for a person to have more reason to perform a wrong act than to perform a right act.[47] This means that Arpaly does not think that it is necessarily irrational for an agent to perform a wrong act. I have mentioned this claim before.

Arpaly cannot expect a person to act irrationally in order to act morally – this seems incoherent. Further, if Arpaly is an internalist about reasons, she cannot assume that a moral reason should motivate a person to act out of proportion to the amount that it is supported by the goals that that person has in his subjective motivational set. If the person in question is perfectly responsive to the moral reason that he has in favor of acting morally, but those reasons are not enough to motivate him to act morally, then he is not blameworthy because he is not insufficiently responsive to the moral reasons in favor of his performing the moral act.

[47] Arpaly 37.

In some ways, my third response to Arpaly is much like my first response, the suggestion that the beguiling grocer has no internal reasons in favor of his acting morally. I could change this to say that the beguiling grocer has no additional internal reasons in favor of his acting morally. The point here is that there are no relevant moral reasons that the beguiling grocer is failing to be responsive to when he cheats his customers, and so he cannot be considered.

When asked how an agent much like this last version of the beguiling grocer could still be considered blameworthy for being insufficiently responsive to moral reason even though it seems like he is as responsive to moral reasons as he could be, Arpaly responded by saying "from the moral point of view, he does not care about morality enough."[48] This claim has three possible interpretations. First, it is possible that Arpaly was saying that he should have found a way to be the kind of person who had more reasons for acting morally in his subjective motivational set. Second, it is possible that Arpaly was really making a depth of moral concern claim. This means that it is possible that Arpaly was suggesting not that the individual in question was insufficiently responsive to moral reasons, but that the agent was not motivated enough out of moral concern. I will make this distinction clearer in a moment. Third, it is possible that Arpaly really was making a reason claim, but that she was really making an external reason claim.

The first interpretation of Arpaly's view seems unlikely, given that she denies the possibility of this kind of activity when she argues against autonomy theorists in her book. She states that people are less likely to undertake character building activities than they are to keep a New Years resolution, and she states that they should not be considered praise or blameworthy for having failed to cultivate the right moral psychology.[49]

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[48] Nomy Arpaly. Wheaton College. Austin House, 26 East Main Street, Norton MA. 03 May 2010. Guest Lecture.
[49] Arpaly 142.

The second interpretation of Arpaly's claim is more plausible. It is possible that Arpaly was saying that maybe the beguiling grocer did take all of his reasons into account in the right way, but he still did not demonstrate enough moral concern. There is a difference between responding to reasons and the extent to which those reasons actually motivate us on Arpaly's view. Recall the merely morally-inclined individual and the moral enthusiast. Both agents are responsive to moral reasons, but one agent has a greater amount of moral concern than the other. However, if Arpaly was making a depth of moral concern claim, then she cannot establish that the beguiling grocer is blameworthy. On Arpaly's view, depth of moral concern allows us to determine *how* praise or blameworthy and agent is, not *when* the agent is actually praiseworthy or blameworthy. Depth of moral concern allows us to determine the degree to which an agent is praiseworthy or blameworthy; it is not a necessary condition for ascribing praise or blame on Arpaly's view.[50]

The third interpretation of Arpaly's claim seems like the most likely. It is possible that Arpaly was really making an external reason claim. I will provide reasons for adopting this interpretation now, but I will deal with my response to her making an external reason claim a little later on. When questioned further on how exactly she thought that an agent like the beguiling grocer would be blameworthy if he had responded to all of the internal moral reasons that occurred in his subjective motivational set, she stated that we had come to a "Humean versus Anti-Humean staring contest."[51] She explained this by saying that Humeans believe that reasons are based in our desires, our psychologies, and that Anti-Humeans believe that people have reasons for acting regardless of their desires.

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[50] Arpaly 85.
[51] Nomy Arpaly. Wheaton College. Austin House, 26 East Main Street, Norton MA. 03 May 2010. Guest Lecture.

The questions being proposed were along the Humean line, which says to me that she was taking up the Anti-Humean approach. If Arpaly was in fact claiming to be an Anti-Humean, and she thinks that people have reason to act morally regardless of their desires, then she seems to be making external reason claims. However, if Arpaly is making an external reason claim, then this has no bearing on the question of whether the beguiling grocer is insufficiently responsive to internal moral reasons that he has in favor of not cheating his customers. Given the information I have provided so far, I have no reason to believe that the beguiling grocer is failing to be responsive to any internal reasons that he has.

So far, I have demonstrated that the beguiling grocer cannot be considered blameworthy on the basis of internal reason claims about relevant moral reasons for which he is failing to act. However, Arpaly's claim that the beguiling grocer has moral reasons for which he is failing to act might just be an external reason claim, so I have not yet successfully demonstrated that the beguiling grocer is not blameworthy when he cheats his customers. As I have described him, the beguiling grocer appears to have no internal reasons to avoid cheating his customers. In other words, not cheating his customers does not seem to be a means to any end in the beguiling grocer's subjective motivational set. To say, then, that the beguiling grocer is unresponsive to a moral reason must be to say that the moral reason is an external reason.

For something to count as an external reason to PHI, we would have to examine the S of the agent and determine that the agent has no end that would be satisfied by her PHI-ing. On Williams view, an external reason to PHI would never be able to successfully motivate an agent to PHI because PHI-ing is not a means to any of her ends. Nomy Arpaly has explicitly stated that her view does not depend on external reasons.[52] If, however, Arpaly wants to insist that the beguiling grocer does in fact have a reason in favor of not cheating his customers even though

[52] Arpaly 37.

there seems to be nothing in his psychology that would support this reason, then Arpaly must be appealing to external reasons.

To demonstrate that external reasons cannot motivate, Williams offers the example of Owen Wingrave.[53] Owen's family strongly desires that he join the military, but Owen does not want to join the military. His family says that he has plenty of reasons for joining the military, namely that his parent's desire that he join the military, that he has a history as a part of a military family, and that there is a lot of familial pride in this history. However, no matter how many times his family suggests to him that he should be motivated to join the military; he is not motivated to do so. Williams suggests that Owen's family just might be wrong in their beliefs that Owen has reasons to join the military. In fact, if he were aware of all of the D's in his S, he would see that he has no reasons in favor of his joining the military. The reasons, then, that his family provide for Owen to join the military are external reasons; they have no relation to the elements of Owen's subjective motivational set.

It is just not clear how an external reason is supposed to motivate an agent to act. The fact that external reason statements do not require the existence of a motive means that they cannot be used to explain a person's action. There must be some sort of psychological link, a relationship, between the agent's performing the action and the truth of an external reason statement. It may very well be true that the beguiling grocer has an external reason, a reason that he has no motivation to act on, to be honest with his customers, but the truth of that statement cannot explain his being honest with his customers precisely because he has no motivation to act on it.

Bernard Williams suggests that what we need to explain the beguiling grocer's honesty, were he to be honest with his customers, is a belief, the belief that the external reason statement

[53] Williams 366.

applies to him. However, if he acquires the belief, meaning if something new is added to the beguiling grocer's subjective motivational set, then it seems that the external reason would just become an internal reason.[54] Thus, if Arpaly is making an external reason claim about reasons that the beguiling grocer has, she is making a claim about something that she wants to count as an internal reason for the beguiling grocer that is not yet supported by his psychology.

For Williams, external reason claims, and probably any claim about normative reasons that we think the beguiling grocer is failing to act for, are incoherent. The only reason claims that actually appeal to reasons for acting that an agent has are internal reason claims. On this view, it just might be the case that the beguiling grocer has no reasons, internal or external, in favor of being honest with his customers. This would mean that he is not actually insufficiently responsive to moral reasons that he has in favor of acting morally.

However, Williams could be wrong about whether or not external reason claims appeal to actual reasons that an agent has. Korsgaard thinks that moral reasons always apply to an agent regardless of whether they are supported in the agent's psychology.[55] As I have already said, Korsgaard suggests the possibility of true irrationality. If the beguiling grocer has an external reason in favor of his not cheating his customers, and he is not successfully responsive to these reasons due to some motivational or perceptual failure, then he is just irrational, and, therefore, not an appropriate target for blame.

Williams actually anticipates Korsgaard's alternative view, noting that those who think that external reason claims appeal to actual reasons that the agent has must think that agents who fail to act on these reasons are irrational.[56] The beguiling grocer just does not have the right kind of relationship with the reasons that he has for acting. If the beguiling grocer reasoned

[54] Williams 367.
[55] Korsgaard 385.
[56] Williams 369.

appropriately, then he would be motivated to act appropriately. I generally take a failure to respond to external reasons for acting to be a perceptual failure on the part of an agent. This is just to say that the agent in question simply cannot perceive actual reasons out in the world that he should be taking as reasons for action. If the agent cannot perceive these reasons for acting, then we can hardly expect him to act on them.

At this point in my paper, I have demonstrated that morally indifferent agents are not blameworthy when they perform wrong acts. This is because morally indifferent agents are either not rational or they just have no (additional) moral reasons for acting morally. The latter claim is the one that I actually endorse. I am with Arpaly in that I generally do not believe that it is irrational to act immorally. I think that Williams is right in his criteria for what counts as a reason, and I think that a person can rationally question whether he or she has reasons to act morally. For any given agent a moral reason claim might be an external reason claim, a claim about reason that are not supported by the agent's S, and I think that external reason claims are really attempts to appeal to reasons that we hope the agent in question has.

It is relatively easy to demonstrate how, on Williams' view, any particular reason claim could be an external reason claim. This is to say that it is easy to show how the morally indifferent agent in question does not actually have a reason for acting or not acting in a certain way. As a result, I spend a lot of time, throughout the rest of this paper, showing how the indifferent individuals in question might be acting irrationally. This should not take away from the view that I endorse, which is the claim that morally indifferent individuals are not blameworthy because they are not being unresponsive to moral reasons that they have for acting morally; these reasons do not exist.

Normative Reasons and External Reasons

As I noted earlier, the normative reasons that we attend to when ascribing blame to morally indifferent agents in praise-blame asymmetry look a lot like external reasons. On my view, this is because I do not think that morally indifferent agents have any internal reasons that they are failing to be responsive to, and so any claims about normative reasons that morally indifferent agents are failing to be responsive to must be external reason claims. Fundamentally, it does not matter what kind of reasons we are appealing to, internal or external, if my description of the psychology of the morally indifferent agent is correct, then we are unjustified in thinking he is blameworthy when he performs wrong acts.

I think my conclusion that we are unjustified in blaming morally indifferent agents for performing wrong acts is not exclusive to Arpaly's view. I think that our actual practice of ascribing blameworthiness to morally indifferent agents, the way we ascribe to morally indifferent agents in praise-blame asymmetry, is unjustified. This is because, as Hindriks suggests, when we actually ascribe blame to morally indifferent agents, we appeal to the normative reason that we think they failed to act for. This is a descriptive claim, meaning this is what we actually do. This means that the actual reason that we think someone like the beguiling grocer is blameworthy when he cheats his customers is that we think that there are reasons that he was not attending to when he acted. As I have described the morally indifferent agent, I cannot see what reasons morally indifferent agents are failing to act for. If my description of the psychology of the morally indifferent agents is correct, and if we really are attending to the normative reasons for which we think the beguiling grocer is failing to act, then we are making reason claims about morally indifferent agents that either do not exist or that the morally indifferent agent could not have responded to differently. This is how I argued against Arpaly's view, which, as I have noted repeatedly, tracks the praise-blame asymmetry.

Foot on Moral Imperatives

In addition to Williams, there are other philosophers who argue that an individual who is indifferent to morality may simply not have reasons for acting morally. Philipa Foot, for example, makes the claim that a person might be justified in questioning whether he has a reason to act morally because statements about morality do not seem to have any kind of special reason giving force.[57] I am going to spend a little time talking about Foot because I want to demonstrate that there is plenty of conceptual space for my suggestion that the beguiling grocer might not have any reasons or any additional reason for being honest with his grocers. Both Bernard Williams and Philipa Foot make strong arguments for why we can believe that any given individual might be justified in questioning why claims about moral reasons for acting apply to her.

In her paper "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives," Foot argues that moral imperatives are hypothetical rather than categorical imperatives. A hypothetical imperative is usually taken to be a statement that directs an agent to something he or she ought to do in light of some goal or end of the agent. In other words, hypothetical imperatives are conditional claims about what an agent ought to do in order to accomplish or satisfy some end.

To give an example of what a hypothetical imperative is I will use the example of Ophelia. Suppose Ophelia tells me that she needs to find another computer because hers was recently destroyed. I might tell her that she ought to go to the local electronics store in order to find a new computer. When I tell Ophelia that she ought to go to the electronics store, I am making a hypothetical imperative. I am telling Ophelia to go to the electronic store if she wants

[57] Philipa Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives," *Moral Discourse and Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches*. Eds. Stephen Darwall, Allan Gibbard, and Peter Railton, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 313 – 322.

to buy a new computer. I tell her to go to the computer store if going to the computer store is a means to an end she has. Sometimes, we are wrong in our understanding of what the agent's end actually is, such that we might take back our hypothetical imperatives because it directs the agent to an act that does not actually correspond to any goal that he or she has. Maybe Ophelia cannot actually afford to buy a computer, so my suggestion that she should visit the electronic store is not very useful for her. In this case, I would take back my claim that Ophelia should go to the electronics store because buying a computer is not her end. Hypothetical imperatives are conditional statements based on some means and end of an agent.

According to Foot, categorical imperatives do something different from hypothetical imperatives. An imperative can be categorical in two ways. First, categorical imperatives cannot be taken back when they do not correspond to some goal of the agent. They are inescapable. Second, Kantians and other proponents of categorical imperatives believe that categorical imperatives have reason-giving force. In the first sense, a categorical imperative applies to all agents regardless of their desires and ends; they are not conditional imperatives. Categorical imperatives apply to everyone and they are thought to provide reasons for acting for anyone to whom they apply. Rules of etiquette and moral claims are generally taken to be categorical in nature. Categorical imperatives, it is believed, are binding, meaning, categorical imperatives apply to all people, under every condition in which it possible to obey them. When, for example, claims are made about rules of etiquette, these rules are supposed to be followed regardless of whether the agent in question has any interest in following them.

In some ways, categorical imperatives to perform an act seem like external reason claims in that categorical imperatives, just like external reason claims, apply to someone regardless of whether or not the person in question has any goals that would be satisfied by performing the act

in question. Rules of etiquette, for example, do not fail to apply Ophelia just because she does not care about them. I would not withdraw my claims about elbows on the table during supper because Ophelia is not interested in etiquette. Like claims about the rules of etiquette, claims about the requirements of morality seem to apply to everyone regardless of their interest in acting in accordance with them.

Foot poses a question about the second sense of categorical, however, by wondering whether one can rationally question whether a categorical imperative is reason-giving. For Foot, there is nothing about moral imperatives that is a different from other types of normative statements.[58] Just as it is plausible for someone to question why they should follow the rules of etiquette, it is plausible for someone to question why they should act in accordance with the requirements of morality. When they ask this question, they are looking for a reason for following the imperative, meaning these categorical imperatives do not always immediately provide reasons for acting. We may believe that Ophelia should behave in accordance with morality, but she may just have no reason to do so. What this means is that moral claims may actually be hypothetical in nature, meaning, for them to apply, they have to correspond to some end of the agent in question.

Foot's view, as I have recounted it, seems to be perfectly consistent with Williams' view of internal and external reasons and my view that it is possible for a morally indifferent agent to perform a wrong act and not be blameworthy because there are no moral reasons that she is failing to be responsive to. Foot is consistent with my view in that, if moral requirements are hypothetical in nature and the morally indifferent agent in question has no goals that would be satisfied by his avoiding some morally problematic act, then the agent in question is not

[58] Foot 318.

potentially blameworthy for failing to respond to reasons that he has in favor of avoiding the wrong act.

Section 4: Moral Indifference

What I have done in this paper seems like a rather odd thing. I have stated that Nomy Arpaly would consider the beguiling grocer blameworthy and demonstrated that, on her own view he is not. One might suggest that Arpaly could just acknowledge that the beguiling grocer is not blameworthy for cheating his customers, and then there would be no problem for her view. However, I think that Arpaly would not make this acknowledgment. She has explicitly stated, in writing and verbally, that agents like the beguiling grocer are always blameworthy when they perform wrongs acts. For example, Arpaly states clearly that she thinks that Jeanne in the second case from section 1 is blameworthy.[59] She states this in the text. The reasons for which Jeanne is acting have nothing to do with her desire to cause harm to Joseph and everything to do with her desire to blow off steam. When Jeanne tells Joseph to "Shut up," she is indifferent to the fact that her action could cause harm. Arpaly takes Jeanne to be blameworthy, and I do not.

I think that Arpaly consistently misapplies her own view throughout her book, and I attribute this to two different factors. The first is the fact that we, people in general, tend to engage in unjustified praise-blame asymmetry, and Arpaly is trying to satisfy our intuitions about who is blameworthy. The problem is that we consistently get it wrong in the case of moral indifference, and so any view that tries to justify blame in the case of agents who are morally indifferent when they perform wrong acts will be consistently misapplied.

Willful Indifference

The second factor is the way in which we typically characterize the morally indifferent agent. This is what I am going to talk about for the rest of this section. So far, I have characterized morally indifferent agents in three ways. They are individuals who have no reasons

[59] Arpaly 79.

in favor of acting morally, who have some reasons but who are as responsive to them as they should be but do not act morally, and as individuals who fail to meet the rationality requirement. A fourth option is the willfully indifferent individual. Some people, it seems reasonable to think, must be willfully unresponsive to reasons that count in favor of performing or not performing an act. I will refer to this type of agent as a willfully indifferent individual. By willfully indifferent individual, I mean an individual who is motivated to ignore available reasons that count in favor of performing or not performing an act. Sometimes we think of people as intentionally irrational or maybe bull headed. The terms "stubborn as a mule" or even "proud" comes to mind. People to whom we would apply these labels are people who, we assume, are reason responsive agents, but these are also people who appear to be making completely irrational choices.

Morally indifferent agents are typically talked about like they are willfully indifferent individuals. The beguiling grocer, on this description has a set of moral reasons available to him in favor of his not cheating his customers that he simply ignores or avoids when he chooses to cheat his customers. This is to say that the beguiling grocer has reasons for acting and he chooses to disregard them when he acts. This type of being, if he actually existed, would in fact be insufficiently responsive to actual reasons that he has in favor of not cheating his customers. On Arpaly's view, this kind of agent would be blameworthy.

I have already indirectly addressed the case of the willfully indifferent agent. This case can be handled in the same way that the beguiling grocer has been handled. Either the willfully indifferent person has reasons to refrain from the act in question or she does not. If the willfully indifferent individual has no reasons to act in a particular way, internal or external, then she is not indifferent to reasons or acting irrationally by not responding to our insistence that she does.

It is sometimes possible that we are just mistaken about the reasons that other people have for acting.

If the willfully indifferent individual does have some kind of reason for refraining from an act and finds herself completely unable to respond to those reasons, then something has already gone terribly wrong in her capacity to successfully respond to reasons that she has for acting. Just because we think of somebody as a lucid reasoner does not mean that she is. The fact alone that this person is seriously unresponsive to a reason, as frustrating as it is, means that there is something in the way of her ability to respond to that reason. In fact, the more it seems that the individual in question is aware of the reasons for acting while still being completely unresponsive to these reasons, the more baffled we tend to be and the more likely we are to take her to be irrational.

It is possible that it is "the will" that is getting in the way of this individual or her "motivation to ignorance," but we really need to think about the fact that these are types of rational blockages. When people are experiencing rational blocks in this way, then it is very hard to say that they have the ability to act other than they are currently. Our minds already conform to certain rational principles because, as Korsgaard notes, if they did not, then they just would not be minds as such.[60] When our minds are failing to act in accordance with rationality, then we are failing as minds.

We treat this kind of irrationality like it is intentional or a chosen course, just one choice out of many. When, in Life, the Universe and Everything, a bored Arthur Dent decides to go crazy and later determines that his day had gone as planned, we are struck by the silliness of his situation, and this is, in fact, the intuition that Douglas Adams is playing on.[61] People cannot

[60] C. Korsgaard, *Self-Consitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 67.
[61] Douglas Adams, *Life, the Universe and Everything* (New York: Del Ray Books, 2005).

choose to go crazy, let alone assess how well they have accomplished their task. The idea of rational irrationality is incoherent.

Now, Arpaly notes, we frequently do things which we take to be irrational when we do them. This is why Arpaly claims that deliberation is not necessary for assigning moral responsibility. An agent need only be responsive to reasons when she acts, in order to be considered a potential candidate for praise or blame. I accept this claim. However, the willfully indifferent individual is not the type of being who can respond appropriately to reasons when being willfully indifferent, even if she can identify her irrational behavior when she does it. If we are to believe that the willfully indifferent individual should be more responsive to moral reasons that she has for acting, then we are necessarily assuming that she can be. Because we are beings that do respond to reasons when we have them and can act on them, then it seems pretty clear that the willfully indifferent individual must be functionally impaired when she does not.

If the willfully indifferent individual has actual external reasons for refraining from the act in question, then we have already explored the type of problem this poses for this individual. She is unable to identify these reasons as reasons and the person making the external reason claim is going to have to believe that she is irrational, and therefore not the kind of being to whom we can attribute blameworthiness, because of her failure to meet the first condition of the rationality requirement. If the willfully indifferent individual has actual internal reasons for refraining from the act in question and she is failing to be motivated, then she is suffering from some sort of motivational impairment over which she clearly has no control. She is irrational, and therefore not the kind of being to whom we can attribute blameworthiness, because of her failure to meet the second condition of the rationality requirement.

Motivational and Perceptual Failures

I imagine that Arpaly is thinking of an agent something like the willfully indifferent individual when she talks about agents who are insufficiently responsive to moral reason. However, she does include three examples of her own, which are supposed to meet the criteria for blameworthy morally indifferent agents. The first two cases of moral indifference are cases of motivational and perceptual failures that result in unresponsiveness to moral reasons. Arpaly thinks that these individuals are blameworthy, but I will show that she gets these cases wrong. The third case of moral indifference is what Arpaly calls motivated irrationality. This, I will show, is very similar to willful indifference. I will show each of these individuals is a type of agent that I have already talked about in my paper, is an agent that she has unjustifiably blamed, and demonstrate how each is not blameworthy.

In her section on responsiveness to moral reasons, Arpaly identifies two ways in which an individual can be a morally indifferent agent.[62] These agents are characterized by their lack of responsiveness to moral reasons. She points to perceptual versus motivational failures on the part of the individuals under consideration. The first kind of morally indifferent agent suffers from a deficit in moral perceptions. This agent is blind to certain moral considerations and is, thus, unable to respond to them appropriately. The second kind of morally indifferent agent successfully perceives morally relevant considerations but is unable to be motivated by them. This agent suffers from some sort of motivational deficit. Taking a cursory look at these two types of individuals, we can see that they just are instances of a failure to meet the first and second conditions of the rationality requirement.

Arpaly uses the example of an over-bearing parent to illustrate the first type of morally indifferent agent.[63] Some parents are unable to respect the autonomy of their children because

[62] Arpaly 82.
[63] Arpaly 82.

they simply cannot understand how the child could make decisions if someone were not there to tell the child which decisions to make. Further, no matter how many times we try to explain to the parent that the child can make decisions on her own, and no matter how many times we show the parent the problems with paternalism, the parent will just be unresponsive to these kinds of considerations and will continue to be bewildered by the request that she stay out of her child's business.

Arpaly uses the example of *Mary the half-moralist*, a young woman who is not sufficiently motivated to keep her promise, to illustrate the second type of morally indifferent agent.[64] Mary borrowed a book from her friend and promised to return it. However, as a result of some mix of her desire to stay home and write her book and bad weather, she does not return the book. Mary is aware of the fact that she promised to return the book, knows that promising to return the book has certain moral implications, and is still not motivated to return the book.

In the first case of moral indifference, the agent might be motivated to act on the moral considerations of which she is aware; she is just not aware of any moral considerations that she should be motivated by. In the second case of moral indifference, the agent is aware of all relevant moral consideration; she is just not motivated enough by these considerations to act on them. On Arpaly's view, both types of morally indifferent agents are blameworthy for failing to be responsive to the morally relevant features of their morally wrong acts. I want to demonstrate that Arpaly is wrong about the blameworthiness of these individuals and show that neither type of morally indifferent individual is blameworthy for performing their wrong acts.

Arpaly is making the claim that the first type of morally indifferent agent has reasons for acting morally that he cannot perceive as reasons for acting. He is not just suffering from a motivational failure: he cannot see how these reasons function as a reason. I would characterize

[64] Arpaly 82.

this case in one of two ways. One possibility is that this is a case of true irrationality that springs from a cognitive failure on the part of the morally indifferent individual. Regardless of whether we are making internal or external reason claims, this individual is unable to treat the reasons like they are reasons, meaning this individual fails the first condition of the rationality requirement. The inability to acknowledge an external reason claim is always going to look like this, but, in this case, there is a similar foreignness to even the internal reason claims because there is an inability on the agent's part to recognize the reason as a reason for him.

We might appeal to Alice and the SAT's to illustrate this case. Alice cannot see how taking the SAT's is relevant to her interests. If we explain to her how and why the SAT's should appeal to her given her desire to go to college, and she is still unable to see that she has a reason to take the SAT's, then we would think that Alice is not capable of engaging in the kind of reasoning that we require of her in order to ascribe rationality to her. In this case, Alice has a perceptual failure; she cannot see that a particular reason counts as a reason for her. Alice cannot see how our explanation of why she should take the SAT's functions as a reason for her.

It is also possible that there are no internal or external reasons for the morally indifferent agent to act morally. If, for example, we are mistaken in the belief that he has reason to act morally, then the indifferent individual is not irrational and is not suffering from a deficiency of good will for which he could be regarded as blameworthy. It is possible that the reason he cannot perceive a reason for acting morally is the fact that he has no reason for acting morally.

The second case of moral indifference is more familiar to us. The beguiling grocer appears to fit this profile. Arpaly is making the claim that the second type of morally indifferent agent has reasons for acting morally that he is not motivated to act on. In this case, Arpaly is probably appealing more to external reasons than internal reasons when making the claim. If

Arpaly is making an external reason claim in the second case of moral indifference, then the individual fails on the first condition of the rationality requirement. The individual is not capable of engaging in the kind of reasoning that we require of him in order to take the external reason as a reason.

If Arpaly is making an internal reason claim in the second case of moral indifference, then the individual fails on the second condition of the rationality requirement. The individual is suffering from a motivational block where he is not capable pursuing the means to his ends. The final option, once again, is that there are neither external nor internal reasons for this morally indifferent agent to be indifferent to. The two types of morally indifferent agents I just addressed were taken, by Arpaly, to be archetypal cases of agents who perform wrong acts out of insufficient responsiveness to moral reasons. I have demonstrated that Arpaly judges them incorrectly, and I have show that these morally indifferent individuals are not blameworthy when they perform wrong acts.

Motivated Irrationality

The third case of moral indifference that Arpaly discusses in the case of "motivated irrationality."[65] I take this case to be relevantly similar to the willfully indifferent agent. Arpaly clearly believes that certain kinds of irrational individuals are morally blameworthy when they perform wrong acts. Thus, even if morally indifferent individuals are experiencing a type of irrationality, her view may accommodate them. This means that she must believe that there is a type of irrationality that people can engage in, which does not exclude them from potential candidates for blame. She refers to this type of irrationality as motivated irrationality.

To address the case of motivated irrationality, I have to talk a little more about the rationality requirement. While Arpaly never explicitly endorses the rationality requirement, she

[65] Arpaly 102.

does indicate that potentially praise or blameworthy agents must meet it. If reason responsiveness constitutes is what makes a person a potential candidate for praise or blame, then an individual who can be a potential candidate for praise or blame, under her view, has to be able to take reasons as reasons for acting, and an agent must be capable of being motivated to act by these reasons. It is not necessary that the individual is a deliberator in order to meet the criteria for the rationality requirement; he need not sort through all of his reasons for acting. He only has to be able to recognize them as reasons in some way (we frequently, but not always, recognize reasons that we have for acting by actually acting on them). However, an individual can only be responsive to reasons insofar as he is rational. If an individual has reasons for acting and he cannot recognize them as reasons for acting or he cannot be motivated to act on them, then he is suffering from a rational impairment that limits his capacity as a moral agent. Individuals who are not rational, globally or in the case of particular situations, cannot be potential candidates for praise or blame when they act.

Now that I have reminded the reader about the rationality requirement, I can return to the discussion of motivated irrationality. Arpaly thinks that racists and sexists are examples of people who act out of motivated irrationality.[66] Racists and sexists seem to hold morally problematic false beliefs, which guide the way they interact with others. An anti-Semite might have the clearly false belief that all Jews are a part of an evil conspiracy to control the world. Having this belief, the anti-Semite will be inclined to treat Jews poorly. Further, the anti-Semite will be unable to take in any information that contradicts his views. If he is told that Jews have no such intentions and that Jews are just as prone to doing good and bad things as anybody else, he will simply not take these considerations seriously. If, however, he is told that Jews are

[66] Arpaly 103.

greedy and dangerous, he will happily accept this information. As a result of believing false information, the anti-Semite runs the risk of performing some morally problematic acts.

In most cases, acts performed from false beliefs are not blameworthy; they are considered to be honest mistakes. In the case of racists and sexists, however, we are still inclined to hold them responsible for their bad behavior in spite of the fact that we recognize that these individuals are acting from false beliefs. To explain this intuition, Arpaly appeals to the epistemic rationality of the belief and compares the case of the racist to the case of Boko and the burglar.[67]

Boko notices an unidentified man sneaking around in his father-in-law's back yard, and Boko takes this man to be a burglar. He binds the man up and, perhaps, treats him a little more harshly than is appropriate, only to learn that the man is not, in fact, a burglar. The man is in the backyard upon the request of Boko's father-in-law. Now, it is always wrong to mistreat a man, but Boko's behavior in this instance is understandable. Boko has good reason to suspect that a person sneaking about the yard at night is a burglar, even if that suspicion turns out to be wrong. For example, non-thieves do not typically sneak around in back yards at night, wear black ski masks, or hide when they are asked to present themselves. Boko's false belief is epistemically rational. I take Arpaly to be saying that Boko's false belief is traceable to his having the goal of believing what is true and not believing what is false.

The beliefs of racists and sexists, according to Arpaly, are not traceable to this goal. Racists and sexists have beliefs that are epistemically irrational, and they are motivated to sustain this irrationality.[68] Arpaly claims that irrationality is not itself a problem, she just thinks that wrong acts performed out of this irrationality, when it has been intentionally induced, are a

[67] Arpaly 102.
[68] Arpaly 103.

problem. The reason that the beliefs of racists and sexists are epistemically irrational is that the beliefs that they hold fly in the face of reality. A psychologist can show a sexist a good deal of empirical evidence that demonstrates more similarities than differences between men and women, and the sexist will continue to hold the belief that men are better than women. An otherwise rational anti-Semite will fail to acknowledge that it is incredibly unlikely that all Jews are a part of an evil conspiracy when all he has to do is consider how hard it is to get ten people on the same page, let alone millions internationally.

It does in fact seem like there is some sinister motivation on the part of racists and sexists that allows them to maintain the beliefs that they have. Given that they grew up on Earth, among people, and generally have the capacity to learn new things, it seems like there is no excuse for their having these beliefs unless they really want to have them. Only a person, according to Arpaly, who was not from Earth and who had been handed a seriously flawed guidebook to humans would be excused for the kind of behavior demonstrated by racists and sexists.

I do need to put the question of sinister motivations aside while talking about racists and sexists for the rest of this section. Arpaly may be right that people who act on sinister motivations are blameworthy, and so, if racists and sexist act on what might amount to sinister motivations, they might be blameworthy. I am primarily addressing the question of motivated irrationality because it looks a lot like willful indifference, and I want to show that agents who suffer from motivated irrationality, in the sense that they are motivated to disregard the morally relevant features of a situation, are not blameworthy.

As I have already noted, Arpaly's idea of motivated irrationality looks a lot like willful indifference. The claim here is that individuals who are experiencing motivated irrationality are intentionally irrational, ignoring facts and any corresponding reasons that would contribute to

their decisions to behave otherwise. Because racists and sexists are motivated by or acting on reasons to be irrational, then they are blameworthy when they perform wrong acts. My first claim is that the idea of motivated irrationality is incoherent in the same way that willful indifference is incoherent. My second claim is that the irrationality of racists and sexists is exactly what excludes them from being thought of as potential candidates for blame when they perform wrong acts as a result of their false beliefs.

Arpaly offers one account of what is going on in the minds of racists and sexists, but I have a different idea about what the minds of individuals suffering from motivated irrationality look like. Philosophers like Korsgaard note that reason, or rationality, is integral to the structure of the human mind.[69] Without various rules of rationality in place, we probably would not be capable of thinking in the way that we do. A huge part of our rationality includes our ability to learn new things, to take in new information and adjust our current understanding of the world in accordance with this new information. We have what psychologists refer to as a neuroplastic mind, which basically means that our brains our adaptive.[70] We form thought structures that fit our environments. Because our brains are plastic however, they are as capable of acquiring rigid thought structures as they are capable of acquiring flexible ones. Rigid thought structures are less conducive to taking in and adapting to new information than flexible ones. Unfortunately, we acquire our habits of mind largely non-rationally, so it is not as though most people set about acquiring rigid or flexible thought structures.

A good number of psychological problems appear to be the result of the development of certain kinds of rigid thought structures. Some of the hardest to deal with are cases of legalistic thinking, perseveration, and denial. In each of these three cases, there is nothing about the facts

[69] Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution* 67.
[70] See Norman Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself* (New York: Viking, 2007).

of the matter that can influence the individual to act, or think, or believe differently. The thought patterns are so rigid that, frequently, psychologists never attempt to actually confront the irrational behavior when it is occurring because to do so is very ineffective. In other words, a therapist would never bother to tell his patient in denial that she is irrational because she would simply be unresponsive to this claim. The only thing psychologists can do is interrupt the thought process when it occurs. This is called redirection. Each time we have a thought, we make it more likely that we will have it in the future, and when the thought is interrupted, we disrupt that likelihood. We cannot appeal to these individuals by appealing to the irrationality of their thoughts because they are irrational precisely on these subjects.

These kinds of perseveration, legalistic thinking, and denial are typically thought to be kinds of protective mechanisms. Because our cognitive makeup is acquired non-rationally, we sometimes adopt rather irrational beliefs about the world. Further, we sometimes come to integrate these irrational beliefs with our core identities, meaning that any attack on these irrational beliefs results in a strongly defensive response. The more irrational the belief is that the person is defending, the more unsophisticated the defense mechanism. Denial, an inability to take in facts that are quite evident, is considered to be the weakest type of defense mechanism because it flies in the face of reality. People who are irrational in this way may very well be defending very irrational beliefs and very morally problematic beliefs, but what we must note here is the fact that people who are irrational in this way have lost the ability to take in new information on the subject and engage it in the rational thought process. What looks like willful indifference or motivated irrationality, is, on my account, really an inability on the part of the individual in question to treat reasons like they are reasons because considering them could result in what is perceived as a serious psychological harm. If these racists and sexists are irrational in

the way that I have described them so far, then they generally fail to meet the first condition of the rationality requirement, and the are, therefore, not potential candidates for blame.

Further, the fact screening that Arpaly thinks individuals experiencing motivated irrationality participate in really looks like a conjunction of two well known non-rational psychological mechanisms. These psychological mechanisms are attributional biases and belief perseverance. Attributional biases are a wide range of cognitive biases that humans use in order to determine who or what is responsible for a given event or circumstance. Of interest here is the negativity effect, which is just a tendency of human beings to attribute the causes of negative behaviors of people we dislike to those people and to attribute the causes of positive behaviors of people we dislike to situations. Also, of interest here is the attribution of out group homogeneity, which is a tendency of human beings to believe that a set of characteristics applies to all members of another group. Belief perseverance is a tendency of human beings preserve beliefs that we currently have, even in the face of contradicting evidence.[71]

These are not psychological mechanisms that are exclusive to racists and sexists; these are psychological mechanisms that we all use because they are non-rational cognitive processes. The mere fact that racists and sexists have these processes does not indicate any kind of motivation on their part to engage in these processes. It is not as though racists or sexists have any particular commitment to engage in these cognitive processes more than other people, so Arpaly cannot mean that they are motivated to irrationality in this way. Further, because some people, especially racists and sexists, have rigid thought structures coupled with these naturally

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[71] There are many articles on this subject. See Steffen Nestler, "Belief Perseverance: The Role of Accessible Content and Accessibility Experiences," *Social Psychology* 41.1 (2010): 35 – 41; Brad T. Gomeza and J. Matthew Wilson, "Rethinking Symbolic Racism: Evidence of Attribution Bias," *The Journal of Politics* 68 (2006): 611 – 625.

occurring cognitive processes, these individuals virtually lose the ability to engage in any kind of critical thinking that would allow them hold other kinds of beliefs. Because racists and sexists actually suffer from a type of irrationality, one that does not stem from any kind of motivation to be irrational, is seems a lot like they cannot be thought of as the kinds of rational individuals to whom we can assign responsibility when they perform wrong acts that stem from their false beliefs.

In this section I have talked about four different cases of moral indifference. The first case, willful indifference, is an example of how we commonly misrepresent cases of moral indifference. When described appropriately, we can determine that willful indifference is an incoherent concept and that individuals who we take to be willfully indifferent are not actually blameworthy when they perform wrong acts because they are not actually insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons for acting. The next two cases I dealt with in this section were Arpaly's representative cases of moral indifference. I demonstrated that these are cases of, either, very clear failures on the rationality requirement, or cases where we are just wrong about our reason claims.

The fourth case I dealt with was the case of motivated irrationality. I demonstrated that racists and sexists, sinister motivations aside, are relevantly similar to the willfully indifferent agent who we take to be intentionally ignoring reasons that she has in favor of acting differently. I actually showed that individuals who suffer from motivated irrationality are actually irrational and, therefore, not appropriate candidates for blame. I believe that I have shown that Arpaly consistently gets cases of moral indifference wrong when she assesses them on her criteria for blameworthiness.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to answer the question of whether morally indifferent agents are blameworthy when they perform wrong acts. The answer to my question is that morally indifferent agents are not blameworthy when they perform wrong acts, and that we are rarely, if ever, justified in considering them blameworthy. I answered this question by looking at Nomy Arpaly's theory of moral worth. I introduced Arpaly's view with the praise-blame asymmetry in mind. Arpaly's theory of moral worth tracks the asymmetry and attempts to justify the actual asymmetrical judgments that we make when ascribing praise and blame. I used Arpaly's view as a vehicle for demonstrating how we go wrong when we claim that morally indifferent agents are blameworthy when they perform wrong acts. To reach my conclusion, I determined that Arpaly thinks that it is a sufficient condition for an agent's being blameworthy that he is insufficiently responsive to the relevant moral reasons when he performs a wrong act. In response, I showed that morally indifferent agents are not actually insufficiently responsive to relevant moral reasons when they act, and that they are, thus, not blameworthy.

It seems worthwhile to ask what the consequences of my view are. Does this mean that we should just let people who cause harm to others and do not care about it get away with their bad behavior? The answer to this question is that we most certainly do not have to tolerate the bad behavior of morally indifferent agents. We just do not get to blame them.

While I am not going to talk about this at any great length, I want to note that we do have the capacity to hold people responsible for their actions without punishing, praising or blaming them. In therapy, for example, clinical psychologists hold their clients accountable for their bad behavior by pointing out problems that their behavior causes for them and their loved ones. Therapists do not regard their clients with blaming attitudes even if the behaviors that their clients present are morally reprehensible. Therapists address their clients with understanding and

compassion, but they also have the ability point out where their clients are going wrong and encourage changes in the behavior. Parents talk to their children about what is appropriate and what is inappropriate all of the time. Without blaming or punishing a child, parents are able to encourage their children to act appropriately by holding them to certain expectations. We can provide morally indifferent agents with expectations, support and encouragement to meet our expectations, and we can provide them with reasons to act morally.

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