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“RESPONSABILIDAD, ACTITUDES REACTIVAS Y LIBERTAD
DE LA VOLUNTAD”

TESIS

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MAESTRA EN FILOSOFÍA

PRESENTA

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Resumen

En mi tesis “Responsabilidad, actitudes reactivas y libertad de la voluntad” me enfoco en la noción moral de responsabilidad como culpabilidad. Un agente S es moralmente responsable cuando es un candidato adecuado de reacciones morales como encomio y reproche o culpa. Encomiamos a S si creemos que ha hecho algo moralmente bueno y culpamos (o reprochamos) a S si creemos que ha hecho algo malo¹.

Voy a ocuparme principalmente del problema que consiste en determinar qué características debe tener un agente de manera que pueda ser adecuadamente considerado como moralmente responsable. Me enfoco en la teoría de la responsabilidad de Jay Wallace como la presenta en su libro *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*. Defiendo la tesis de Wallace de que las capacidades de auto-control reflexivo son una condición necesaria de la responsabilidad moral, rechazo su tesis de que las actitudes reactivas sean una condición necesaria de la responsabilidad

¹ I rely on Jay Wallace’s view of accountability and blameworthiness (1994, 52-61).

moral y critico su solución compatibilista acerca de la relación entre responsabilidad y libertad de la voluntad.

Wallace sostiene que la responsabilidad moral requiere lo que llama “capacidades de auto-control reflexivo”. Estas son la capacidad de entender y aplicar razones morales y la capacidad de gobernar nuestro comportamiento a la luz de las razones que uno entiende (Wallace 1994).

Entre otras cosas, la primera habilidad requiere que el agente sea capaz de distinguir entre las circunstancias en que tiene una obligación moral y las circunstancias en las que no la tiene. También debe ser capaz de identificar aquellas acciones que son útiles para cumplir con tales obligaciones. Por otro lado, alguien tiene la capacidad de gobernarse a sí mismo sólo si es capaz de guiar sus acciones de acuerdo con las razones morales que ella entiende. Este agente debe ser capaz de resistir aquellos deseos que lo llevan a no cumplir con una demanda moral. Alguien que es incapaz de ver sus deseos en perspectiva no tiene la habilidad de gobernar racionalmente sus acciones (Wallace 1994, 154-155).

Wallace sostiene que podemos culpar de manera justa solamente a aquellos que tienen la capacidad de entender y aplicar razones morales y la habilidad de gobernar sus acciones de acuerdo con tales razones.

Wallace también defiende la tesis de que las llamadas “actitudes reactivas” son esenciales a nuestra práctica de considerar a la gente como moralmente responsable. Wallace sostiene que hay una conexión esencial entre la responsabilidad y las actitudes reactivas. De acuerdo con Wallace, una o las dos condiciones siguientes deben cumplirse para que un agente S pueda considerar a otros responsables moralmente:

1. S adopta alguna actitud reactiva (resentimiento, indignación o culpa)
2. S piensa que sería apropiado adoptar alguna actitud reactiva hacia alguien que hace algo malo moralmente, incluso si S de hecho no adopta ninguna actitud reactiva (Wallace 1994, 62-73).

Finalmente, Wallace sostiene que la responsabilidad moral no requiere de libertad de la voluntad en sentido incompatibilista. El argumento llamado “estrategia de generalización” está basado en la idea de que intuitivamente hay casos en que consideramos que un agente no es moralmente responsable porque creemos que está determinado. De acuerdo con filósofos como Derk Pereboom (2001), si el determinismo fuera verdadero, ninguno de nosotros sería moralmente responsable. Wallace presenta una explicación compatibilista de por qué no consideramos moralmente responsables a los agentes de la estrategia de generalización. De acuerdo con Wallace su explicación elimina “la seducción del incompatibilismo” (una especie de atracción irresistible) que es producida por la estrategia de generalización.

De acuerdo con Wallace, las excusas bloquean la responsabilidad moral de un agente porque muestran que la creencia de que tal agente no cumplió con su obligación moral es falsa. Las excusas nos dan una razón para pensar que el agente no eligió violar una obligación moral. La tesis principal de Wallace es que las excusas que de hecho aceptamos no sugieren que estar determinado sea una excusa también. A primera vista, parecería que excusamos a un agente porque no tenía opciones, sin embargo Wallace argumenta que la falta de alternativas no explica todos los casos en que modificamos nuestros juicios acerca de responsabilidad moral (Wallace 1994, 147-153).

Wallace sostiene que exentamos de responsabilidad moral a ciertos agentes porque carecen de las capacidades de auto-control reflexivo: la habilidad de entender y aplicar razones morales y la habilidad de gobernar nuestras acciones de acuerdo con tales razones. De acuerdo con Wallace, las excepciones operan mostrando que nuestras capacidades de auto-control reflexivo están limitadas (Wallace 1994, 180-185).

Como mencioné anteriormente, acepto que las capacidades de auto-control reflexivo son necesarias para la responsabilidad moral, rechazo la tesis de Wallace de que alguna o las dos condiciones anteriores deben cumplirse para que un agente S sea moralmente responsable y critico su teoría compatibilista acerca de la relación entre responsabilidad y libertad de la voluntad.

Introduction

In this thesis I will be primarily concerned with the problem to determine which characteristics an agent should fulfill in order to be fairly regarded as morally responsible, that is, as morally accountable and blameworthy. I will defend an account of moral responsibility that accepts that the so-called powers of reflective self-control are a necessary condition of moral responsibility and rejects that reactive attitudes are a necessary condition of moral responsibility. Traditionally, any account of moral responsibility has also adopted a position about the relation between free will and moral responsibility. I will not solve such a problem here because it is a whole topic by its own right and because its solution does not influence the results of my main line of inquiry. However, I will analyze and criticize Jay Wallace's position about it. I will argue that Wallace does not prove the thesis that moral responsibility does not require free will².

In his *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*, Wallace explains accountability in terms of what he calls powers of reflective self-control. These

² Throughout this thesis, we should understand freedom as indeterministic freedom. That is, the one that is incompatible with determinism.

powers are the capacity to grasp and apply moral reasons and the capacity to govern one's behavior in light of the reasons that one understands (Wallace 1994). In the first chapter I will argue that the powers of reflective self-control are a necessary condition of moral responsibility. I will provide a defense of such a thesis from the criticisms that Thomas Scanlon offers in *What we Owe to Each Other* (Scanlon 1998).

Wallace further claims that there is an attitudinal dimension of moral responsibility that is constituted by reactive attitudes and that is essential to our practice of holding each other morally responsible. In the second chapter I will argue that the reactive attitude of guilt paradigmatically shows that moral responsibility does not require reactive attitudes.

In the third and last chapter, I will present an incompatibilist challenge to a compatibilist account of moral responsibility: the generalization strategy. This argument is based on the idea that there are common sense cases in which we do not hold people morally responsible because we think they are determined. According to philosophers like Derk Pereboom, if determinism were true, none of us would be morally responsible (Pereboom 2001). Wallace argues that he can provide a compatibilist explanation of why we do not hold morally responsible those agents in the generalization strategy cases. Such an explanation, he argues, would dissipate the seductiveness of incompatibilism that comes from the generalization strategy. I will argue that Wallace fails to dissolve the seductiveness of incompatibilism. This is so

because his argument against the generalization strategy is not decisive and because the way in which we understand deliberation favors an incompatibilist position about free will and moral responsibility. In the rest of this introduction, I will get into further detail about the theses that I will defend or criticize.

Wallace claims that it is reasonable to hold someone accountable³ only if she possesses the following two abilities: the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons and the ability to govern her behavior in light of those reasons. Among other things, the former ability requires that the agent is able to distinguish between the circumstances in which she has a moral obligation and the circumstances in which she does not. She should also be able to identify those actions that will be useful in order to fulfill such moral obligations. In contrast, someone has the capacity to govern herself if she is able to guide her behavior with the moral reasons that she grasps. She should be able to resist desires that lead her to the violation of moral demands. Someone that lacks the capacity to step back from her desires does not have the ability to govern her actions by reasons (Wallace 1994, 154-155).

As there are reasons that support our moral obligations, Wallace claims that we can fairly blame only those who possess the ability to grasp and apply reasons and the ability to govern their behavior in light of those reasons. Similarly, it would be unreasonable to blame a kid for not being good at sports if she does not have the

³ In what follows, for the sake of brevity I will use “accountable” as short for “morally accountable” and “responsible” as short for “morally responsible.”

physical abilities to be a sport star or hold a newly-landed foreigner to the obligation to speak one's language as a native (Wallace 1994, 161-162).

Wallace regards psychopathy as a paradigmatic case in which an agent should not be held morally responsible because she lacks the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons (Wallace 1994, 177-178). In *What We Owe to Each Other* Thomas Scanlon claims that the ability to understand moral reasons is not a necessary condition of moral responsibility (Scanlon 1998, 289). In the first chapter I will argue that Scanlon's arguments against Wallace are not decisive. Scanlon claims that even if an agent is not able to understand the force of moral reasons, it is justified to hold her morally responsible as long as the agent still has the capacity to reassess or revise his reasons to act. Scanlon claims that the ability to give the reasons that one has to support one's actions is necessary for accountability, rather than the ability to understand reasons (Scanlon 1998, 287-290). I will claim that Scanlon's notion of revision is problematic.

In chapter II, I will argue against Wallace's thesis that reactive attitudes are an essential feature of our practice of holding people morally responsible. Wallace claims that there is an essential link between moral responsibility and reactive attitudes. According to him, one or both of the following conditions have to be fulfilled for an agent S to hold people morally responsible:

3. S experiences an actual episode of reactive attitudes (resentment, indignation

or guilt)

4. S considers that it would be appropriate to experience reactive attitudes towards the wrongdoers, even if S does not actually experience an episode of reactive attitudes (Wallace 1994, 62-73).

I disagree with Wallace's conclusions and present a number of cases that show that moral responsibility and moral blame do not require the experience of a reactive attitude or the belief about its appropriateness in a particular case. I will argue that a paradigmatic case is guilt.

As I said above, my main purpose on chapter III is to cast doubt on Wallace's response to the incompatibilist about moral responsibility and determinism. Basically, according to Wallace excuses block moral responsibility by making false the belief that a person did not fulfill a moral obligation that we held her to. Excuses give us a reason to think that the agent did not choose to break a moral obligation. Wallace's main claim is that determinism would not generalize from the accepted excuses. At first sight, it may seem that we excuse the agent because he did not have options. However, Wallace argues that the lack of alternatives does not explain all cases in which we modify our judgments (Wallace 1994, 147-153).

Wallace argues that we exempt agents because they lack the powers of reflective self-control: the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons and the ability to govern her behavior in light of those reasons. According to Wallace, exemptions

work by showing that our powers of reflective self-control are impaired (Wallace 1994, 180-185). As I mentioned before, I will argue that there are two different interpretations of the powers of reflective self-control. On one interpretation, such powers are perfectly compatible with determinism. However, on a different interpretation, they have an incompatibilist feature. I will claim that the latter is supported by common sense.

A further difficulty for Wallace is related to a source of seductiveness that does not come from the generalization strategy. The deliberation process clearly involves the assumption that the agent has options open to her. The idea is that each time that we deliberate we think that we have options. I will argue that Wallace does not dispel the seductiveness that comes from the way in which we understand deliberation.

Chapter I

Responsibility and the Ability to Understand Moral Reasons

In this chapter, I will defend Jay Wallace's thesis that moral responsibility requires the powers of reflective self-control. That is, the abilities to grasp and apply moral reasons and to govern one's behavior in light of those reasons. Wallace claims that we typically think that psychopathy impairs such powers. A psychopath lacks the powers of reflective self-control because she is unable to see any reason to refrain from causing pain and suffering to others.

Wallace argues that such a deficiency renders unfair to hold a psychopath morally responsible (Wallace 1994, 177-178). In *What We Owe to Each Other* Thomas Scanlon argues that a psychopath can be fairly blamed even if she lacks the ability to understand moral reasons (Scanlon 1998, 287-290).

Roughly, Scanlon claims that as long as there is coherence between the agent's actions and thoughts, the agent can be fairly held morally accountable. He

claims that the agent's actions are morally significant for her relations with others only if such a condition is met.

Certainly, it is controversial how to best define psychopathy and to point out what failure it involves. However, both Wallace and Scanlon assume a roughly similar account of psychopathy. They grant that a central characteristic of the psychopath is her lack of understanding of moral reasons. Assuming such a characteristic, they dispute whether such an agent can be fairly held morally responsible⁴. It is also noteworthy, that a psychopath (as understood here) should be distinguished from an amoralist. According to a widely accepted characterization of the amoralist, this agent understands (in contrast to the psychopath) moral reasons, but is indifferent to them (Lenman 2008). That is, she does not feel motivated to act according to moral reasons, even though she recognizes the validity of such reasons.

I will assume the above notion of psychopathy and argue that Scanlon's arguments against Wallace fail. In particular I will focus on Scanlon's view about moral significance and the revision of our moral reasons. I will argue that the powers of reflective self-control are a necessary condition of moral responsibility. As a consequence, I will claim that a psychopath cannot be fairly blamed for her actions. In what follows I will explain Wallace's thesis about the relationship between the powers of reflective self-control and moral responsibility.

⁴ For an overview about the philosophical debate around psychopathy see Murphy 2010.

Wallace's View

Even though Wallace's main project is to give an account of moral responsibility, his starting point is not an examination of what it is to be morally responsible, but an analysis of our moral practices. His strategy is to seek the conditions that make it fair to hold people morally responsible. The idea is that we commonly hold people responsible, but we are not always justified in doing so. Sometimes, there are conditions that block moral responsibility (Wallace 1994, 1-2).

Consider the following case. Someone drops a heavy object on your foot. Your first reaction is to blame that person for dropping the object. You feel angry because you think that she was careless. A witness tells you that she was pushed by someone else and that she did everything she could to avoid hurting you. Once you realize that she did not mean to hurt you, it is clear that you are not justified in holding her morally responsible for hurting you. Among those conditions that block moral responsibility, Wallace distinguishes between excuses and exemptions⁵. In short, excuses make inappropriate to blame people for particular wrong actions that they do (like in the above example) and exemptions render unfair to hold someone morally responsible in general.

⁵ In "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil" Gary Watson (2004) coins the term "exemption" to refer to what Peter Strawson regarded as the second group of excusing conditions (Strawson 2005, 42).

Wallace claims that to hold someone morally responsible is to hold her to obligations that we accept. As my neighbor has the duty to keep her dogs under control so they do not hurt me, I regard her as a morally responsible agent. Wallace claims that we excuse people in particular circumstances because we discover that they did not violate the moral demand that we held them to. You excuse the person that dropped the object on your foot because you realize that she did not want to hurt you. That is, she recognizes the moral obligation to respect other people's interests and she did nothing to violate such a demand.

According to Wallace, there is a close relationship between holding people to obligations and a susceptibility to experience reactive attitudes. This way, if you excuse someone, you suspend your resentment towards that person and regard it as inappropriate (Wallace 1994, 120-126).

In contrast to excuses, exemptions make unfair to hold someone morally responsible in general by showing that the agent is not a good candidate for moral responsibility or reactive attitudes. Some kinds of mental illnesses render the patient as an inappropriate target of moral responsibility. Even though one of those patients can intentionally hit a nurse, we would not blame the patient for such an action. Rather, we will regard treatment as the adequate way to deal with her (Wallace 1994, 155-165).

As I mentioned earlier, we can distinguish between accountability and blameworthiness. An agent is accountable if we fairly hold her to an obligation that we accept. For instance, I hold my neighbor to the obligation to control their dogs so they do not hurt me. Given the close connection that Wallace postulates between moral responsibility and reactive attitudes, he thinks that holding someone accountable involves a susceptibility to experience reactive attitudes. Given that I regard my neighbor as an accountable agent, I am prone to experience resentment if she fails to comply with the obligations that I hold her to (Wallace 1994, 157-166).

In contrast, an agent is blameworthy when she violates an obligation that we hold her to. If I am walking in front of my neighbor's house and one of her dogs severely hurts me because she was careless, I will experience resentment towards my neighbor. In this case, a moral obligation has been violated and as a consequence I experience reactive attitudes (Wallace 1994, 118-127).

Given the distinction between accountability and blameworthiness, Wallace claims that there are two different conditions of moral responsibility: blameworthiness conditions and accountability conditions (B-conditions and A-conditions, for short). B-conditions are conditions that an agent must satisfy in order to be fairly blamed for a particular wrong action that she performs. In contrast, A-conditions have to be satisfied in order to hold an agent morally accountable in general. Wallace explains excuses and exemptions in terms of B-conditions and A-

conditions, respectively. This way, we excuse someone because such an agent does not fulfill B-conditions and we exempt an agent because she does not fulfill A-conditions.

Clearly, B-conditions require A-conditions. That is, if an agent fails to fulfill A-conditions, she will also fail to fulfill B-conditions. If we cannot hold an agent to moral obligations in general, we cannot blame her for having violated a certain moral obligation. Once we exempt a mentally ill person from moral responsibility, we do not blame her anymore for particular actions that she performs. This way, even if she hits her nurse, we do not regard her as blameworthy (Wallace 1994, 118-127).

In what follows I will focus on Wallace's view about exemptions. Roughly, Wallace claims that the powers of reflective self-control constitute the A-conditions of moral responsibility. Exemptions block moral responsibility because the exempted agent does not possess A-conditions. In what follows, I will explain such powers and its relationship with the case of psychopathy. The powers of reflective self-control are the following two abilities:

1. The ability to grasp and apply moral reasons.
2. The ability to govern one's behavior in light of those reasons.

The ability to grasp and apply moral reasons should not be understood as the mere capacity to give those reasons that support a particular moral obligation. The

agent should also be able to distinguish between the circumstances in which she has the moral obligation and the circumstances in which she does not. She should also understand which actions are useful to fulfill the moral obligations she is held to. For instance, if I understand that I have the moral obligation to visit my friend at the hospital, I should realize that friendship involves supporting our friends in difficult times. I should also be able to distinguish between helping my friend and obsessively trying to decide on her behalf.

Wallace regards psychopathy as a paradigmatic exempting condition. Psychopathy is commonly understood as a condition that deprives the agent from the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons. This agent is unable to see why she should not cause pain and suffering to others. It is not only that she violates moral obligations, but also that she is not able to see why she should not do so. A feature of psychopaths that exhibits their inability to grasp moral reasons is their incapacity to distinguish between trivial and important moral concerns (Wallace 1994, 178).

Someone has the capacity to govern herself if she is able to guide her behavior with the moral reasons that she grasps. In addition to understanding why I should visit my friend at the hospital, I should also have the capacity to act in accordance with what I consider the best reasons. Among other things I should be able to resist desires that could lead me to the violation of moral demands. I should be able to resist the temptation to go to a party instead of visiting my friend at the hospital. Someone that

is completely unable to step back from her desires does not possess the ability to govern her actions by reasons. A person that lacks this capacity will systematically behave according to her strongest desires.

Addiction is the epitome of the inability to govern oneself in light of reasons. Typically, we think that an addict understands that she should spend her money to buy food instead of drugs, but she acts from irresistible desires that lead her to act against her best judgment⁶.

Given that both the psychopath and the addict lack at least one of the powers of reflective self-control, Wallace concludes that it is unjustified to hold them morally accountable. As a consequence, he also claims that it is not fair to blame such agents for their moral wrongdoings.

Wallace gives the following argument to show that it is inappropriate to hold people morally accountable if they do not possess the powers of reflective self-control. He claims that to hold people morally responsible is to hold them to moral obligations that we accept and that moral obligations are supported by reasons. Clearly, it would be wrong to hold someone to a moral obligation for no reason at all. I have the obligation to respect other people's property and there is a justification behind such a duty. I should not steal because people work hard to get their property and because our society is founded on a mutual agreement about the way we should

⁶ For a discussion of addiction see Wallace 2003, Scanlon 1998 (Conclusion) and Watson 2004 (2).

live together. In short, there are reasons that support our moral obligations (Wallace 1994, 155-165).

As that is so, Wallace argues, it is reasonable to hold morally responsible only those who possess the ability to grasp and apply reasons and the ability to govern their behavior in light of those reasons. Psychopaths and addicts do not possess the powers of reflective self-control. The former cannot understand the reasons behind the moral obligation to respect other people's lives and bodies. The latter cannot act from the reasons that she regards as the best. As they lack such abilities, it is unreasonable to hold them morally responsible.

Wallace presents two cases that are analogous to moral responsibility cases. If a newly-landed foreigner arrives to our country, we will not demand that she speaks our language as a native. That would be unfair because such an agent cannot get a perfect accent if she has not heard such an accent before. It would be unreasonable to expect that from him. In a similar way, it would be unfair to blame a boy that does not do well on sports if he does not have the physical abilities to be a sport person. Similarly, according to Wallace, it would be unreasonable to hold people morally responsible if they lack the powers of reflective self-control (Wallace 1994, 161-162).

According to Wallace exemptions block moral responsibility by showing that our powers of reflective self-control are impaired as we exempt agents for moral responsibility if they lack the above abilities. There are several instances of this kind

of agents. For instance, small children are not morally responsible because they have not fully developed their powers of reflective self-control. They are learning to understand moral reasons and apply them to their particular circumstances.

Scanlon's Criticisms to Wallace's Position

Thomas Scanlon claims that the ability to understand reasons is not a condition of moral accountability. He claims that the inability itself is not a reason to exempt an agent from moral responsibility. Rather, such impairment is relevant only when it affects the agent's capacity to revise her judgment. According to Scanlon, that an agent can reassess her judgments involves an adequate relationship between the agent's judgments and her actions. In short, according to Scanlon, the fact that there is an adequate connection between an agent's actions and thoughts implies that the agent is able to revise her reasons for action.

Scanlon claims that moral actions are generally connected with a moral judgment so when we ask an agent to give us an explanation of her actions, we try to discover which reasons support her moral judgments and so her actions. If this agent possesses the capacity to make judgments, she will be able to reveal which judgments are related to which actions. Scanlon argues that the ability to understand moral reasons is not a necessary condition of moral accountability, but only the ability to make moral judgments (Scanlon 1998, 277-290). In this section I will present Scanlon's argument against Wallace and I will argue that it fails to prove that the

ability to understand moral reasons is not a necessary condition of moral responsibility.

Susan Wolf defends a similar position to Wallace's. She presents two cases in order to show that an agent that cannot grasp moral reasons should not be held morally accountable (Wolf 1990, 85-86). These cases support Wallace's position about the relationship between moral accountability and the ability to understand moral reasons. Given that the latter is a condition of the former, those agents that are unable to grasp and apply moral reasons should be exempted from moral responsibility.

Wolf's First Case

There is a woman whose friend desperately wants a book. She has enough money to buy it and the opportunity to do so, but she is so self-centered that the idea of buying the book to make her friend happy does not come to her mind. This woman has never experienced genuine and caring friendships. She was not educated to notice the needs and preferences of her friends. Her relatives and other people around her do not get presents for each other. As a consequence, such a woman is unable to see reasons to get the book for her friend. Wolf concludes that it would be unfair to blame this woman for not getting the book for her friend.

Scanlon rejects Wolf's and Wallace's conclusion. Against Wolf's self-centered woman case, Scanlon argues that we can interpret it in two possible ways. First, we may think that the woman tries as hard as possible to fulfill her obligations as a friend. She always makes an effort to be a caring friend, but her background and previous experiences make her fail to see the kind of actions that she has to perform in order to be a good friend. For instance, she does not realize that making a public comment about her friend's disorganized appearance is not a nice gesture. She does not get offended when people harshly criticize her in public because that is the way in which her family works, so she concludes that her friend does not mind as well. This unfortunate woman does care about her friend's feelings, but she fails to see reasons to act otherwise than she has always behaved (Scanlon 1998, 283-284).

According to Scanlon, in this case our judgments about her failure to see reasons to buy the book for her friend are less harsh because we realize that she is making an important effort. When her friend gets to know this woman's family background and how hard she tries to be a good friend, she tends to judge her in a more benevolent way. Scanlon argues that such a change in the friend's judgment is not due exclusively to the woman's inability to see reasons, but also to what her actions reveal of her character. Her constant attempts to discover her friend's preferences show that she cares about her friends. It is this caring feature which makes the difference in our judgments about her.

We find a different situation with the second interpretation of the self-centered woman case. On this interpretation the woman does not care about other people's needs at all. She does not make any attempt to discover what her friends like or dislike because she finds that unimportant and of course her carelessness hurts other people's feelings. According to Wolf, this woman's friend should not blame her because she is unable to see reasons to behave like a good friend. Scanlon disagrees with that conclusion and claims that moral blame is still appropriate. This is so because that woman's character is reflected on her actions (Scanlon 1998, 295).

Wolf's Second Case

In Wolf's second case a person experienced a severely deprived childhood. This person was constantly abused as a child and she was educated to take advantage of others as much as she could. As a result of her education, this person cannot avoid mistreating others. She lacks the ability to see reasons to respect other people. She does not understand why she should be considerate and not abusive. Wolf concludes that it is unjustified to blame this person for her wrongdoings.

In his "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian theme," Gary Watson brought to the philosophical reflection the case of Robert Harris, a cold-blooded criminal that was executed in California in 1992 for the murder of two teenagers. Robert and his brother Daniel stole the boys' car to rob a

bank. Every person that met Robert described him as lacking any regard for the well-being of others.

Through family testimony, we discover that Harris's behavior can be explained by a severely deprived childhood. His father strongly resented Robert's mother because he thought Robert was not his son. In turn, Robert's mother blamed Robert for all the abuse she was subjected to. The lack of a caring childhood and early experiences of abuse in jail shaped his criminal character⁷.

The case of Harris is analogous to Scanlon's second interpretation of the self-centered woman case and to Wolf's second case. Harris does not see any reason to change his behavior and this is the result (at least in part) of a deprived childhood. According to Wolf, Harris should not be regarded as a morally accountable agent. In contrast, Scanlon claims that the criminal's inability to see the force of moral reasons does not rule out moral accountability. Similarly, the woman's incapacity to understand the actions that good friends should perform does not exempt her from the obligations that friendship involves.

Scanlon argues that agents that lack the ability to understand moral reasons are morally accountable as long as they are able to reassess the reasons that lie behind their actions. Harris places no value on other people's lives and his actions reflect his viewpoint. His actions are consistent with his thoughts. According to Scanlon, this

⁷ See Watson 2004 for details about Robert Harris' case and Watson's analysis of it.

shows that Harris can revise the reasons that underlie his actions. For instance, if we ask him about his crimes, he will explain why he thinks that it is justified to kill other people. He can say that he enjoys violence and he is entitled to be cruel with others because others were cruel with him.

According to Scanlon a necessary condition for moral accountability is the ability to give the reasons that support one's actions. Clearly, this does not conflict with Wallace's position as he also accepts that the agent should be able to distinguish which reasons lie behind her actions. However, Wallace goes beyond Scanlon as Wallace claims that the ability to understand moral reasons itself is a necessary condition of moral accountability. Scanlon accepts that this ability is relevant only because it may impair the more basic capacity to revise one's moral reasons. Scanlon accepts that the ability to grasp reasons of an agent like Harris is impaired, but claims that he is still able to make judgments about morality and to behave in accordance with such judgments. Scanlon explains the importance of an agent's capacity to revise reasons. He claims that such a capacity is morally significant for an agent's relationships with others. According to him, what matters in moral interaction is that there is no disruption between an agent's deliberation process and her actions (Scanlon 1998, 277-290).

Scanlon compares a case like Harris's with two other kinds of cases. First, consider the case of a "black widow" that gets married to rich men and kills them to

get their fortune. She is perfectly competent to recognize the reasons in favor of respecting people's life. However, she chooses to kill people in order to get a personal benefit. Second, consider the case of a mentally ill person that hits someone and kills her. This person's cognitive capacities are impaired and so she does not know how much she is able to hurt someone else⁸.

Scanlon claims that an agent like Harris (who cannot see the force of moral reasons) is more similar to the black widow than to the mentally ill person. The latter does not endorse her action. We think about her illness as a disrupting condition between the person's rational powers and the actions that she performs. She killed a person, but this action is not the result of her deliberation process. She never planned to murder or intended to do so.

In contrast, there is no such a disruption in the case of Harris and the black widow. The latter chooses her victims carefully and goes through a long process in order to get her victims to trust her. She plans how and when she will kill them so that she is not discovered by the police. Finally, she plans her runaway and her change of identity. In this long series of events, all her actions reflect her thoughts.

The only difference between Harris and the black widow is that he lacks the capacity to understand why he should respect other people's lives. Besides that, they are analogous. Harris's actions also reflect his mental states. He intends to kill and

⁸ The black widow example is mine, but it is an instance of a general case that Scanlon presents.

does everything that he needs to do in order to accomplish his goals. Later, he also tries to avoid the punishment that he would receive for his crimes. Both Harris and the mentally ill person lack the capacity to understand moral reasons, but the radical difference between them is that in Harris's case, the failure does not disrupt the connection between his thoughts and his actions. In the case of the mentally ill person, the inability to understand moral reasons is relevant only because it disassociates the person's actions from her judgments. Scanlon concludes that in itself, the inability to understand moral reasons is not an exempting condition.

Scanlon's Case: an Accident

Scanlon presents the following case to support his position against Wallace and Wolf. Consider a victim of a horrible accident. Before the accident, this person was kind and gentle. However, she became mean and disrespectful as a consequence of the accident. According to Scanlon, right after the accident, people will understand that her behavior is due to the accident and will not feel resentment against her. However, if time passes and she does not try to change her behavior, people will realize that she endorses such an attitude by not doing anything to correct it. As a result, her family and friends will come to believe that her personality changed as a result of the accident. Given that she has adopted a new personality, they will treat her as any other person and will resent her behavior when she does not fulfill moral obligations. They will not think that the accident created a disturbance between her

thoughts and her action. Rather, they will think that the accident changed her personality. They will hold this person morally responsible because her actions reflect her judgments, even if her new decisions are the result of a change caused by the accident (Scanlon 1998, 279).

In the following section I will argue that the moral significance of an agent's actions actually changes if we realize that she lacks the power to understand moral reasons. I will criticize Scanlon's account of the accident case. I will also argue that Scanlon's view of revision is unsatisfactory because in order to reassess one's reasons, one should be able to point out the reasons that one actually has, but also be sensitive to reasons that others point out to us.

My Argument against Scanlon

It is true that right after the accident, the victim's friends experience a change in their reactive attitudes towards the injured person. They are patient and tolerant with her rude behavior. However, it is not clear that as time passes they will simply assimilate the changes, accept that she adopted a new personality and treat her as an accountable agent again. Scanlon argues that if we realize that the person endorses her new kind of behavior, we regard her as fully morally accountable. I will claim that we tend to exempt such a person from moral accountability, if we think that her ability to understand reasons is impaired.

Consider a case in which the victim suffers an important damage as a result of the accident, instead of just a change in her manners. Imagine that after the accident this person gets into the habit of stealing small things from friends and stores⁹. This person does not see any reason to change her behavior and enjoys her new pastime. Certainly, her friends would conclude that the accident changed her character. They will think that she is a very different person. They will realize that she fully embraces her actions, given that if she is asked to justify her behavior, she is perfectly able to tell us why she enjoys stealing. She says that such an activity is an endless source of entertainment and that she is willing to take any risk to pursue it.

As good citizens and moral agents, her friends give her moral reasons to stop stealing. For instance, they tell her that in taking away people's possessions, she does not respect the effort that others have invested on those things. Some of those objects may even be important family memories. They point out that her victims suffer as a consequence of her actions. No matter how many reasons they give her to stop stealing, she is unable to see the force of those reasons. She thinks that her enjoyment is more important than the well-being of others. Her friends realize that she was different before the accident. It is clear to them that she suffered some kind of damage that impaired her capacity to understand moral reasons. They understand that her problem is not due to carelessness. The question is whether her systematic

⁹ This is not the case of a kleptomaniac because the person in my examples cannot see why she should stop stealing, while the kleptomaniac knows that she should stop, but cannot refrain because she experiences compulsive desires. The kleptomaniac case is more similar to the addict than to the present case.

endorsement of her behavior would make them see her as a fully morally accountable agent again.

Eventually her friends will get used to hiding their valuable objects when she visits and they will keep an eye on her when they go out together to avoid getting in trouble. Of course, they would not go shopping with her. They will remember the old times before the accident and miss her previous values. However, it is not intuitive that they will still regard her as a fully accountable agent. It seems more likely that they will see her as an unfortunate person that was severely affected by the accident. It seems that her actions have a different moral significance than those of a person that steals to get a personal benefit. It seems that being aware of a person's incapacity to understand why she should behave morally changes the way we see her actions.

Scanlon's notion of revision is problematic. When we ask a moral agent to revise her moral reasons we do not merely ask her to point out the reasons that she holds to support her actions. In the case of the accident victim, we are not satisfied with an explanation of the actions that she actually has in favor of stealing, we also expect that she will possess the moral capacity to be sensitive to the reasons that we ask her to consider. Without this latter capacity it seems that revision is not possible and that we cannot fairly blame an agent that lacks the capacity to see the force of moral reasons. This way, Scanlon fails to prove that psychopaths should be held

morally responsible and in general that the ability to understand moral reasons is not a necessary condition of moral accountability.

So far I have defended the claim that moral responsibility requires the powers of reflective self-control. In the following chapter I will undertake the task to show that Wallace's thesis that reactive attitudes are a necessary condition of moral responsibility is false.

Chapter II

The Attitudinal Aspect of Moral Responsibility

In this chapter I will argue against Wallace's thesis that reactive attitudes are an essential feature of our practice of holding people morally responsible. In order to clarify my thesis, I will go into detail about Wallace's position about the relationship between reactive attitudes and moral blame.

Wallace argues that moral blame and moral sanction are responses associated with moral responsibility (Wallace 1994, 66). When we hold an agent to an obligation and the agent violates it, we blame her and sometimes we believe that a sanction is appropriate. In Wallace's view, given that moral blame is a response essentially associated with moral responsibility and that moral blame has an inherent attitudinal dimension, moral responsibility possesses the same feature.

As I mentioned before, Wallace claims that there is an essential link between moral responsibility and reactive attitudes: resentment, indignation and guilt¹⁰. He does not claim that an agent should experience an actual episode of reactive attitudes each time that she regards people as blameworthy. In contrast, he accepts that moral blame does not require such an experience, given that a number of circumstances may prevent an agent from experiencing reactive attitudes towards a wrongdoer. This way, Wallace claims that at least the second of the two conditions below is necessary to our practice of holding people morally responsible:

1. An agent experiences an actual episode of reactive attitudes (resentment, indignation or guilt).
2. An agent considers that it would be appropriate to experience reactive attitudes towards the wrongdoers, even if she does not actually experience reactive attitudes.

Let's take an example to illustrate Wallace's position. Imagine that two of your colleagues, A and B, lie to you. You realize that they did something wrong and you hold them morally responsible for what they did. You feel resentment towards A, but not towards B. The reason is that B is so charming that you have trouble feeling any negative emotional response towards her. According to Wallace, this absence of

¹⁰ In Wallace 1994 (chapter 2), Wallace presents a complex argument to show the distinctive moral character of these three reactive attitudes. He distinguishes his account of reactive attitudes from Strawson's account (Strawson 2005). In this thesis, I will not discuss such arguments. I will take for granted that those reactive attitudes are related to moral responsibility.

resentment does not prevent you from holding B morally responsible as long as you believe that resentment would be an appropriate response to B's action.

I agree with Wallace that an actual episode of moral responsibility is not necessary in order to hold someone morally responsible. However, I will argue that the belief that it would be appropriate to experience reactive attitudes is not necessary as well. In short, in this chapter I will defend the thesis that moral responsibility and moral blame do not require neither of the above two conditions.

Wallace formulates an objection against a number of theories about moral responsibility. The objection is that they consider the attitudinal feature of moral responsibility as a mere side effect of our practice of holding people morally responsible. This amounts to an important failure according to Wallace because he regards reactive attitudes as essential to moral responsibility. I will focus on two theories: the so-called "economy of threats account" (Schlick 1962, Smart 2003, Dennett 1984) and Scanlon's contractualist view of moral responsibility (Scanlon 1998, 2003). These positions have different views about moral responsibility, but they both deny that reactive attitudes constitute one of its essential features. I will not try to prove that either of these theories is correct as an account of moral responsibility. Instead I will only claim that Wallace's objection to both theories is not successful. I will focus on the reactive attitude of guilt and argue that it is not necessary to feel

guilty in order to hold oneself morally accountable or morally blameworthy. I will present a number of examples that show the intuitiveness of my claim.

The Economy of Threats Account

Wallace formulates several criticisms against the economy of threats account in addition to the classical problems that philosophers have found with such an account (Wallace 1994, Strawson 2005, Bennett 2008). As I said above, I will focus on one criticism, namely that it does not account for our practice of holding people responsible because it fails to explain its attitudinal feature. I will argue that Wallace's objection is not successful because he does not prove that reactive attitudes are an essential feature of moral responsibility¹¹.

The economy of threats account is the view that the main role of moral blame and moral sanction is to have a deterrence effect on people. According to this account, the main function of blame and sanction is to discourage people from breaking moral obligations in the future. The idea is that correcting people's behavior is the essential feature of moral responsibility. We hope that punishment for a murderer will be so strong that next time that she feels tempted to murder someone she will refrain from doing so (Wallace 1994, 54-62).

¹¹ Of course it might be the case that some or all of the other criticisms are successful. It is not my purpose to defend the economy of threats account as a fully satisfactory account of moral responsibility.

Wallace's main criticism to the economy of threats view is that it does not take into account the attitudinal dimension of moral responsibility. According to Wallace, when we blame someone for a wrong action we are not merely trying to affect that person's future behavior. We are also trying to express our feelings towards that action. When we sanction Harris, it is not our exclusive goal to modify his patterns of action. We also express the deep indignation that his actions produce in us.

As this is so, we can blame someone and so experience reactive attitudes without sanctioning her behavior. There are cases in which we do not express our moral judgments about a wrongdoer (Wallace 1994, 56). Consider the case of a person that thinks for herself that Harris is blameworthy. This person does not express her judgment to anyone, even though Harris' actions make her feel indignation. Certainly, this person does not sanction Harris' behavior. She may even think that sanction is not the best way to deal with Harris and that he should receive medical treatment instead. This kind of case shows that reactive attitudes are a feature of moral blame even in the absence of sanction.

According to Wallace, the particular case of guilt shows his point clearly. If I lie to a friend and then I feel guilty about it, I do not simply try to prevent myself from lying to my friends in some later occasion. It seems that I can feel guilty even if I do not want to educate myself in order to be an honest person. Wallace claims that I

experience guilt as a reaction to something wrong that I did and the connection between my reactive attitude and moral responsibility is essential¹².

To Wallace's objection, an economy of threats theorist can reply that her view can account for an attitudinal dimension of moral responsibility. She may say that what Wallace calls "generalized beneficence" can explain the attitudinal feature of moral responsibility (Wallace 1994, 56). Such an attitude can be understood as a concern about the future benefits that an agent can attain.

Wallace replies that generalized beneficence is characterized by a forward-looking focus. When we experience generalized beneficence, we focus our attention on the future consequences of someone's action. To experience this attitude towards Harris involves a desire for the future well-being of all those that will have something to do with Harris. However, Wallace argues, the attitude that is essential to moral blame is a backward-looking attitude. That is, our point of attention is a past action, rather than a future state of affairs. When we blame Harris for his crimes, our attitude is related to something that he already did.

I am willing to concede that as a matter of fact there is always a connection between reactive attitudes and moral blame. It might even be true that every time that we blame someone, either we experience reactive attitudes or we think that they would be an appropriate response. However, Wallace's arguments do not show that

¹² Below I will explain in more detail the connection between moral responsibility and reactive attitudes.

such a relationship is essential to moral responsibility. It is still possible that the attitudes that we experience are only a side effect of those elements that are essential to moral responsibility. I will defend this thesis in the following section. If I am right, I will show that the economy of threats account does not face the challenge to account for the attitudinal dimension of moral responsibility.

Scanlon's Contractualist View

In "The Significance of Choice" Thomas Scanlon argues that reactive attitudes are not essential to moral responsibility because we can blame people even if we do not experience any reactive attitude towards them. He presents a case that is analogous to Wallace's charming colleague case. Imagine that you discover that your dearest friend did something morally wrong to someone else. She is your closest friend since you were kids and so you do not experience any indignation towards her. In other situations, if you came to know that someone else did exactly the same thing, you would experience indignation. According to Scanlon, it is clear that even in the absence of any reactive attitude it is still the case that you blame your friend and regard her as a morally responsible agent. Certainly, you hold your friend to moral obligations and you think that she violated one of them.

Wallace's disjunctive condition of moral responsibility is a response to such an objection. The reply is that you can blame your friend as long as you consider appropriate to feel indignation towards your friend. This blocks Scanlon's criticism

that an actual episode of reactive attitudes is not essentially connected to moral blame. It may seem that Wallace shows that the belief in the appropriateness of moral responsibility is enough to guarantee the essential connection between reactive attitudes and moral responsibility. However, there are more radical cases in which it seems that not even the belief in the appropriateness of reactive attitudes is necessary in order to hold people morally responsible. Wallace claims that it is clear that when we forgive someone we withhold resentment towards that person, even though we find resentment appropriate. I will argue that forgiveness does not help Wallace's case, as it is not clear that he provides a correct characterization of such a phenomenon.

Blame without Resentment: The Case of Forgiveness

Wallace considers one challenge presented by Lawrence Stern in his "Freedom, Blame and Moral Community." Stern argues that behavior exhibited by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. poses a challenge to a view like Wallace's (Stern 1974, 78-79). Such cases suggest that holding people to blame does not require reactive attitudes. Both of them were the victims of moral transgressions by others. King dealt with the unfair treatment of African Americans in the United States and Gandhi with the defense of his people's political freedom. Nonetheless, both of them adopted a policy of nonviolence to defend their political movements (the civil rights movement in the United States and India's independence).

Clearly, Gandhi and King could recognize that their oppressors violated moral obligations. If it is justified at all to experience resentment towards moral transgressors, certainly they were justified in feeling it. However, we may understand their political position as going beyond the mere absence of violence to the lack of resentment.

Of course, the fact that they did not experience reactive attitudes is not a point against Wallace's position because, as I mentioned before, Wallace claims that holding people morally responsible does not require an actual episode of reactive attitudes. That is, for Gandhi and King to blame people, it is not necessary that they actually felt resentment. Rather, in order to hold others morally responsible it is necessary to believe in the appropriateness of resentment. According to Wallace, that Gandhi and King still held such a belief is clear if we understand their actions as expressing forgiveness (Wallace 1994, 72-73).

Wallace claims that a first condition to forgive someone is to think that she did something wrong. Imagine that you do not visit your best friend at the hospital while she recovers from a terrible accident and she forgives your lack of consideration. It seems natural that in order to forgive you, she has to acknowledge that not visiting her was wrong in the first place. In contrast, if you could not go because you were violently ill, it seems that she could not forgive you because there

is nothing to forgive. I have no problem accepting this condition. It is the second condition that I find unsatisfactory.

According to Wallace, in order to forgive someone it is necessary to believe that it would be appropriate to feel resentment towards the wrongdoer and to be willing to renounce that resentment¹³. In general, we see forgiveness as a generous act and, according to Wallace, such generosity comes from the fact that the forgiver knows that she is fully justified in experiencing resentment, but she chooses to give it up¹⁴. This way, he claims that if we understand the Gandhi/King cases in terms of forgiveness, we can see that even though forgivers do not feel reactive attitudes, they still believe it would be appropriate to feel them. Wallace considers a radical kind of moral reformers:

1. They morally disapprove of certain behaviors on the part of others.
2. They do not experience resentment.
3. They do not believe that resentment is appropriate¹⁵.

These radical reformers judge other people's behavior and regard some behavior as morally wrong. They hold judgments such as "racial discrimination is

¹³ Wallace endorses a traditional view of forgiveness as explained in Murphy 1982, 504.

¹⁴ For a detailed treatment of forgiveness and the conditions it has to fulfill, see Hieronymi 2001.

¹⁵ There may be a number of reasons to believe that resentment is not appropriate: you may think that human beings would be better off without it or maybe your religious convictions or moral ideals make you believe that resentment should be avoided, etc.

morally wrong.” However, they do not experience resentment towards those who racially discriminate and they do not think that resentment is appropriate.

According to Wallace it is doubtful that they hold people morally responsible at all (Wallace 1994, 73). Wallace claims that if we eliminate the attitudinal feature of moral responsibility, we are just left with the belief that an agent has done something wrong and maybe with the further belief that it is appropriate to sanction such an agent. In that case, judgments of blame get reduced to statements about an agent’s fulfillment of a moral obligation. According to Wallace, holding people morally responsible goes beyond a mere description of someone’s actions. That is, such a stance does not merely establish a causal relation between a person and a wrong action (Wallace 1994, 73, 74-79). Following Susan Wolf (1990, 41) Wallace claims that holding someone morally responsible is a form of deep assessment of people’s actions and the attitudinal aspect of moral responsibility (reactive attitudes) makes it such.

In contrast to Wallace, Norvin Richards allows forgiveness even in the absence of resentment (Richards 1988, 77-79). Richards argues that a forgiver that does not experience resentment can still hold others morally responsible. Clearly, as it stands, Richards’s position is not a challenge to Wallace’s view because the latter can argue that a forgiver still needs to believe that resentment would be appropriate. However, Richards’ account can be modified without losing its plausibility.

Richards presents the following case to support his position. Imagine a father, John, who feels deeply disappointed because his son stole money from him. John does not feel resentment towards his son. He just feels sadness. We can add to Richards' formulation that John does not think that resentment would be appropriate as he believes that resentment does not have a place in a loving relationship. Despite the wrongdoing and the negative feelings that he experiences, John decides to forgive his son. The fact that John does not feel resentment and does not think it would be appropriate does not block our intuition that John's situation is a genuine case of forgiveness.

Let me further modify the scenario. Imagine that John does not experience sadness or resentment because in general he disapproves of emotional reactions. Does this alter our initial intuition? It does not, because John can still hold his son morally responsible, even if his moral judgment does not go hand in hand with an emotional reaction.

As Wallace acknowledges, forgiveness requires the belief that the agent to be forgiven has done something wrong. Given Wallace's analysis of forgiveness and his position about the radical moral reformers, he would have to argue that John's is not a genuine case of forgiveness and further that John is not a participant of the practice of holding people morally responsible (since he does not think that resentment would be appropriate).

Both claims are counterintuitive, as we do think that John can forgive his son and that he can hold his son morally responsible. Intuitively, his assessment of his son's actions does constitute a form of deep assessment and it goes beyond a description of his son's behavior. This is so in the absence of resentment and in general, in the absence of an emotional response.

Blame without Guilt

In this section, I will argue against Wallace's view that an agent cannot hold herself morally responsible unless she experiences guilt or believes that guilt is appropriate. I will present a number of counterexamples to Wallace's position. The second case also supports the view that an emotional episode is not necessary for an agent to hold someone morally responsible.

Case A: Tired of Feeling Guilty

Imagine a person who was educated to feel guilty every time she makes a mistake, no matter the nature of the mistake. If she fails an exam, she feels guilty, if she tells a lie, she feels guilty, if her room is messy, she feels guilty and so on. In this case, guilt was used as a resource to force her to do things correctly. After careful reflection and years of self-torment she decides not to feel guilty anymore as she thinks that guilt has importantly damaged her life and that she does not need it as a control mechanism to do things the right way. Significantly, it is not her goal to have

permission to do things wrongly. She decides to train her mind in order to avoid feeling guilty each time she does something wrong (morally or non-morally wrong). Suppose that after a long period of training, she finally attains her goal and is able to live without guilt.

Imagine that after the training, she lies to a friend and so hurts her friend's feelings. She cares about her friend and feels sad about what she did. She acknowledges that lying was wrong and she makes a commitment not to do it again. However, given her ideas about guilt and her training, she does not feel guilty nor does she think that it would be appropriate to feel guilty. In this case, she still holds herself morally responsible. The absence of guilt and the absence of the belief that guilt would be appropriate do not preclude her from holding herself morally responsible.

She acknowledges that lying was wrong and so that she is blameworthy. In short, this scenario suggests that moral responsibility and moral blame do not require either the actual experience of reactive attitudes or the belief that it would be appropriate to experience reactive feelings.

Case B: A Serial Killer

To illustrate this kind of case, we can consider the case of the black widow that marries rich men and then kills them to get their fortune. For the sake of the

argument, let's concede that she is not a psychopath because she understands that she is held to the moral obligation to respect other people's lives and she is also able to guide her behavior in accordance. However, she decides to become a serial killer as a way of achieving her dream of being wealthy. Suppose that she is a cold-blooded criminal and so that she does not feel any guilt or remorse for her crimes. Also, she knows how to accomplish her goals and is aware that guilt is an obstacle to getting what she wants so she does not think that it would be appropriate for her to feel guilty for the murders.

Even in the absence of guilt, sadness or any other emotion, we believe that this person can hold herself morally responsible for what she does. She is aware that the murders of her husbands can be correctly attributed to her. It also seems correct that she can regard herself as blameworthy for what she does given that she is a competent moral agent.

Case C: Good Man who Does Not Feel Guilty

Consider the case of a man that diligently complies with his moral obligations. He is not a perfect moral agent and sometimes fails to do what is right, but succeeds most of the time. However, his moral education, in contrast to that of the agent in case A, did not include guilt as a means to make him do the right thing. Rather, he was encouraged to avoid feeling guilty and to focus his efforts on repairing the damage done by his mistakes and in avoiding similar mistakes in the future. This

way, he learned to fulfill his moral obligations without feeling guilty when he fails to do so. As a result of his education, he does not believe that feeling guilty would be appropriate. Again, it is intuitive that this agent is a participant of the practice of holding people morally responsible. It is clear that he can hold himself morally responsible even if guilt is so detached from his moral life.

Case D: A Society without Guilt

Imagine that at some point our society starts training people to avoid feeling guilt. Consider this situation as a generalization of the above case. This is a group of people that rejects guilt, but still holds its members to moral obligations. In such a society, children are educated to be moral beings without guilt. Once they are adults they learn to recognize when they do something wrong and to make an effort to comply with moral obligations. It is clear that this would be a group of morally accountable individuals, whose only difference with our present society is that we experience guilt and they do not.

The above cases show that there is no essential link between moral responsibility and moral blame and reactive attitudes. They show that our practice of holding people morally responsible need not involve an experience of reactive attitudes or the belief that it would be appropriate to experience reactive attitudes.

Potential Reply

Regarding the above cases, Wallace may reply in two closely-related ways. First, he may claim that each of the agents merely describes a state of affairs. As a consequence, each agent's judgment does not constitute a deep moral assessment of facts and so does not constitute a genuine case of moral blame. Here Wallace faces an important problem, namely that it is intuitive that the moral judgments of the above agents are forms of deep assessment. What this implies for Wallace is that at least he has to give us a story about this appearance, even if at the end his position is correct.

Second, he may reply that the agents in my cases are obviously moral agents, but that they are participants of a different kind of moral practice, namely the practice followed by people in shame cultures. This is not an adequate reply because the above cases can be constructed as completely independent from shame and we would still have the result that the agents hold people morally responsible for their actions. In a shame culture, people do not experience reactive attitudes as responses to a failure to live according to their values. Instead of feeling guilt, they feel shame and instead of resentment, contempt. According to Wallace, members of these communities are still moral agents, but are different from us because they do not experience reactive attitudes and they do not recognize moral obligations (Wallace 1994, 38-40).

Let's analyze whether case 3 can be thought of as an example of a shame culture. Imagine that as part of this good man's education, his family also educated him to avoid feeling shame. As a consequence, this person's moral life also lacks the shame component that Wallace may try to attribute to the above agents in order to explain the intuition that they are moral beings. Notice that even in the absence of shame we still regard the agent as justified in blaming himself.

The above cases of forgiveness and self-ascription of moral responsibility stand as such even though the agents do not feel reactive attitudes or regard reactive attitudes as appropriate. Moreover, some of those agents do not experience any emotional episode, but are nonetheless participants of the practice of holding people morally responsible.

In the following chapter I will criticize Wallace's view about the relation between moral responsibility and free will. I will argue that he does not decisively prove that the generalized strategy is wrong and that we should discard the incompatibilist explanation of our deliberation process.

Chapter III

Seductiveness of Incompatibilism

My main purpose in this chapter is to cast doubt on Wallace's response to the incompatibilist about moral responsibility and determinism. Wallace accepts that incompatibilism is an attractive view rooted in our common sense views of moral responsibility. However, he claims that his view can explain why incompatibilism is seductive and how a compatibilist position is more satisfactory. In what follows I will present an incompatibilist challenge: the generalization strategy. I will later argue that Wallace fails to dispel "the seductiveness" that it originates.

An Incompatibilist Challenge: the Generalization Strategy

In *Living without Free Will* Derk Pereboom claims that there are cases in which we naturally tend to excuse an agent from moral responsibility because we believe that she is determined (Pereboom 2001, 99-115). This is how he explains the case of Robert Harris. Pereboom argues that if we accept determinism as an excusing

or an exempting condition in those cases and determinism is true, we should conclude that nobody is morally responsible. This is Pereboom's version of the so-called generalization strategy. He formulates four cases in which an agent, Plum, performed an action, the homicide of Ms. White¹⁶:

Case 1: Plum behaves like an ordinary human being, but he was created by a neuroscientist who manipulates him directly through sophisticated technology. Plum can deliberate and take decisions, but everything he does and thinks is controlled by the scientist.

Case 2: Plum behaves like an ordinary human being, but he was created by a neuroscientist who cannot control him directly, but that programmed him to weigh reasons for action as a rationally egoistic creature. In the particular case of the murder of Ms. White, the egoistic reasons were so powerful that he was causally determined to kill.

Case 3: Plum behaves like an ordinary human being, but he was rigorously trained as a criminal in his home and community. However, he is still a rationally egoistic person. His training started so early that he could not alter or prevent it. In his circumstances, he was determined to kill Ms. White.

¹⁶ I modify Pereboom's presentation of the cases as not all their features are relevant for my present purposes.

Case 4: Determinism is true and Plum is an ordinary human being that is a rationally egoistic person. The events that ‘pushed’ him to kill Ms. White trace back even before he was born.

Pereboom’s thesis is that we excuse Plum in cases 1-3 from moral responsibility because we think he is determined to kill Ms. White. In cases 1 and 2, we tend to suspend reactive attitudes towards Plum because someone, directly or indirectly, manipulated him to kill. According to Pereboom, the conclusion that manipulation is an exempting condition results from a belief in determinism (Pereboom 2001, 112-114).

Case 3 is slightly different because there is an intuition that Plum is indeed morally responsible. Sometimes we think that at some point, we can decide what we want to be, despite the influences we were exposed to during childhood. This way, two brothers that suffered the same abusive treatment at home can follow completely different paths, so that one can become a cop while the other a drug addict. However, Pereboom claims, we should accept that reactive attitudes are not appropriate towards Plum in case 3 as well as in the previous two cases. This is so because Plum’s education, just like manipulation, was something out of his control. Pereboom also claims that as a matter of fact, in some cases we do excuse an agent like Plum, for

example someone like Robert Harris and we do so because we think that such agents are determined (Pereboom 2001, 114-115)¹⁷.

About case 4 our intuitions are not clear about the relationship between determinism and reactive attitudes. However, again, Pereboom claims that we are forced to accept that Plum is not a good candidate for reactive attitudes in this case because the agent is determined in just the same way that he is in cases 1, 2 and 3. Pereboom's move is to go from cases in which we naturally accept determinism as an excusing condition to the case in which determinism is true (Pereboom 2001, 115-116): if determinism is true, we should suspend reactive attitudes towards everybody. This way we think that we are justified in experiencing reactive attitudes in general, and unjustified only in some cases, but we are wrong.

To give further plausibility to case 3, consider the following cases. We hear about two equally cruel criminals. They even committed the same crime. One of them is Robert Harris and the other is a John Doe. Both of them have severe problems to recognize the demand for regard that we make on them and to experience reactive attitudes. They do not feel any remorse, guilt or compassion. When we know about their crimes, we feel indignation. We immediately experience negative feelings towards them and think that punishment is of course adequate.

¹⁷ "The best explanation for the intuition that Plum is not morally responsible in the first three cases is that his action results from a deterministic causal process that traces back to factors beyond his control" (Pereboom 2001, 116).

Later on, we get more information about their backgrounds. We realize that Harris was constantly abused at home, victim of terrible mistreatment. He was never loved, but hated by his mother. On the other hand, Doe had a happy childhood. He was not poor and his parents and family loved him. In general, he had everything that's good for a child. It seems that we come to believe that we are not wholly justified to experience indignation towards Harris because of his difficult childhood, while we regard our attitudes as appropriate towards John. We evaluate them differently.

Pereboom would explain the difference as follows. At first we feel resentment towards Harris because we think that he freely killed those people. Later, when we come to know his personal background we change our attitudes because we give up our belief about his freedom. Now we think that something out of his control, the way he was treated as a child, ultimately produced his crimes. As a result, we consider unjustified or inappropriate the reactive attitudes that we experienced. In short, we think that the fact that he is determined, that he is not a free being, is an exempting condition¹⁸.

We may reply to Pereboom that the other criminal's happy childhood was also out of his control, but our indignation remains. Pereboom may say that our initial

¹⁸ "Not implausibly, our attitude of indignation is mitigated by our coming to believe that there were factors beyond his control [Harris's] that causally determined certain aspects of his character to be as they were" (Pereboom 2001, 95).

attitude towards Doe remains because we think that his childhood did not determine him to become a criminal, we think that he chose to be a criminal.

According to Pereboom, determinism is an exempting condition because we use it as a criterion to modify or suspend our reactive attitudes. We apply it to few people, only to exceptions, but we do it. We believe that there are two groups of people: determined and free. We think that people like John are normal and so responsible and good candidates for reactive attitudes *because* they are free; and that some others are determined and so not good targets of reactive attitudes. Such a distinction explains the difference in our evaluation. According to Pereboom, in cases like Harris's we stop considering appropriate our initial reactions because we come to believe that the agent is determined.

Pereboom's conclusion is that if determinism were true, excusing and exempting conditions would generalize given that moral responsibility is actually blocked in some cases because we believe that the agents are determined. In the following section I will present Wallace's response to the generalization strategy.

Wallace's Reactive Account

In this section, I will present Wallace's account of excuses and exemptions and his arguments to show that determinism does not generalize from excuses or from exemptions. These latter arguments constitute Wallace's response to the challenge posed by the generalization strategy.

1. Excuses and B-conditions

Wallace claims that excuses are localized in the sense that they are applied to particular actions that people do. When we excuse an agent, blameworthiness is blocked for a particular action, but we still regard the agent as morally accountable. For instance, when you excuse your friend because she did not mean to hurt you, you stop blaming her, but you still think that she is a morally responsible agent in general.

Wallace's account of excuses is based on his defense of the principle of blameworthiness without fault. That is, the principle that an agent should not be blamed if she has not done anything wrong. Clearly, this principle enjoys of an immediate intuitive appeal. I will present Wallace's argument to defend it.

Wallace claims that we demand from people that their actions reflect certain qualities of will, rather than only bodily movements (Wallace 1994, 127-135). For instance, if someone steps on my foot, I excuse her only if I realize that she did not

mean to hurt me. It is a fact that she hurt me, but I excuse her based on my evaluation of her qualities of will.

Wallace claims that there is a particular kind of qualities of will that is relevant for moral blameworthiness: an agent's choices. Briefly, he argues that given that moral obligations can be justified based on reasons, the qualities of will that are relevant for blameworthiness have to be sensitive to the force of reasons. Mere bodily movements do not fulfill this requirement. In contrast, the choices of an agent are relevant to assess someone's blameworthiness because they are sensitive to reasons.

Intuitively, we think that intentions are important to attribute moral responsibility. Wallace claims that the importance of intentions comes from the significance of choices for moral blameworthiness as intentions are a necessary condition of choices and in turn choices are a necessary condition to attribute the violation or the fulfillment of a demand. As a consequence, a person cannot comply with or violate a demand if she did not choose to do the action that violated or fulfilled the demand.

Given that our actions express the choices that we make, Wallace argues that we excuse agents when their actions do not exhibit a choice to violate a moral demand. A person that hits me by accident did not have the intention to hurt me and so she did not choose to hurt me.

As I explained before, Wallace claims that reactive attitudes are sensitive to a belief about whether a person violated a moral obligation that we hold her to. For instance, I experience resentment towards a friend when I think that she lied to me. Wallace tries to explain the content of such a belief in terms of people's qualities of will, in particular in terms of people's choices. He claims that the belief that someone violated a moral obligation that we held her to involves the belief that such a person chose to perform an action that ultimately led to the violation of the moral obligation.

To sum up, according to Wallace excuses block moral responsibility by making false the belief that a person did not fulfill a moral obligation that we held her to. Excuses give us a reason to think that the agent did not choose to break a moral obligation. This way, in the absence of a choice, we have to conclude that the agent did not do anything wrong. Given that it is highly intuitive that we should not blame a person that did not do anything wrong (the principle of no blameworthiness without fault), we have to excuse from moral responsibility those who did not intend to violate a moral demand. In cases in which a person makes a mistake, or is subject to physical constraint or coercion, the person does not intend to do a particular action and so she does not choose to do such an action. For instance, a person that cannot help you to carry a heavy bag because she is very sick does not break any moral obligation towards you.

In what follows I will explain Wallace's argument to defend his compatibilist account of excuses against the generalized strategy. Wallace's basic claim is that determinism would not generalize from the accepted excuses. According to Wallace, even if the world were deterministic, people would violate moral obligations and express their choices to perform actions that lead them to violate such moral obligations. An agent that does something wrong chooses to do such an action and this fact is not affected by the truth of determinism. In other words, in a deterministic world it would not become false that we choose to comply or violate moral obligations and that we act according to our choices.

Wallace claims that the irrelevance of determinism is obvious because excusing conditions do not block moral responsibility by showing that our choices are determined, rather they show that there is no choice to do an action that breaches a moral law. For instance, in the case of the person that hurts you by accident, you do not excuse her because she is determined, but because she did not choose to hurt you (Wallace 1994, 147-153).

Wallace finds a further difficulty with the thesis that excuses can be explained by the presence of free will. He claims that the principle of no blameworthiness without fault is a highly intuitive principle as the fact that someone did not do anything wrong is a very good reason to excuse that person from blameworthiness. Wallace acknowledges that some cases suggest that we excuse agents because they

lack alternative possibilities. For instance, in cases of excuses like “I couldn’t help it” or “the car wouldn’t start” the agent had no options. She wanted to pick up her friend at the airport on time, but the car did not start soon and so she was late. This agent’s only option was to arrive late.

At first sight, it seems that we excuse the agent because she did not have options. However, Wallace thinks that the principle of alternative possibilities does not explain the modification in our moral responsibility judgment. He claims that the fact that we should excuse the above agent because she had no options does not undermine his previous account in terms of the principle of no blameworthiness without fault. This is so because the fact that an agent did not do anything wrong seems to be enough to excuse her from moral responsibility. This way, if the fact that the agent could not have done otherwise is a reason to excuse her from moral responsibility, it is merely a further reason in addition to the principle of no blameworthiness without fault.

According to Wallace, his account of the excuses is superior to the account that the principle of alternative possibilities can offer because Wallace’s view is a unitary theory of excuses. That is, the principle of no blameworthiness without fault can explain the whole group of the excusing conditions, while the principle of alternative possibilities can explain only some of them. For instance, when I explain

to you that I did not mean to hurt you, I am not trying to be excused on the basis that I did not have alternative possibilities.

It is true that only in some cases in which an agent is excused she lacks options. However, it is important to notice that the incompatibilist does not need to give a unitary account of the excuses. In this sense, the fact that Wallace does offer a unitary account does not make his account superior to the incompatibilist explanation. The latter only needs to show that in some cases, we excuse people because we think that they are determined. If she proves this, she also proves that there are ordinary situations in which we accept determinism as an excuse. This way, this theorist would prove that if determinism were true, we would be justified to generalize excuses and stop holding people morally responsible. The incompatibilist does not need to provide an explanation of all the excusing conditions.

Wallace claims that the mere lack of alternative possibilities in the above cases does not show that such a feature gives excuses their force as excusing conditions. For instance, when you give as an excuse that your car would not start, you do not simply report that you had no other option, but to arrive late to the airport. At the same time, you are also describing your qualities of will. You are saying that you wanted to arrive on time because you care about your friend, but that a problem with your car did not let you do so.

As I mentioned before, according to Wallace he can explain the phenomenon that he calls “the seductiveness of incompatibilism.” Wallace criticizes the economy of threats account because it does not explain why incompatibilism is so compelling. If the economy of threats account were correct, compatibilism would be obviously true, but it would be mysterious why incompatibilism is so compelling. Wallace thinks that his version of compatibilism is superior because it explains why incompatibilism is seductive.

Wallace’s explanation is that some of the central cases of excuses have in common that their agents lack alternative possibilities. This is the case of reflex bodily movement and constrain. In these situations, the agent cannot do otherwise as she actually does. Certainly, this is a feature of the examples, but according to Wallace, it is not what blocks moral responsibility. Wallace’s diagnosis is that we make a false generalization from that feature to all the cases. The problem with the generalization is that the lack of alternative possibilities is not the source of the excusing force so it is false that we should excuse everyone from moral responsibility if we all were determined. The element that is doing the work is the fact that the agent did not do anything wrong.

I agree with Wallace about the following claims: it is true that if determinism were the case, we would still hold each other to moral obligations. I would still believe that you should not hurt me or steal my property. Also, we would regard a

number of things as moral obligations and there would be people that would not comply with them. For instance, I would believe that people have the obligation to respect other people's lives and some people would kill others. In this sense, it is true that excuses would not generalize if determinism is true.

Nonetheless, blameworthiness requires accountability as Wallace himself acknowledges. This way, if determinism rules out A-conditions, it also rules out B-conditions. In the following section, I will explain Wallace's account of exempting conditions and his arguments to show that they do not generalize if determinism is true. I will argue that he does not refute the generalization strategy and as a consequence, that he does not prove that determinism would not rule out blameworthiness.

2. Exemptions and A-conditions

As I explained before, Wallace claims that we exempt agents because they lack the powers of reflective self-control: the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons and the ability to govern her behavior in light of those reasons. Roughly, the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons is the capacity to recognize the force of moral reasons and to apply the relevant reasons to a particular situation. In contrast, someone has the capacity to govern herself if she is able to behave in accordance with the moral reasons that she grasps.

According to Wallace, exemptions work by showing that our powers of reflective self-control are impaired, so that when a condition counts as an exemption, the agent lacks the above abilities as in the cases of young children and some mentally ill people.

Wallace argues that the powers of reflective self-control are analogous to capacities such as playing the piano and speaking a foreign language. It is clear that such capacities would not be impaired if determinism were true. Even if we were all determined, there would be people with outstanding abilities to play the piano or speak several languages. Analogously, according to Wallace, even in a determined world, agents would still be able to understand reasons and to act according to those reasons. That is, nothing would prevent determined agents from possessing the powers of reflective self-control as such powers are regular psychological abilities. As a consequence, Wallace claims that determinism is irrelevant to establish whether someone possesses the powers of reflective self-control or not (Wallace 1994, 180-185).

It seems that Wallace's explanation of the exempting conditions in terms of the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons and the ability to govern oneself in light of those reasons generates the suspicion that free will is involved. This is so because being able to understand moral reasons and being able to govern one's behavior in light of moral reasons seem to presuppose that one has alternatives. In the rest of the

chapter I will argue that Wallace does not succeed in eliminating what he calls “the seductiveness of incompatibilism”.

In the following section, I will argue that there are two different ways in which we can understand the powers of reflective self-control. Under one interpretation, such powers are perfectly compatible with determinism. However, on a different interpretation, they have an incompatibilist feature. I will argue that the latter interpretation is supported by common sense. Finally, in the last section I will discuss the problems that the phenomenon of deliberation poses to Wallace’s view.

The Powers of Reflective Self-control and Incompatibilism

Let us break down the powers of reflective self-control into their two components: the ability to understand moral reasons and the ability to govern our behavior in light of those reasons.

A) The Ability to Understand Reasons

Under a first interpretation, this ability should be understood as a certain kind of cognitive faculty that allows an agent to process what we normally consider moral reasons. As Wallace claims, if the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons is just this cognitive faculty, it is clearly compatible with determinism. It is analogous to an ability to solve advanced mathematical equations. There are people that have such

abilities and there are people who do not. Having such capacities is just to be able to get a certain conclusion from a number of premises. Understood in this basic sense, the ability to understand reasons is the mere capacity to recognize moral reasons and to apply them to a particular circumstance.

Nonetheless, there is a further sense in which this ability involves having options. Recalling Harris's case, he cannot see the force of moral reasons. Wallace claims that it is unreasonable to hold him morally responsible because he does not have the capacity to understand why he should avoid hurting others.

At least *prima facie*, Harris's incapacity would generalize if determinism were true. In other words, it is not clear that the ability to understand moral reasons does not presuppose free will. Consider the moment in which the black widow¹⁹ decides to kill her next husband. Her reason to murder him is to get his substantial fortune. If she were determined, having that reason would be the only thing she could do given her past and laws of nature. That is, the reasons that she actually has would be the only reasons that she could possibly have given that she is determined.

Nonetheless, understanding reasons seems to involve the ability to grasp reasons that are different from those that one actually has. If the black widow is determined, there is a sense in which she cannot understand why she should not kill her husband. If this is correct, Harris's situation and the black widow's situation

¹⁹ From my examples in chapter II, this is the serial killer that is not a psychopath.

would generalize to all the agents if determinism is true. Given this interpretation of the ability to grasp and apply moral reasons, the generalized strategy still represents a source of seductiveness. Wallace does not rule out such a source because his compatibilist arguments can be applied only to the first interpretation. We will see in the next subsection that similar considerations apply to the second component of the powers of reflective self-control.

B) The Ability to Govern one's Behavior in Light of Reasons

About this further ability, there is a basic sense in which we can interpret it. According to Wallace, we hold each other to moral obligations that we accept. Let us say that a moral obligation is "Help your friends when they need you." At a particular occasion, an agent chooses to fulfill such a moral obligation. I agree with Wallace that this is perfectly compatible with determinism and that complying with the obligation is a regular psychological capacity like playing the piano or singing. There are people whose actions coincide with their choices. As spectators we can see that an agent systematically behaves as her judgments indicate. We can observe that there is a perfect consistency between her deliberation process and the actions that result from that.

Nonetheless, it seems that being able to govern one's behavior in light of reasons goes beyond the above description. It is not clear how I could govern my own behavior if what I actually do is the only thing that I can do. Given that determinism

would leave us with only one option at every moment, it seems that there would be no room for self-governance in a determined world.

Wallace claims that governing one's actions by reasons implies that one can step back from one's desires, overcome them when they conflict with what morality demands and do the right thing. Again, it is not clear that this does not presuppose free will. Stepping back from one's desires seems to imply that there are two different outcomes that I can produce: I can act from my desires and do what I want to do, or I can overcome them and do the morally correct action.

Recall my previous example. Imagine that the black widow deliberates about whether she should kill her husband and get his fortune or whether she should do the right thing and stop killing people. Suppose that thanks to a sort of spiritual conversion she decides to fulfill her moral obligation to respect people's lives and she decides not to kill her husband. He is a very rich man so she feels an intense desire to kill him and get his fortune. However, she resists her impulses and does the right thing.

In such a case, stepping back from her desires seems to involve free will. It seems that she must have both options (kill or not kill) in order to be able to govern her actions in light of moral reasons. Consider the case in which she is determined and so the only thing that she can do is to refrain from killing her husband. Clearly,

she would think that she governed herself, but it is not clear that that would be a correct description of her actions if determinism were true.

My main point is that intuitively, the notion of self-governance involves free will. This further interpretation goes beyond psychological abilities and seems to require an incompatibilist characteristic of the agent. Given that the suspicion of free will remains in cases like the black widow, it is still plausible that exemptions would generalize if determinism is true. That is, if governing one's behavior by reasons requires free will, none of us would be morally responsible if determinism were true. As a consequence, Wallace does not rule out the seductiveness of incompatibilism that comes from the generalization strategy.

As I mentioned in the previous section about excuses, Wallace claims that B-conditions presuppose A-conditions. That is, in order to fairly regard someone as blameworthy, she should be accountable in the first place. As this is so, even though Wallace shows that in a sense we would still be able to violate moral obligations, he does not prove that we would be fairly held morally blameworthy given that we should be suitable candidates of accountability in the first place.

Incompatibilism and Deliberation

A further difficulty for Wallace is a source of seductiveness that does not come from the generalization strategy. The black widow got involved in a

deliberation process to decide whether she should kill her husband or not. This process clearly involves the assumption that she had options. Clearly, the very deliberation process involves the idea that we do have options. If we thought that there is only one thing that we could possibly do, we would not start to reflect about what we should do. Derk Pereboom raises the question as follows: “Could one deliberate about which of two roads to take if one believed that as a matter of causal fact one was capable of making only one of the two choices?” (Pereboom 2001, 136).

One possible reply to this may be that it is enough that we believe that we have alternatives, even if we do not have them. If these were correct, we could get engaged in deliberation even if determinism were correct because we would not know which alternative is the one that is opened to us.

The problem with such a reply is that it is not clear that deliberation requires only the belief that we have options, rather than real options. The problem for Wallace is that he does not provide any convincing argument to show that real options are not necessary for deliberation. As this is so, he does not rule out an important source of incompatibilist seductiveness.

Conclusions

In this thesis I defended the thesis that moral responsibility requires the powers of reflective self-control. I argued that Scanlon's view of revision is unsatisfactory because in order to reassess one's reasons, one should be able to point out the reasons that one actually has, but also be sensitive to reasons that others point out to us.

I argued that we do not regard an agent as fully accountable when she lacks the ability to grasp moral reasons. It seems that such a person's actions have a different moral significance than those of people that can understand why they should comply with moral obligations. I concluded that Scanlon fails to prove that psychopaths should be held morally responsible and in general that the ability to understand moral reasons is not a necessary condition of moral accountability.

Wallace's explanation of cases like Gandhi and King involves a particular view of forgiveness. According to such a view, there is a relationship between forgiveness and the belief that the forgiven agent did something wrong and the belief that it would be appropriate to experience reactive attitudes towards such an agent in

a particular case. In chapter II I argued that it is not clear that forgiveness requires the belief that it would be appropriate to feel resentment towards a wrongdoer.

I argued that there may be circumstances in which an agent thinks that resentment is never appropriate. In such cases, the agent's ability to hold people to obligations is not impaired by her rejection of resentment. It seems that this agent would still be able to forgive others for their wrongdoings. If this is correct, forgiveness should not be understood as the renunciation of resentment in cases when the agent finds it appropriate.

I argued that in the case of guilt it is clear that a person can be a participant in the practice of holding people morally responsible, even in the absence of reactive attitudes. It is plausible that you hold yourself morally responsible and that you blame yourself for something wrong that you did without feeling guilty and without thinking that it would be appropriate to feel guilty. I argue that we should not understand the latter kind of agent as a member of a shame culture because she does not experience shame as she is not embarrassed for his behavior. Also, she does think that he failed to live in accordance with his values. Rather, she believes that she failed to fulfill a moral obligation.

I presented the following case as a paradigmatic case in which an agent that does not experience guilt or thinks that guilt is an appropriate response in some circumstances is still justified to hold herself morally responsible. A man diligently

complies with his moral obligations. He is not a perfect moral agent and sometimes fails to do what is right. However, his family educated him to not feel guilt when he does something wrong. This way, he fulfills his moral obligations most of the time, he does not feel guilty when he fails to do so and he does not think that guilt is an appropriate response to a wrong action. Intuitively, this agent is still a participant of the practice of holding people morally responsible. Clearly, he can hold himself accountable and blameworthy even if guilt is so detached from his moral life.

In chapter III, I argued that understanding reasons seems to involve the ability to grasp reasons that are different from those that one actually has. If this is so and we were determined, there is a sense in which we would not be able to understand reasons that are different from the ones that we actually have. If this is correct, the generalized strategy still represents a source of seductiveness.

In the same fashion, it seems that being able to govern one's behavior in light of reasons goes beyond the above description. It is not clear how I could govern my own behavior if what I actually do is the only thing that I can do. Given that determinism would leave us with only one option at every moment, it seems that there would be no room for self-governance in a determined world.

Wallace claims that governing one's actions by reasons implies that one can step back from one's desires, overcome them when they conflict with what morality demands and do the right thing. Again, it is not clear that this does not presuppose

free will. Stepping back from one's desires seems to imply that there are two different outcomes that I can produce: I can act from my desires and do what I want to do, or I can overcome them and do the morally correct action.

My main point is that intuitively, the notion of self-governance involves free will. Given that the suspicion of free will remains, it is still plausible that exemptions would generalize if determinism is true. As a consequence, Wallace does not rule out the seductiveness of incompatibilism that comes from the generalization strategy. Given that according to Wallace B-conditions presuppose A-conditions, in order to fairly regard someone as blameworthy, she should be accountable in the first place. As this is so, even though Wallace shows that in a sense we would still be able to violate moral obligations, he does not prove that we would be fairly held morally blameworthy given that we should be suitable candidates of accountability in the first place.

Wallace's account faces a further difficulty that comes from a source of seductiveness that is independent from the generalization strategy. Clearly, the very deliberation process involves the idea that we do have options. If we thought that there is only one thing that we could possibly do, we would not reflect about what we should do. I argued that Wallace does not show that deliberation only requires the belief that we have options, instead of real options themselves. As this is so, Wallace does not rule out a very important source of incompatibilist seductiveness.

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