



A Very Bad Wizard: Morality Behind the Curtain

By Tamler Sommers

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In the first edition of *A Very Bad Wizard: Morality Behind the Curtain* – Nine Conversations, philosopher Tamler Sommers talked with an interdisciplinary group of the world’s leading researchers—from the fields of social psychology, moral philosophy, cognitive science, and primatology—all working on the same issue: the origins and workings of morality. Together, these nine interviews pulled back some of the curtain, not only on our moral lives but—through Sommers’ probing, entertaining, and well informed questions—on the way morality traditionally has been studied.

This Second Edition increases the subject matter, adding eight additional interviews and offering features that will make *A Very Bad Wizard* more useful in undergraduate classrooms. These features include structuring all chapters around sections and themes familiar in a course in ethics or moral psychology; providing follow-up podcasts for some of the interviews, which will delve into certain issues from the conversations in a more informal manner; including an expanded and annotated reading list with relevant primary sources at the end of each interview; presenting instructor and student resources online in a companion website.

The resulting new publication promises to synthesize and make accessible the latest interdisciplinary research to offer a brand new way to teach philosophical ethics and moral psychology.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The study of morality is the most exciting game in town, and when people ask me why I think so, I always refer them to Tamler Sommers's extraordinary book, *A Very Bad Wizard!* This new edition even tops the first edition, and it brims with witty, insightful, and fascinating conversations with the best moral psychologists and moral philosophers of our times."

Edouard Machery, University of Pittsburgh, USA

"Sommers's interview style cuts straight to the heart of a wide range of issues in morality and psychology. Not only does Sommers offer clear and crisp challenges to many of philosophy's leading figures, but he manages to do so in a way that brings these issues to light for any intelligent layperson. Sommers covers topics ranging from free will, justice and objectivity in morality, to meaning in life, honor, and the morality of violence. In doing so, he is providing an invaluable service to philosophy and related areas like social psychology by pushing today's best thinkers to answer the tough questions, and all the while bringing philosophy to life for a wider audience. Tamler Sommers is not just a very bad wizard, he is a very badass wizard!"

Michael McKenna, University of Arizona, USA

"Sommers' interviews are easygoing but sharp and critically engaged. He knows how to bring out what's most interesting in his subjects, and he also presses them in just the right ways. The line-up of interviewees includes many of the brightest lights in moral philosophy, each with a rich and provocative body of work to discuss, and this second edition's additions are first-rate. While this would be excellent background reading for students in a variety of ethics courses, it's actually entertaining and enlightening reading for anyone interested in gaining access to some of the very best contemporary work in moral philosophy."

David Shoemaker, Tulane University, USA

"This clever and thoughtful book makes ethics come alive by ditching dry philosophical prose and opting instead to let real human voices speak for themselves. The range of topics is impressive, the interviews are probing yet accessible, and the author is an eminently likable guide to the terrain. I teach this book in my intro to ethics course, and the only disappointment is not having time for my students to read the whole thing. It allows students to see thinkers in the process of thinking, and to appreciate what charitable and constructive philosophical conversation looks like."

Neal Tognazzini, Western Washington University, USA

'As convenor of an interdisciplinary module on ethics... I found *A Very Bad Wizard* to be an invaluable resource. The interviews are engaging and understandable for those uninitiated to philosophical methodology but they do not betray the depth and complexity of the issues being discussed. Additionally, because of the interview format, the reader is allowed to witness the dynamic and relatable human experience of being excited by and embracing the difficulties of ethical issues and philosophical thinking. As such, even the most sceptical of students were motivated by the collection. Finally, the module contains the option to be assessed by a creative piece, and the interviews provided

one model for how philosophical thinking and understanding could be demonstrated – and even enhanced – without needing to resort to the standard essay.' - Philip Gaydon, University of Warwick, UK

About the Author

Tamler Sommers is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston. His research focuses on moral responsibility, revenge, honor, and the philosophy of punishment. He is the author of *Relative Justice: Cultural Diversity, Free Will and Moral Responsibility* (2012) and co-host of the Very Bad Wizards podcast. He is currently writing a book in defense of honor.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Donna Miller:

Now a day folks who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources in it can be true or not need people to be aware of each information they get. How many people to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Reading a book can help individuals out of this uncertainty Information specially this A Very Bad Wizard: Morality Behind the Curtain book because book offers you rich facts and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you may already know.

Robert Aviles:

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