

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Rationality in an Unjust World**

**Professor Claire A. Hill**

Professor of Law and Vance K. Opperman Research Scholar,  
Director for the Institute for Law & Rationality  
Associate Director for the Institute for Law & Economics  
University of Minnesota School of Law

Many people believe that good is rewarded and bad is punished, at least most of the time. This belief can be theological, but it need not be. If I study or work hard, I'll be rewarded. If I don't commit crimes, I won't go to jail. If I eat less, I'll lose weight. And so on. But there are some people who believe they live in an unjust world. Hard work is not necessarily rewarded. Punishments are doled out without regard to desert. And this happens often enough that working hard or behaving in accordance with the golden rule doesn't really make sense. Of course, these views are not either/or. For instance, somebody might believe that their family will treat them well but that the greater society will not.

In my paper, I will argue that some of what might be considered "irrational" behavior is in fact explicable as the result of a cost-benefit analysis, where the analysis takes as its starting point that the world isn't just.

\* Prof. Claire A. Hill is Professor of Law and the Vance K. Opperman Research Scholar at the University of Minnesota Law School. She is the Director and founder of the Institute for Law & Rationality and Associate Director of the Institute for Law & Economics. She received her B.A., M.A. from University of Chicago, her J.D. from American University and LL.M., J.S.D. from Columbia University. She teaches courses in commercial and business law, as well as seminars in law and economics, transactions, and corporate governance. Professor Hill's research interests include capital structure, behavioral law and economics, contract theory, and law and language. She previously taught in the Schools of Law at Chicago-Kent, George Mason, Northwestern and Boston University; she also was a Sloan Visiting Professor at Georgetown. Before becoming a law professor, Professor Hill practiced corporate law at Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy in New York.