

On the Status of the Reflexive Found with English Inherently Reflexive Verbs: A Response to Kallulli (2013)*

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Gould, I. 2018. On the status of the reflexive found with English inherently reflexive verbs: A response to Kallulli (2013). *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 18–3, 282–305. This paper challenges the recent claim in Kallulli (2013) that the reflexive morphology found with inherently reflexive verbs (IRVs) in English (as in e.g. *to behave oneself* or *to conduct oneself*) is verbal morphology akin to the deponent verbal morphology found in languages such as Albanian and Greek. I discuss how the types of evidence raised by Kallulli for this claim are either inconclusive or in fact point toward an alternative claim when a more detailed look at IRV data in English is undertaken. As an alternative, I advance a view that builds on Schäfer (2012), as well as Buring (2005), and that is supported by the balance of evidence discussed here. I propose that the reflexives are fully-fledged pronominal arguments of the IRVs. Thus, I claim that the reflexives are selected for by the IRVs, and I identify a thematic role that these reflexives receive from the IRVs.

Keywords: deponent verbs, inherently reflexive verbs, passives, unaccusative verbs

1. Introduction

In this paper I challenge the recent claim in Kallulli (2013) regarding the syntactic status of the reflexives found with inherently reflexive verbs (IRVs) in English, and build on the proposals in Schäfer (2012), as well as Buring (2005). IRVs are verbs that for a particular meaning of the verb (by hypothesis, for a particular lexical entry of a verb), either must appear with a reflexive (1a), or can optionally appear with a reflexive (1b), and cannot appear with any other expression in the place of that reflexive (2).¹

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¹ Interestingly, *behave* is the only verb among the verbs I discuss in this paper (see (4) for the complete list) that allows this optionality. For more discussion related to the IRV *behave* without the reflexive, see Section 2 and note 12.

- (1) a. Mary absented *(herself) from class.
 b. John behaved (himself).
- (2) a. *Mary absented { her / her son / her thoughts } from class.
 b. *John behaved { him / his son / his thoughts }.

Kallulli claims that these reflexives are not in fact reflexive pronouns, but are instead (together with their reflexive counterparts found with IRVs in Romance and other Germanic languages) the exponence of a *v*-head, and are the morpho-syntactic counterparts of certain passive or non-active verbal morphology (depending on the language) found in Albanian, Greek, and Latin. Kallulli's claim is striking in positing that an element that when found outside of IRVs is standardly accepted as a nominal anaphor is instead verbal morphology when it occurs with IRVs. Indeed, this claim challenges the other prominent proposals of Buring (2005) and Schäfer (2012) who take the reflexive in English IRVs to be a nominal and an actual reflexive pronoun in the syntax. Broadly speaking, then, these positions diverge on whether the reflexives are verbal or nominal.

In this paper I contribute to this debate on the status of the reflexives of English IRVs by building on a suggestion put forward in Schäfer. In Section 2, I propose that not only is the reflexive in English a pronominal argument of the verb in the syntax (and I provide a novel piece of syntactic evidence that the reflexive, irrespective of its semantic status, is a nominal argument in Section 3.1), but that it is a fully-fledged, meaningful semantic argument of the verb. Schäfer is agnostic as to whether the reflexive is always a semantic argument and is unable to suggest any possible thematic role for the English reflexives, although he does suggest that they might have one, a suggestion that I pursue in Section 2. In contrast, Buring denies the reflexive is a semantic argument. Indeed, it is possible to take the lack of any concrete proposal regarding a thematic role for the reflexive as an indication that some alternative proposal such as Kallulli's is on the right track. Laying out such a concrete proposal, then, is an important step in working to establish the non-verbal/nominal nature of these reflexives. Underpinning my semantic position regarding reflexives is a puzzling class of verbs that does not appear to have been previously discussed. Like IRVs, these verbs are highly restrictive in what their arguments are, but they are somewhat more permissive in systematically allowing for certain other, non-reflexive arguments. My hypothesis is that an understanding of these puzzling verbs can help shed light on IRVs: IRVs can simply be thought of as a proper sub-class of these verbs, one that has more narrow requirements on its arguments, but that assigns the same kinds of thematic roles. With an understanding of what the reflexive's thematic role can be, the overall view in which these reflexives are pronominal arguments becomes more viable than in earlier work.

Moreover, in this paper I will argue that Kallulli's arguments (for the claim that the

English reflexives are verbal) are not compelling, and that in fact the balance of evidence supports the proposal advocated for here. In Section 3, I focus on what I consider to be Kallulli's core, putative evidence for her claim. Kallulli's argumentation relies on evidence of two main strands. The first involves the lexical roots of IRVs in nominal environments, and the second concerns the claim that both the passive/non-active verbs mentioned above (these are deponent verbs; see Section 2 for more) and IRVs share the related properties of being unaccusative and not being able to be passivized. I discuss how this evidence is either (a) inconclusive, and is also compatible with the proposal here, or (b) incomplete, and that when the data set is expanded, we find some pieces of syntactic evidence that support the proposal here and/or can be used to argue against or challenge Kallulli's.²

Before continuing, I comment briefly on the English IRVs that fall within the scope of this study. Kallulli considers only *behave* and *perjure*, but Levin (1993: 107) and Buring collectively list 60 verbs that they claim are IRVs in English, the former in particular collecting them from a number of earlier sources. However, I find that a number of them are archaic or not present in standard American English, and thus do not constitute members of my lexicon over which I command fluency. Moreover, I find that contemporary usage of many of these 60 verbs (under the relevant interpretation) allows these verbs (e.g. *embroil*) to have objects that are not reflexives. Thus, in addition to (3a) where *embroil* appears with a reflexive, which is modeled on (3b), we have (3b) from Patrick et al. (2001: 269), with some other full nominal that is not pronominal (although it contains a pronoun). This contrasts with what we saw in (1) and (2), and these kinds of examples provide clear evidence that these verbs are not IRVs. Interestingly, some of these verbs, although allowing non-reflexives, still have restrictions on what kind of nominals are allowed, a point I return to in Section 2.

- (3) a. ... men who embroiled themselves in one scandal after another.
b. ... men who embroiled his administration in one scandal after another.

For these reasons, I will limit the focus of this paper to considering the 13 verbs in (4) below that I find to be robustly inherently reflexive in standard American English. In the interest of space, no examples in this paper will illustrate some point with all members of this list, but unless otherwise indicated, a claim made here is intended to be applicable to all members of this list.

(4) English IRVs under consideration:

absent, acquit, avail, bear, behave, carry, comport, conduct, content, nerve,
perjure, pride, resign

² At various points I also consider less substantial points raised by Kallulli, and discuss how they do not favor Kallulli's approach over the one I advocate.

As hinted at above, the significance of examining a more comprehensive set of IRVs than Kallulli does is that we are able to more rigorously test the claims made by the competing proposals concerning IRVs, and thus to get a more accurate picture concerning their analysis. One might wonder, though, whether examining verbs other than the two verbs Kallulli explicitly cites can be leveraged in challenging Kallulli's proposal. As a response to this question, we can first note that there is no indication that Kallulli (p. 355) has anything in mind other than claiming that all reflexives of English IRVs are verbal. Still, one could suppose that there are sub-classes of English IRVs, one of which has verbal reflexives (including those of the Kallulli's verbs *behave* and *perjure*), and the other of which has nominal reflexives. However, in nearly all the empirical phenomena considered in this paper, all the IRVs in (4) pattern alike. The only two exceptions are as follows. The first is related to the optionality of the reflexive with *behave*, which sets *behave* apart from all the other IRVs in (4), including *perjure* (cf. note 1). I discuss this matter further in Section 2 and note 12, but this optionality is a relatively minor point that interacts very little with the overall argumentation in the paper, and even slightly favors the proposal I advocate. The second involves the novel syntactic data introduced in Section 3.1, involving the morpheme *of*. There we find a genuine split in the behavior of the IRVs, with *behave* and *perjure* patterning like most of the other IRVs in (4), but not like all of them. As we will see, though, this difference does not call into question the proposal I advocate, and it does not provide any clear support in favor of the idea that the reflexives of some IRVs are verbal. Thus, while there might very well be sub-classes of IRVs (both of which have nominal reflexives), the balance of evidence is in favor of a single overarching analysis that treats the reflexives as either verbal or nominal, and this is the approach I will take in the remainder of this paper. Moreover, the general thrust of the argumentation of this paper still goes through even if we reject the premise of such an overarching analysis as a starting point (indeed the argumentation goes through fully if we accept such an overarching analysis), and the analysis I offer still stands as one that is viable for all the IRVs above.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, I first briefly lay out Kallulli's proposal, followed by the proposal that I advocate. In this section I also introduce the argumentation for treating the reflexives as semantic arguments of IRVs. I save more detailed discussion of Kallulli's motivations for her proposal for Section 3, in which I respond in detail to Kallulli's arguments, with each of the two sub-sections focused on one of the two core strands of putative evidence for Kallulli. Section 3 also contains some novel syntactic evidence for treating the reflexives as arguments of IRVs. Section 4 then concludes and includes some outstanding questions that this paper raises.

2. Overview of the Competing Proposals

In this section, I first give an overview of Kallulli's (2013) proposal, followed by the alternative I propose. Given that my proposal involves the hypothesis that reflexives are semantic arguments of English IRVs, an idea that does not receive wide support in the literature, and is perhaps fairly surprising, I also focus in this section on the significance of this hypothesis with respect to the kind of proposal found in Kallulli, as well as on discussing concretely what I take the nature of the reflexive's thematic role to be.

Kallulli claims that along with the reflexive morphology for IRVs in Romance and other Germanic languages, the reflexives in English IRVs are the morpho-syntactic counterparts of deponent morphology found on deponent verbs in Albanian, Greek, and Latin. Deponent verbs are traditionally described (cf. Bennett 1907) as verbs that are inflected with passive or non-active morphology (depending on the language) but yet do not have a passive/non-active meaning. Thus Kallulli claims that these reflexives are verbal morphology, specifically the exponence of a particular kind of *v*-head that, for our purposes (see also note 9), verbalizes certain predicates and encodes that there is no external argument, meaning that this is a type of unaccusative *v*-head (see Marantz 1997 for related discussion of *v* as a derivational, verbalizing morpheme).³ As most predicates in English do not co-occur with these reflexives, the reflexives as *v*-heads could presumably be lexically specified to select for the heads of certain predicates. This *v* morphology could also presumably be phonologically null in examples such as (1b), or such examples could exceptionally occur with a different (also null) *v*-head, one that would correspond with active verbs (as there is no reflexive), but which also does not allow for an external argument (cf. Kallulli 2013: 346–348). As such, these reflexives are not arguments of the IRVs, they do not have a thematic role, they are not nominals, and they are not relevant for Binding Theoretic considerations. For Kallulli, then, the examples in (2) are ungrammatical because there are nominals being merged into the structure ostensibly to function as direct object arguments of the IRVs, when these verbs, due to their valency restrictions, cannot take these nominals as arguments, and these nominals thus remain unlicensed.

Implicit in Kallulli's proposal is the more widely shared intuition (see e.g., Reuland 2009) that reflexives with IRVs do not have any thematic relation to the eventuality of the verb. Even Buring (2005) – who assumes that the reflexives are actual nominal reflexives subject to Binding Theory and are syntactic arguments of IRVs – treats these reflexives as essentially semantically vacuous. Thus, for both Kallulli and Buring, *behave*, for example,

³ Kallulli does not discuss how the reflexive morphologically combines with the rest of the utterance. It is not clear to me how relevant this point is for the issues discussed in this paper, but as a tentative hypothesis, we might suppose that the reflexive is some sort of clitic that attaches to the right edge of the morphological complex headed by the lexical root of an IRV. See also note 11 for further discussion.

would be a one-place semantic predicate in (1) and (2) that does not express any semantic relation between the subject and the reflexive. It is worth mentioning that a consequence of Buring's position seems to be that languages with IRVs would have homophonous reflexives, with one kind being the regular one that provides a reflexive meaning, and the other (which combines with IRVs) being a counterpart that lacks substantive content.⁴

However, Buring is quick to note (p. 22) that it is difficult to substantiate this semantic intuition. Indeed, Schäfer (2012) – who takes a position similar to Buring in assuming that IRVs select for reflexives as a syntactic argument – leaves open the possibility that the English reflexives might have a hitherto unspecified thematic role. In fact, Schäfer (p. 235) points to examples of German IRVs that contain the reflexive embedded in a PP as evidence that the reflexives must at least sometimes have a thematic role under the assumption that a semantically contentful preposition assigns a thematic role to the nominal it combines with.

The key question here is whether it is possible to identify in a non-stipulative way some thematic role for the reflexives of IRVs. As pointed out in the introduction, this is a significant question. If we cannot identify this role, then this would seem to lend viability to an approach such as Kallulli's. Kallulli's approach need not stumble over what a thematic role might be because the reflexive is not in the first place an argument that can bear a thematic role. Given that such a thematic role has not yet been identified for English, it is

⁴ Buring's empirical motivation for his claim about the semantics of these reflexives comes from the following observations. First, other nominals such as proper names cannot take the place of the reflexive. This fundamental data point is not revealing, though, if as I assume (see the subsequent discussion in this section), IRVs must select for a reflexive. Second, Buring notes (without providing examples) that the reflexives cannot be stressed, fronted, coordinated, or right-node-raised in conjunctions with non-IRVs. These first two observations appear to be correct, as shown in (i). Under my proposal, the fact that the reflexive cannot bear focal stress can likely be attributed to it being the only possible direct object for IRVs, given that it is the only constituent that can be selected for. Assuming that Rooth's (1992) alternative semantics is sensitive to such syntactic restrictions, then the focus/alternative semantic value of the focused reflexive will be the singleton set containing only the reflexive, in violation of the presupposition discussed by Rooth that such a set have other members in it. Relatedly, the inability for these reflexives to topicalize is plausibly linked to its inability to be focused as per the discussion here.

- (i) a. *John behaved himSELF.
 b. *HimSELF, John behaved.

However, Buring's latter two observations are counterexemplified in (ii), and this is consistent with my claim that the reflexives are fully-fledged arguments. As Buring gives no examples to substantiate his observations, I will not comment on them further.

- (ii) a. Every coach must conduct himself or herself with appropriate decorum.
 b. John is a polite narcissist. That is, he likes, and behaves, himself.

fair to say (even though Kallulli does not, but see the discussion on p.234–236 of Schäfer for suggestive remarks) that one of the chief attractions of Kallulli's approach is that it avoids in a principled way the difficulty of having to identify this role. However, if we can identify this role, then this attraction disappears, and consequently the alternative position in which the reflexives are pronominal arguments becomes viable in a way that it has never been before: just like all other pronominal arguments in English bear thematic roles so too do the pronominal arguments of IRVs. In introducing my proposal below, then, I will do just this: I will identify a thematic role for the reflexive, thereby increasing the viability of an approach that treats the reflexives as nominal arguments.

Building on Buring and Schäfer, I will assume that the English reflexives of IRVs are indeed syntactic arguments selected for (to the exclusion of other expressions) by these verbs (optionally in the case of (1b)), and are thus fully nominal as reflexive pronouns and subject to considerations of Binding Theory. We will see novel syntactic evidence from nominalizations in Section 3.1 that supports the nominal argumenthood of the reflexives (irrespective of their meaning), and in Section 3.2, I will claim that the data are compatible with IRVs having external arguments.⁵ The examples in (2), then, simply violate the selectional requirements of the verbs, which require there to be a reflexive. But I would like to go one step further in hypothesizing that these reflexives in English are semantic arguments of IRVs, meaning that they do have a thematic role, and that we can in fact be concrete in laying out what that role is. Thus, I will be pursuing Schäfer's suggestion that the reflexives might have a thematic role. Not only will positing such a thematic role help us later on in Section 3.2 provide some understanding for why IRVs cannot passivize, but we will see below that there is reason to think that the role I hypothesize for the reflexives exists independently in the language. The idea, then, is that with IRVs, we are simply faced with the intersection of two independent properties of the grammar: the possibility of selecting for a reflexive pronoun, and the possibility of assigning a particular thematic role to that pronoun. In the remainder of this section, I focus on the empirical motivation for, and the nature of this thematic role.

Crucially, the case for this thematic role centers on a particular class of verbs that I do not believe has ever been identified as such. Members of this class are drawn from the verbs that Levin (1993) identifies as IRVs in English. I have discussed how most of these should not be classified as IRVs (at least for some speakers), but among these are verbs

⁵ The core empirical fact related to Schäfer's claim about the reflexives' syntactic argumenthood involves their ability to surface with a passivized IRV. As discussed further in Section 3.2, though, this is not possible in English. Thus, we must look elsewhere for support that the English reflexives are in fact syntactic arguments. Buring's motivation for this claim is considerably weaker, as it stems from the judgments regarding examples such as (1) and (2), which Buring attributes in part to Binding Theory: *him* in (2) would violate Principle B, whereas (1), which has actual reflexives, would follow Principle A. We have already seen, though, how the (un)grammaticality of these examples is compatible with Kallulli's view that the reflexives are not syntactic arguments.

such as *inure* and *exert* that have a curious restriction. First observe that these verbs, like IRVs, can appear with a reflexive, and at first glance do not appear to obviously bear any thematic role in much the same way as the reflexives of IRVs are assumed not to. For example, we might suppose that *inure* means roughly “to become accustomed” and is used in reference to some difficulty. But if it does, then it is not any clearer what relationship the reflexive bears to the eventuality in question in (5a), than it is with the IRV in (5b).

- (5) a. The ascetic inured himself to hardship.
b. The ascetic behaved himself.

But now observe that unlike IRVs, these verbs (again, under the relevant interpretation), can also appear with other nominals that seem to bear a close relation to the subject, whereas other nominals cannot appear with these verbs. Some illustrative examples are given in (6) and (7).

- (6) a. The ascetic₁ inured his₁ body to hardship.
b. Mary exerted herself.
c. Mary₁ exerted every ounce of her₁ { energy / strength }.

- (7) a. *The ascetic inured my body to hardship.
b. *Mary exerted every ounce of John’s { energy / strength }.

When we consider the examples above, the restriction we are seeing is puzzling. Given the co-indexation we see in (6), we might wonder whether there is some Binding Theoretic tool we could use to enforce which nominals are possible. But note that these examples involve possessive pronouns – not reflexives – and so we cannot say that they must be bound because of Principle A. Further, we cannot in any obvious sense avail ourselves of some selectional restriction that requires a bound possessive pronoun, because these pronouns are embedded inside the post-verbal nominals. Assuming that selection is strictly local, then *inure* in (6a) for example, could select for the Determiner head that c-commands *body*, but not for the possessor that is embedded inside the DP headed by this Determiner.

Instead, I believe we can make sense of this restriction with what we can call *inure*-type verbs by appealing to thematic roles linked to Smith’s (1970:107) notion of “internal control”, and that this in turn can help shed light on the nature of IRVs. For Smith, certain verbs (e.g., unergative verbs such as *laugh* and *play*) have an event participant that is an internal controller. These verbs’ events “can be controlled only by the person engaging in it”, and this control “cannot be relinquished” to any other individual, or external controller. We can think of these internal controllers as initiators of the event, and they, and only they,

are able to be such initiators. Further, during the course of the event, the controller is exerting control over some salient entity necessary for the manifestation of the event that the controller can be conceptualized as having inherent control over, such as the controller's body, mind, or other attributes associated with the body or mind. This is intuitively true of unergatives such as *laugh* – think of the vocal tract muscles that must necessarily be stimulated in order for a laughing event to occur. Thus, we can think of internal control here as referring to (a) event–initiation restricted to a particular kind of entity (viz. the internal controller), and (b) exerting control over some salient event–related entity that the controller has inherent control over. If we consider *inure*–type verbs, we can say that they also involve both components of internal control. Thus, with *inure* above, for example, no one other than the ascetic can initiate the event of inuring, and this event necessarily involves a kind of conditioning of entities under the ascetic's control, be it the ascetic's body or the entirety of the ascetic in the case of the reflexive.

My proposal, then, is that with *inure*–type verbs, both components of internal control are grammaticalized in a particular way via thematic roles. Thus, these verbs take one semantic argument and assign it the role of internal controller (which is also the case with familiar verbs such as *laugh*), and take another semantic argument and assign it a thematic role that specifies a salient entity relevant for manifestation of the event that the controller has inherent control over. (Relevance, here, means closely related to some entity, the exertion of inherent control over which is necessary for the manifestation of the event, a relation that can be direct identity with the entity or that can be somewhat indirect, as discussed with regard to *perjure* below.) This specification can be fairly specific as in (6c), or it can be more general with a reflexive as in (6b). In either case, the same thematic role applies to the object (which establishes relevance via an identity relation). This proposal also allows us to rule out the examples in (7). We do not conceptualize one individual's body or energy, for example, as being inherently controlled by some other individual, and because this is the case, this means that the objects in (7) cannot satisfy the s–selection requirement of the verbs that they be inherently controlled by the controller (i.e., the subject).

Turning now to English IRVs, the hypothesis about *inure*–type verbs can be carried over with little difference. All the verbs in (4) involve the two components of inherent control. For example, no one other than the ascetic in (5b) can initiate the event of behaving, and in carrying out this event of behaving, the controller must exercise control over the entirety of the controller (at least, perhaps, the entirety of the controller that is externally observable). With some of these verbs such as *perjure*, we perhaps do not want to say that the entirety of the controller needs to be controlled. To commit perjury, perhaps only sub–parts of the controller need to be controlled (e.g., certain mental capacities, along with whatever physical actions, such as movement of the vocal tract, that are necessary to lie). This is entirely consistent with the thematic role assigned to the reflexive: all that the

thematic role on the reflexive tells us is that the controller has inherent control over the controller as a whole, which can be viewed as the salient entity relevant for the event; and this seems conceptually plausible if we think of the controller as a whole as being closely related in a part-whole relation with proper sub-parts of the controller. The reason the reflexive must be used with such verbs to express this thematic role is simply due to the syntactic restriction that the reflexive must be selected for. The hypothesis, then, is that the same thematic roles that independently allow us to account for the event participants with *inure*-type verbs, also allow us to understand the event participants of IRVs.⁶

To help see that there can be a parallel between *inure*-type verbs and IRVs it is perhaps instructive to return to an example such as (5). If we acknowledge that the relationship between the reflexive and the events in (5) is similarly unclear, and if we allow the additional data in (6) and (7) to shed light on the role of reflexives with *inure*-type verbs, then all things being equal, we can assume that this same role is applicable to the reflexives with IRVs, as indeed seems possible given the discussion above. More generally, once we establish that the thematic roles for *inure*-type verbs are options that are available in the grammar, we have no principled reason to block these roles from being available for IRVs. The only difference, of course, is that for IRVs, one of their arguments must be a reflexive, a fact that can be accounted for with syntactic selection. In a sense, then, IRVs form a proper sub-class of *inure*-type verbs: one with matching thematic roles, but one whose direct objects are proper subset of what is possible more generally given these roles.

In sum, this section has served in large part to establish a concrete proposal for the thematic role of the reflexives of IRVs. This proposal allows us to maintain that these reflexives are fully-fledged arguments of IRVs; we do not need to say that there are semantically vacuous reflexives as per Büring; and we lose a key motivation for supposing

⁶ A reviewer wonders whether, in light of the preceding discussion, more familiar, agentive transitive verbs such as *eat* are predicted (incorrectly) to be IRVs, given that verbs such as *eat* seem to involve arguments that are internal controllers (e.g. the *eater*). However, the proposal here makes no such prediction: taking an internal controller as an argument is no guarantee that a verb will be an IRV. Rather, IRVs here are the result of two additional selectional requirements that a verb must have. First there is the requirement of selecting for a reflexive argument: verbs such as *eat* have no requirement to select for a reflexive, and therefore the theme of *eat* need not be a reflexive. Moreover, such verbs do not select for a semantic argument that the internal controller has inherent control over. In addition to taking a controller as a semantic argument, a verb such as *eat* simply takes a theme as its other semantic argument. The internal controller of an event does not need to have inherent control over the theme, and so the theme of *eat*, for example, can be some entity such as cake, which we can conceptualize as existing completely independently (and thus not under the inherent control of) the controller. Thus, the notion of internal control is grammaticalized differently in IRVs and other verbs such as *eat vis-à-vis* the thematic roles of their arguments: only in the case of IRVs is there a designated thematic role for the controlled entity (in the relevant sense), meaning that only with IRVs is such an entity necessarily an argument of the verb.

that these reflexives are not nominal as per Kallulli.

3. Responding to Kallulli's (2013) Evidence

In this section, I respond in detail to what I consider to be Kallulli's (2013) core evidence that is putatively in favor of treating the reflexives of IRVs as verbalizers on a par with deponent verbal morphology. Section 3.1 involves discussion of nominal environments, and I argue that contra what Kallulli claims nominals show, syntactic evidence (some of which has not been discussed before) supports the claim that the reflexives are nominal arguments of IRVs. Section 3.2 then involves discussion of unaccusativity and passivization. There I point out that the evidence available is (contra Kallulli's claim) consistent with (and slightly favors) the claim that IRVs have external arguments, and I propose that the ban on passivizing IRVs can be related to the thematic roles they assign, along with independent observations about constraints on passivization in English.

3.1 Nominals

Kallulli's first line of argumentation rests on the ungrammaticality of examples of the sort in (8). There we see a nominal use of the lexical root of some IRVs, which eliminates the availability of the reflexive combining with *of*.

- (8) a. John's (dignified) behavior (*of himself)
 b. Mary's (formidable) pride (*of herself on her work)
 c. Mary's (long) absence (*of herself from class)

Kallulli does not spell out in detail the significance of these facts for her proposal, but I believe the argument can be made straightforwardly via the following two points. (a) If the reflexives are indeed nominal arguments of the verbs, then we might expect to be able to see them combine with *of* in nominal environments, under the assumption that *of* is a preposition that selects for nominals, or is a case-marker that appears on nominals. (b) However, if the reflexives are simply verbalizers of lexical roots, then it is not surprising to not see them in nominal environments: *of* cannot combine with the reflexives here because the reflexives are verbalizers, not nominals. Again, we can say that the connection to deponent verbs is that the deponent verbal morphology is also verbalizing morphology.⁷

⁷ Related to the concept of nominalization is a point that, in fact, figures more prominently in Kallulli's discussion, and that Kallulli raises with the intention of supporting her claim that the

However, there are several problems with this line of argumentation. The most important observation to make here is that although *of*+reflexive is indeed ungrammatical with a number of IRV roots as in (8), it is crucially possible with some IRV roots as illustrated in (9), an observation that to my knowledge has not been discussed before. Importantly, we can maintain that the nominals in (9) are inherently reflexive because other nominals cannot take the place of the reflexive, as illustrated in (10).

- (9) a. Mary's (criminal) conduct of herself (toward others)
 b. the duchess's (reluctant) resignation of herself to her fate
- (10) a. *Mary's (criminal) conduct of { her body / her behavior / others }
 b. the duchess's (reluctant) resignation of { *her body / ²*her spirit } to her fate
 c. *the duchess's (reluctant) resignation of her fate

The significance of these data is that they provide strong evidence for the claim that the

reflexives are verbalizers. First, she tries to draw a parallel between English IRVs and the deponent verbs of Albanian, Greek, and Latin/the IRVs of Romance and other Germanic languages in positing that these verbs are derived from nouns and adjectives. Portraying the derivation of these verbs as a systematic one across the languages (i.e. one from nouns/adjectives to deponent verbs/IRVs) in need of some unifying account, Kallulli attempts to unify all these verbs by means of some additional morphology that can be responsible for the verbalizing. For her a unified account stems from identifying the deponent verbal morphology and the reflexive morphology as being responsible for this category-changing derivation. However, I do not think that the case has been strongly made that there should be a unifying type of derivation for these verbs cross-linguistically. For instance, Kallulli cites (p. 354, n. 33) Zombolou and Alexiadou (2013) (Kallulli actually cites an earlier presentation of this paper.) for the claim that 68% of deponent verbs in Modern Greek are denominal or deadjectival, and she cites (p. 354) Xu et al. (2007) for the claim that 46.5% of deponent verbs in Latin are denominal or deadjectival. And a quick survey of the Oxford English Dictionary reveals that the IRV use of *behave* and *comport* appears to predate the nominal *behavior* and the obsolete nouns *behave* and *comport*, although the verbal use of *pride* is said to be derived from the noun *pride*, and the verbal use of *perjury* could very well be derived from a nominal or adjectival form. It is not clear what are we supposed to make of these data. Surely, we cannot simply claim that if a large percentage of these verbs are denominal/deadjectival in a language, then all of them must be. In Latin, for example, this percentage is a minority of all the relevant verbs. At what point could we say that this claim is falsified? – when the percentage drops below 40%, or perhaps below 30%? Certainly, there appear to be some tendencies, which perhaps have historical explanations, but this does not seem to give us enough of a foundation to make the kind of broad claim Kallulli makes. And this leads to an even more substantial point related to history: Kallulli's discussion (p. 355) seems to focus on a diachronic process of deriving the verbs from nominal/adjectival forms (although her claim that the reflexives are verbalizers is also a synchronic one). But even if we grant that such a process was historically relevant in the formation of all IRVs (in all the relevant languages), it does not follow that this derivational process is a part of the synchronic grammar, and Kallulli offers no clear evidence that it is. I conclude, then, that Kallulli's observations pertaining to denominalization/deadjectivalization do not bear on the central questions of this paper.

reflexives are nominal arguments. First, we can take the possibility of combining with *of* as syntactic evidence that the reflexives are nominals given the morpho-syntactic requirements of *of*. Second, we can take the impossibility/degradedness of the non-reflexives to appear in the syntactic frame with the genitive and *of* that we see in (10), coupled with the well-formedness of the reflexives' appearance in the same frame in (9), to indicate that the nominal uses of the roots are preserving some argument structure requirements of the root seen with verbal uses of the root (and in particular, that only an argument selected by the root from its verbal use can combine with *of* here). The parallel between verbal and nominal uses thus supports the claim that there are argument structure requirements involving the reflexives, and without such requirements, the data above would be mysterious.

Further, the examples in (8) are still compatible with the reflexives' being nominal arguments. This is because the expectation of seeing all nominal arguments being able to combine with *of* is simply not met more generally in the language. This is illustrated in the examples in (11), which are inspired by Postal (2010). But even though the use of *of*+XP is impossible here, we have no reason to say that *me* or *contempt* is not nominal/is a verbalizer, and likewise, we have no reason to say these expressions are not arguments of *insult* or *betray*.

- (11) a. John insulted me.
 b. John's insult (*of me)
 c. You betrayed contempt for linguists.
 d. your betrayal (*of contempt for linguists)

It appears that there are constraints on when *of* can combine with nominal arguments of a lexical root, and that these constraints lie behind the data we see in (8), (9), and (11). Indeed, the null hypothesis, which I will adopt here, is that the same set of constraints is operational with all these examples. And given the overarching similarities between IRVs and other transitive verbs that see throughout this paper, this is a reasonable hypothesis to adopt. An investigation of what these constraints might be, though, goes beyond the scope of this paper, and I will leave it as a question for further study.

As some final remarks related to nominalization, we can consider some additional examples that dovetail neatly with the proposal that the reflexive is a nominal argument, but that are challenging for Kallulli's proposal. Consider, then, the gerunds in (12), which unlike the examples in (8), are nominalizations that do allow for the reflexive. Note that gerunds of this sort are possible for all the verbs in (4).

- (12) a. John behaving himself
 b. Mary priding herself on her work

c. Mary absenting herself from class

Assuming that the gerundive *-ing* must attach to a verb, and that the reflexives are the verbalizers, as per Kallulli, then Kallulli would have to say that first the reflexive-verbalizer attaches to the root, and then the gerundive nominalizer combines with that verb form (with the reflexive then cliticizing to the end of the morphological complex; cf. note 3). But if that is the case, then we must ask why an analogous process of verbalization followed by nominalization cannot apply in the examples in (13), which correspond to examples in (8) but lack the *of*. Also note that nominal constructions of the sort in (13) (when a nominal form of the verb exists) are not possible for any of the verbs in (4).

- (13) a. *John's behavior himself (was unexpected.)
 b. *Mary' pride herself on her work (was unexpected.)

For Kallulli, the ungrammaticality of the examples in (13) is not straightforwardly clear, as their grammaticality does not parallel the putatively comparably derived examples in (12), and does not seem to follow from any general properties of derivation in English. Under my proposal, though, the data are straightforwardly accounted for. The type of gerundives in (12) more generally allows verbal arguments to appear within the nominalization (cf. Abney 1987), and the reflexive arguments with IRVs are no exception. However, as is well known, when we consider other, non-gerundive nominals in English like those in (13), then in order for arguments of the root of the nominal to be licensed within the nominal, some additional morphology is necessary (e.g., a preposition or possessive marker).

In sum, we have seen novel syntactic evidence involving *of* combining with the reflexive in nominal contexts that supports the claim that these reflexives are nominal arguments of IRVs. Further, the data Kallulli refers to in these nominal contexts are also compatible with this claim. Finally, additional data involving nominalizations also favor the analysis put forward here over Kallulli's.

3.2 Passivization and Unaccusativity

Kallulli's (2013) second line of argumentation rests on the following core parallels that are claimed to exist between IRVs in Romance and Germanic and deponent verbs in Albanian, Greek, and Latin. First, depending on the language, these verbs are claimed to not be able to be passivized or to be highly resistant as a class of verbs to passivization (but see Schäfer 2012 for numerous counterexamples involving Germanic). And relatedly, Kallulli claims that these verbs are all unaccusative. Kallulli assumes that this second parallel in fact underpins the first, given the independently observed impossibility of

passivizing unaccusatives elsewhere in these languages. Kallulli then claims that these similarities can be captured if we assume that IRVs and deponent verbs are morpho-syntactic analogues across different languages, with the reflexive expressing what the deponent verbal morphology does.^{8,9}

It is important to note, though, that these two parallels are logically independent of each other. Thus, verbs/structures that cannot passivize need not be unaccusative, as I discuss further below. With this idea as a guiding principle, in this section I will accordingly address these two putative parallels separately. First, I will discuss how the evidence available does not clearly argue in favor of English IRVs being unaccusatives. In fact, I will propose that English IRVs can be analyzed as poly-valent verbs with external arguments (and there is slight evidence favoring this view), a position that can also account for the data in this sub-section, and one that is entirely compatible with the approach I have been advocating, but that eliminates the unaccusativity parallel between English IRVs and deponent verbs/IRVs in other languages. Then I will discuss how the inability for English IRVs to passivize can be subsumed under an independent generalization regarding constraints on passivization in English. If the unavailability of passivization for the relevant verbs in the other languages is due to their status as unaccusatives, then the apparent similarity with English IRVs not passivizing is not in fact due to any deep grammatical similarity, but rather this apparent similarity is simply an artifact of some other grammatical constraint that also restricts passivization. If we follow this line of reasoning, then the passive parallel also disappears as any compelling reason for maintaining English IRVs as analogues of these other verbs, and it remains possible to maintain the proposal put forward in this paper.

⁸ More broadly Kallulli appears to be motivated in drawing parallels between IRVs and deponent verbs as regards verb classes by the observations that (a) in Romance and other Germanic languages, the same reflexive found in IRVs is also found with passive, middle, and anticausative verb meanings, and (b) in languages such as Albanian and Greek, deponent morphology is found with passive, middle, and anticausative verb meanings. However, Kallulli notes (p. 349) that this kind of parallel does not extend to English passive and anticausative verbs, which do not employ a reflexive. For the sake of completeness, we can also note that English middles also do not make use of a reflexive. What this illustrates is that a further parallel between IRVs and deponent verbs in other languages, does not hold for English.

⁹ A final point made by Kallulli regarding one further parallel between IRVs and deponent verbs is the claim that the *v*-head for both classes of verbs encodes that the eventualities of the predicates are activities by means of a [+act] feature. However, it appears that in Kallulli (2013) the [+act] feature is intended to characterize both activity and stative (“psych”) predicates, and in background discussion in Kallulli (2007) that Kallulli (2013) cites as a way of introducing [+act], [+act] can also characterize semelfactive predicates. Given the lack of detailed discussion on the nature of [+act], and given that these types of predicates do not seem to form any sort of natural class, at this point it is not clear to me exactly which types of predicates Kallulli predicts to be IRVs or deponent verbs with [+act]. Consequently, I will not consider this point of comparison between IRVs and deponent verbs any further.

Let us now consider whether English IRVs are unaccusatives. Aside from their resistance to passivize (which is exemplified and discussed later in this section), Kallulli mentions no relevant evidence applicable for English that could purport to show IRVs are unaccusative, other than their resistance to combining with other nominals, as we saw in (2). (Kallulli also shows how some IRVs in other languages require some additional derivational morphology in order for there to be what appears to be an external argument, but as such argument-introducing derivational morphology does not appear to be attested with English IRVs, and as such an absence is compatible with IRVs having any kind of valency with or without external arguments, this phenomenon is not particularly relevant to the present discussion.) The logic here (see in particular Kallulli 2013:351–353) is that if IRVs had an external argument, then we might expect them to take some other nominal as an internal argument. As this does not appear to be possible (cf. (2)), then this could be because IRVs lack external arguments altogether and can take only one internal nominal argument, which then appears as the surface subject.¹⁰ Again, this is consistent with Kallulli's claim that the reflexive here is not actually an argument of the verb, whose only nominal argument is the subject. However, we have also seen that the facts in (2) are compatible with an alternative view, namely one in which the possibility of English IRVs obligatorily selecting for a reflexive pronoun accounts for how these verbs combine with other nominals.

At this juncture, it bears asking whether there is any other evidence that points in favor of English IRVs being unaccusative. As far as I can tell, there is no evidence that favors an unaccusative analysis over a poly-valent analysis involving external arguments. To illustrate this, I will consider three widely used syntactic diagnostics pertaining to unaccusativity in English: expletive *there*, cognate objects, and the *X's way* construction.

First, expletive *there*, although compatible with many unaccusatives (but not all sub-classes of them), is highly resistant to verbs with an external argument (see Levin 1993). Now note that expletive *there* is not possible with any of the IRVs from (4); some examples are given in (14).

(14) a. *There nerved a parachutist himself to jump out of a plane.

(cf. A parachutist nerved himself to jump out of a plane.)

¹⁰ Related to the claim that IRVs lack an external argument, Kallulli notes (p. 352, n. 29), that Latin deponent verbs and IRVs in Romance and other Germanic languages all have non-causative meanings. I presume that what Kallulli has in mind is some notion of causation that corresponds to Levin and Rappaport Hovav's (1995) notion of externally caused eventualities, a notion that is prototypically associated with external arguments. I would agree that all the verbs in (4), similarly, do not involve such external causation. However, I do not think this kind of similarity points to any conclusion about the question of an external argument. All the verbs in (4) correspond to Levin and Rappaport Hovav's notion of internally caused eventualities (of which, as far as I can tell, eventualities involving the internal control discussed in Section 2 are a proper subset), and as they discuss, verbs expressing such internal causation can have external arguments.

- b. *There comported a professor herself with great dignity.
(cf. A professor comported herself with great dignity.)

Facts such as those in (14) are inconclusive. It could simply be the case the IRVs form a sub-class of unaccusatives that disallows expletive *there*. Just as plausible, though, is that (14) is illustrating a well-established pattern of verbs with external arguments disallowing expletive *there*.

Second, cognate objects are generally impossible with unaccusatives in English (cf. Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995), but are generally possible with unergatives (Levin 1993). Now note that cognate objects are impossible with all the verbs in (4); some examples are given in (15).¹¹

- (15) a. *John prides himself a tremendous pride on his work.
b. *Mary contents herself (some) joyous contentment with her meager
possessions.
c. *The polite child behaved herself (some) gracious behavior.

However, facts such as those in (15) are also inconclusive. As Massam (1990) points out, transitive verbs with an overt object are also impossible with cognate objects. Under Kallulli's assumption that the reflexive is not the object but simply a verbalizer, we expect that the examples in (15) are likely to be grammatical if the subject were an external argument, meaning that the IRVs would be unergatives. As the examples are clearly ungrammatical, this could be taken to support the claim that these verbs are not unergative, but are unaccusative. But recall that under the approach I advocate, the reflexives are the selected objects of IRVs. Thus, if we assume that IRVs have external arguments along with these reflexive arguments, then we can understand the ungrammaticality in (15) as

¹¹ A reviewer asks why the reflexive always immediately follows the verb in (15) instead of immediately following the cognate object. Relatedly, the same reviewer also asks why later in (16), the reflexive again always immediately follows the verb instead of immediately following *way*. Recall from note 3 that I am assuming that for Kallulli the reflexive is a clitic that attaches to the verbal complex (i.e. the verb and all its affixes). Under this assumption, the best chance these examples have of being grammatical for Kallulli is for there to be no intervening material such as a cognate object preceding the reflexive, as in the examples given in the main text. However, we can note that placing the reflexive instead immediately after the cognate object or *way* is still ungrammatical for all the IRVs in (4). Whereas Kallulli could claim that the ungrammaticality of this alternative order is the result of misplacement of a reflexive clitic, under my proposal the ordering is not relevant, as the structures in (15) and (16) are simply those that do not allow both an overt object and a cognate object/*X's way* regardless of their ordering. Note in this regard, then, that placing the selected objects in (17) after *way* still results in ungrammaticality; an analogous observation can be made with respect to overt objects of non-IRV transitive verbs and cognate objects (not exemplified in this paper).

reflecting the same phenomenon that more generally prevents transitive verbs from taking cognate objects.

Finally, consider the *X's way* construction, which can be discussed along the same lines as cognate objects. Similar to cognate objects, this construction is not possible with unaccusatives, but is possible with unergatives (Levin 1993). Again we find that, with the exception of *behave*, which is discussed further in note 12, this construction is not possible (under the relevant path-related interpretation of *X's way*) with the verbs in (4); some examples are given in (16).¹²

- (16) a. *John perjured himself his way out of a job.
b. *The parachutist nerved herself her way out of the plane.

Again, the stars in (16) could be taken as support, under Kallulli's assumption that the reflexive is not an object, that the IRV subjects are not external arguments, and that these verbs are unaccusatives. Crucially, though, just as was the case with cognate objects, the construction is impossible with transitives whose selected object is overt, as illustrated in (17), which contains examples modeled on those in Levin (1993:99).

- (17) a. The boy pushed (*the cart) his way through the crowd.
b. She stipulated (*the previous constraint) her way out of the problem.

¹² Related to the fact that the IRV *behave* need not appear with the reflexive appears to be the additional fact that *behave* is fairly acceptable with the *X's way* construction, as illustrated in (i).

- (i) The polite child behaved her way to an extra cookie from her teacher.

We can take (i) to support the claim that *behave* here is an unergative verb, and thus patterns like the other IRVs in having an external argument. One possible objection to this claim is that *behave* cannot take a cognate object:

- (ii) *The polite child behaved (some) gracious behavior.

However, as we would expect from an unergative, *behave* does not allow expletive *there*, as shown in (iii), and there are other arguably unergative verbs, such as *dribble*, that pattern like *behave* and do not readily allow a cognate object, as shown in (iv). The balance of evidence, then, supports the claim that *behave* is unergative and has an external argument.

- (iii) *There behaved some polite children in this classroom.
(iv) a. The basketball player dribbled his way across the court.
b. ?*The basketball player dribbled a fine dribble.
c. *There dribbled some star basketball players on this court.

If the relevant IRVs obligatorily select for an overt reflexive object, then we can assimilate the ungrammaticality of examples such as those in (16) to the more general phenomenon that we find regarding transitive verbs with external arguments, as in (17).

In sum, the general pattern we see is that the diagnostics are compatible with Kallulli's view that English IRVs are unaccusative, with the reflexive not being a nominal argument – but they are also all consistent with English IRVs having external arguments and a nominal reflexive argument, a position that is consistent with my proposal (but see note 12 for some slight syntactic evidence involving *behave* against Kallulli's position, and in favor of the one I have been advocating). As I cannot identify any additional unaccusativity diagnostic that will allow us to distinguish between the two approaches, I conclude that there is presently no evidence supporting a parallel regarding unaccusativity between English IRVs and IRVs/deponent verbs in other languages. Accordingly, considerations of unaccusativity do not tell us anything at present about the question of whether English IRVs are deponent-like, or about what the status of the reflexive is.

But if the impossibility of IRVs to passivize is not due to their status as unaccusatives, what might be behind it? I comment on this shortly below, where I discuss that the passivization facts are again inconclusive, and do not necessarily point to any deep-rooted similarity between English IRVs and IRVs/deponent verbs in other languages. First, though, let us consider what the facts are with English IRVs. Note that Kallulli does not provide actual examples involving passives of IRVs, but it is straightforward to do so. As an initial observation, consider the ungrammatical passives in (18).

- (18) a. *Mary was absented (herself) from class.
b. *John was behaved (himself).

For Kallulli, these examples are on a par with those of other unaccusatives, such as those in (19).

- (19) a. *The train was arrived at the station.
b. *Monkeys are often lived for twenty years or more.

As the reflexive is not a nominal for Kallulli, the only available nominal that could appear in subject position in the passives in (18) is the same as the subject in the active versions of these examples. The same holds for the unaccusatives in (19), but this pattern (i.e., the same subject in both the passive and the active) is robustly disallowed in English (Perlmutter and Postal 1983).

For the position I advocate, though, we must consider a more enriched set of data, because the reflexive (as an object nominal) should be promoted to subject position. For my proposal, then, the examples in (18) are similarly ruled out, given that we do not have

demotion of the active subject. Instead, we must consider promoting the reflexive. A first attempt at this is given in (20).

- (20) a. *Herself was absented from class.
b. *Himself was behaved.

Note that the ungrammaticality of the examples in (20) could be due to a variety of factors. For example, the case–form on the reflexives might render them incompatible as subjects of the finite clauses in (20). Note further that reflexive subjects of passivized verbs are possible in the complements of ECM/raising–to–object verbs, as illustrated in (21).

- (21) a. John₁ wanted himself₁ to be shot.
b. Mary₁ wanted herself₁ to be replaced for this job.
(i.e., Mary wanted someone else to replace her with a different person)

Thus, we can use these kinds of embedding verbs to test for the possibility of promoting the reflexive with passivized IRVs, while ruling out the case–form on the reflexive as a factor contributing to ungrammaticality. Various relevant examples are given in (22).

- (22) a. *John₁ wanted himself₁ to be absented from class (by himself₁).
b. *Mary wanted himself₁ to be absented from class (by himself₁).
c. *John₁ wanted himself₁ to be behaved (by himself₁).
d. *Mary wanted himself₁ to be behaved (by himself₁).

Regardless of whether there is a Binding Theory violation involving an instance of *himself* in (22b, d), that violation can presumably be avoided in (22a, c). Nevertheless, the examples are squarely ungrammatical, and the same holds for the other IRVs in (4). The conclusion, then, is that IRVs in English cannot passivize.

We are now in a position to consider a further observation that can distinguish the ungrammatical examples in (22), from the unaccusative examples in (19). It has been observed (see Baker et al. 1989, as well as references therein) that there are interpretive restrictions on passivizing transitive verbs more generally that pattern just like what we see in (22). To begin with, the short passives in (21) do not allow for an interpretation where the agent of *shoot* or *replace* is understood to be referring to *John* or *Mary* respectively. Further, the long passives do not allow for a reflexive in the *by*–phrase that is co–indexed with the embedded subject, as shown in (23). There thus appears to be some constraint blocking these interpretations, a constraint that is not violated in the possible interpretations of (21), thereby allowing the passives to be possible in (21) under such interpretations.

- (23) a. *John₁ wanted himself₁ to be shot by himself₁.
 b. *Mary₁ wanted herself₁ to be replaced for this job by herself₁.

Now the impossibility of these interpretations on the passives of non-IRVs matches what we see in (22). To make the parallel complete, it is important to note that the short passives in (22) without the *by*-phrase do not have an interpretation that matches the possible interpretation of the short passives in (21), where someone else is doing the shooting or initiating the replacing. We can account for the absence of this interpretation by recalling from Section 2 that the proposal here is that the two thematic arguments of IRVs are linked semantically via the notion of inherent control. Thus, the initiators of *absent* and *behave* in (22) must be the inherent controllers of the reflexives. In other words, these controllers must be understood as referring to *John* and *Mary* respectively, thereby guaranteeing a parallelism between (22) on the one hand, and the impossible interpretations of (21) and (23) on the other. Whatever constraint ultimately derives this restriction on interpreting the passive, we can hypothesize that it is one that applies across the board to transitive verbs with external arguments, including IRVs.¹³

According to this line of reasoning, then, the ungrammaticality involving the unaccusatives in (19) is unrelated to that of the IRVs in (22), as the unaccusatives have no other thematic argument that could in principle be understood as referring to the subjects in (19). In contrast, the ungrammaticality of the examples in (22), instead of being tied to IRVs being unaccusative, instead can be subsumed under whatever more general principle blocks passivization under certain co-referential interpretations, an interpretation that is necessarily present with IRVs given the proposal laid out in Section 2 concerning the thematic roles of IRVs' arguments. Thus, the evidence involving IRVs and passivization is also inconclusive: it is compatible with Kallulli's claim that these verbs are unaccusatives, but it is also compatible with their having external arguments and being subject to some independent constraint on passivization.

In sum, we have seen data that, though compatible with Kallulli's claim that English IRVs are unaccusative, are also compatible with an alternative claim that they have an external argument – in fact the balance of evidence slightly favors this alternative, when we consider the unergative behavior of *behave* discussed in note 12. Thus, the motivation to treat English IRVs on a par with, say, deponents in other languages, along with any conclusions regarding the status of the English reflexives based on such an equivalence, is

¹³ According to Baker et al. (1989), the impossible interpretations are ruled out as strong crossover violations, with the derived subject in passives raising over a co-indexed argument that corresponds to the demoted subject. It is questionable, though, whether such a proposal is tenable given that A-movement with raising verbs, as in (i) does not lead to a crossover violation, in contrast to what Baker et al. claim occurs with the A-movement in passives.

(i) Mary₁ seems to herself₁ ___ to be a genius.

no longer compelling, especially in light of the independent constraint on passivization that appears to be applicable to IRVs once we understand their argument structure properties as per the proposal in Section 2.

4. Conclusion

This paper has challenged Kallulli's (2013) position that the reflexives found with English IRVs are verbalizers akin to deponent verbal morphology in other languages. Instead, I have advanced a proposal that treats the reflexives as fully-fledged arguments that are selected for by IRVs and are assigned a thematic role from these verbs. I proposed a thematic role related to the internal controller of an event, and introduced a class of verbs, what I called *inure*-type verbs, to substantiate this proposal. Various questions related to IRVs remain unanswered. For instance, what can account for why some nominals with IRV roots but not others are incompatible with the reflexive combining with *of*? Further, if there is some more general constraint in English blocking the passives of IRVs, then we can ask from a cross-linguistic perspective why the passives of IRVs are possible, as discussed by Schäfer (2012), in certain other Germanic languages. The hope is that the more in-depth investigation into English IRVs that has been begun here can help to shed light on these questions in future research.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: Tertiary

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*On the status of the reflexive found with English
inherently reflexive verbs: A response to Kallulli (2013)*

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