

# Thomas Nagel

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## The Control Principle

- ↳ We are morally assessable only to the extent that what we are assessed for depends on factors under our control
- \* our moral assessments should not differ w/ respect to two different people when the only different factors are out of their control (ex: responsible driver going through school zone vs. one that hits a child who runs into the school zone) → we could say something morally bad occurred, but not that the driver did something morally wrong

## Moral Luck

- ↳ occurs when an agent can be correctly treated as an object of moral judgement despite that it was out of the person's control
- 1) Resultant luck: the uncontrolled consequences or results of your actions
  - Moral luck when there is already a degree of responsibility
    - \* non-negligence (when there is no degree of moral responsibility): responsible driver kills someone → moral bad luck
    - \* negligence (some degree of moral responsibility)
- 2) Circumstantial luck: the situations you happen to find yourself in
  - consider cases in which you pass by and you could help
    - ↳ negligence: could have easily helped, but didn't → gets judged as negatively moral
    - ↳ supererogatory: helping beyond the call of duty → gets morally judged in a high regard
- 3) Constitutive luck: concerns the way you happen to be by nature + nurture
  - natural endowments: people are treated as more important or judged differently (wealthy, celebrities)
  - nurtured endowments: people are raised w/ different manners + habits (racists, sexists)

## Responding to the problem

- how do we respond to the paradox concerning moral luck?
  - ↳ deny moral luck and accept the control principle?
  - ↳ accept moral luck and deny or restrict the control principle