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Total points: 10

The control condition which states that an individual should be held morally responsible only for actions that are under his or her control leads to problems with moral luck because the very notion of ‘luck’ seems to be defined in terms of control. For example, consider the following: L1: An event E is lucky for an individual S, if and only if the occurrence of E is beyond S’s control. L1 does not fully capture our intuitions about luck since we can think about events beyond S’s control like the rusting of iron (contrast it with events like S winning the lottery) which is not considered lucky with respect to S. We could tighten our account of luck as follows: L2: An event E is lucky for an individual S, if and only if the occurrence of E is beyond S’s control and is relevant to S. L2 is also vulnerable to counterexamples unless we provide an account of relevance. The sun rising every morning is beyond S’s control but is significant for S and yet we don’t consider sunrise to be a lucky event for S.

(1) What kind of relevance makes L2 a good definition of luck? (5 points)

Suppose you also wanted to quantify the amount of luck associated with a certain event E that is beyond S’s control and is relevant to S in the way you have given in (1). Let $P(E)$ be the objective probability of event E. For example, the probability of there being a pedestrian on a certain road at a certain time is 0.15 based on available traffic data. But notice that such probabilities are neutral with respect to S and so assume that $R(S, E)$ is the relevance measure which gives us the degree to which event E is relevant for individual S.

(2) Which among the following do you think best captures the idea of the amount of luck associated with event E involving S? (a) $R \times P(E)$ (b) $R \times [1 - P(E)]$ (c) $R/P(E)$ (d) $R/[1 - P(E)]$. Explain. (5 points)