PHI 202| Study questions 7

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Readings:
Nagel, T. (1979). Moral Luck. In *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge University Press.
Taylor, R. (1992). Freedom and Determinism.

(1) According to the **Control Principle**, we can be morally assessed *only* to the extent that what we are assessed for depend on factors under our control. It follows that two people ought not to be assessed differently regarding moral responsibility and praise/blame if the only differences between them are factors beyond their control. What's at stake in accepting or rejecting this principle?

(2) According to Nagel, there are five types of moral luck: (i) outcome luck, (ii) circumstantial luck, (iii) constitutive luck, (iv) casual luck. Frick adds a fifth one: (v) counterfactual luck. What are they? Can you give an example of each?

(3) The claim that there is moral luck conflicts with the Control Principle. This is puzzling. We can address this puzzle in two broad ways. First, we can deny that there is moral luck despite appearances. Second, we can reject or revise the Control Principle. Which of these approaches, if any, should we take?

(4) What is the thesis of metaphysical determinism?

(5) What is the thesis of compatibilism/soft-determinism? Why does Taylor think that this view is untenable?

(6) Consider the following case from Frankfurt's (1969) "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility". Is Ann responsible and blameworthy? How does this case bear on Taylor's argument against compatibilism?

> **Frankfurt's Case**: Ann wants to shoot Tom. Beth has learned about Ann's plan and would like Ann to carry it out. Beth is concerned that Ann might waver, so she arranges things in the following way: if Ann shows any signs that she will not shoot Tom, Beth will manipulate her in such a way that Ann will shoot Tom. As things turn out, Ann follows through with her plan and shoots Tom for her own reasons. Beth never intervened.