

Salience, Imagination, and Moral Luck

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The problem of moral luck has been a persistent issue in moral philosophy. Kant famously denied its existence, claiming that the will alone determines the moral worth of an action.¹ Many, however, are unconvinced by Kant's treatment and find it intuitively correct to think that, at least sometimes, the consequences of an action can change the moral quality of the act even if those consequences arise completely as a result of luck. Bernard Williams (1981) famously argued for this view, and Thomas Nagel (1979) elaborated on Williams' treatment of it. Nagel defines moral luck as being characterized by cases "where a significant aspect of what someone does depends on factors beyond his control, yet we continue to treat him in that respect as an object of moral judgment," (26) and he identifies four distinct kinds of luck which could, plausibly, influence our moral judgments regarding a particular act. Of these, luck in the outcome of one's actions will be the primary focus of the discussion here. As an example of this sort of luck, Nagel asks us to imagine a truck driver who accidentally hits and kills a child.

The driver, if he is entirely without fault, will feel terrible about his role in the event, but will not have to reproach himself ... However, if the driver was guilty of even a minor degree of negligence – failing to have his brakes checked recently, for example – then if that negligence contributes to the death of the child, he will not merely feel terrible. He will blame himself for the death. And what makes this an example of moral luck is that he would have to blame himself only slightly for the negligence itself if no situation arose which required him to brake suddenly and violently to avoid hitting a child. Yet the *negligence* is the same in both cases, and the driver has no control over whether a child will run into his path.

In the end, Nagel admits that moral luck is paradoxical and that a satisfying solution to the problem is unlikely to be forthcoming.

Absent a solution, then, one promising method of approaching the problem of moral luck is to focus on an account of blame which explains why our blaming attitudes vary, appropriately

¹ See Kant (1797)

it seems, in cases where the outcome of one's actions depend a great deal on luck. This is the strategy pursued in recent work by T.M. Scanlon (2008) who offers an account of blame which construes blame as occurring within the context of particular kinds of relationships that individuals have with one another. Thinking of blame as a function of relationships, Scanlon suggests, offers a plausible solution to the problem of moral luck. My aim in this paper is to show that Scanlon's account of blame is open to a different kind of luck-based objection. If this is correct, then it would undermine much of the motivation for Scanlon's theory of blame. I then attempt to offer a way of understanding moral luck cases which allows for a plausible explanation of differential blaming responses by appealing to the salience of certain relevant features of the action in question. Before turning to these issues, however, I will begin by offering a brief overview of Scanlon's account of blame

§1. Scanlon on Blame and Moral Luck

According to Scanlon, blame occurs when one alters one's attitudes and dispositions toward another person in response to a judgment that the other has impaired his or her relationship with one relative to some normative standard. As he puts it,

[T]o claim that a person is *blameworthy* for an action is to claim that the action shows something about the agent's attitudes toward others that impairs the relations that others can have with him or her. To *blame* a person is to judge him or her to be blameworthy and to take your relationship with him or her to be modified in a way that this judgment of impaired relations holds to be appropriate. (Scanlon 2008, 128-9)

So, for Scanlon blame consists in a judgment that a relationship has been impaired and a subsequent modification of the attitudes, intentions, and dispositions that comprise that relationship. However, making sense of this view requires filling in precisely what it means to say that a relationship is impaired as well as what sort of modification Scanlon has in mind.

Impairments of the sort that Scanlon is interested in are to be understood within the context of a particular ground relationship. In short, impairment occurs when one party to the relationship holds attitudes that are “ruled out by the standards of that relationship, thus making it appropriate for the other party to have attitudes other than those that the relationship normally involves.” (135) Scanlon’s paradigm example, here, is the case of friendship. Being a friend to another person requires that one hold certain attitudes toward one’s friend. These will include attitudes of mutual regard, but they will also include attitudes such as concern for the friend’s well being, a desire that things go well for the friend, disappointment at the friend’s failures, and much more. These attitudes, for Scanlon, constitute the standards of the relationship of friendship, and when one party to the relationship is seen not to hold the attitudes that are constitutive of the ground relationship the relationship is impaired. In response to this impairment, the other party to the relationship may alter her attitudes in a way that is consistent with her position relative to the agent being blamed and the significance of the impairment. So, when my friend betrays me I have reason to believe that her attitudes are such that the nature of our relationship has been changed, and I can modify my attitudes toward my friend in a way that is appropriate to our friendship and the significance of the betrayal. For example, I may no longer be inclined to confide in the friend who has betrayed my trust, or I may no longer be disposed to engage in deep conversations with her which may reveal certain vulnerabilities in me.

This view of blame has significant appeal when considered within the context of personal relationships. However, if the Scanlonian view is to give a full account of the nature of blame, it must be able to give an account of instances of blame which occur outside of these relationships as well. The reason for this is that if blame is a function of impaired relationships, then it would

seem that we cannot blame those with whom we have no relationship. If this is right, then it would follow that I cannot actually blame a stranger who wrongs me. In order to address this issue, Scanlon suggests that we do, in fact, have a relationship that is impaired by the stranger who shows disregard in this way. This he calls the “moral relationship.”

The moral relationship, Scanlon suggests, is a relationship that we have with all other moral agents. However, unlike friendship, it does not involve a standing set of attitudes that we have toward others. Instead, it is something that we have in virtue of being fellow rational beings capable of responding to reasons. The requirements of the moral relationship, then, consist in those things that we owe to other moral agents (i.e. not to harm them, to give aid when this may be easily done, not to lie to them, etc.) as well as a number of other attitudes and dispositions that typically characterize good moral relations (such as “being disposed to be pleased when we hear of things going well for other people” (Scanlon 2008, 140)). These attitudes characterize the moral relationship, according to Scanlon, and when we judge that another person fails to hold these attitudes toward us we may modify our attitudes in light of this fact. This judgment and modification constitutes moral blame on the Scanlonian view.

There is surely more that could be said to fully capture the nuance of the Scanlonian picture of blame, but the preceding will be sufficient for the purposes of this paper. The picture that he offers is compelling in a number of ways and especially in the weight that it gives to our relationships in characterizing blame. However, one of the key virtues of the account, Scanlon suggests, is its ability to offer an explanation of our differing responses in cases of moral outcome luck, an explanation which hinges on his notion of significance. So, imagine two reckless drivers. One driver drives recklessly but makes it to his destination without incident, and the other driver is unlucky and hits and kills a child who runs into the street. Each of the drivers

has acted recklessly and has demonstrated that he holds attitudes that impair the relationships that others can have with him. However, the second driver's actions are significant for others in a way that those of the first driver are not. To this end, Scanlon writes, "he is not only the person who killed a child but also the person whose recklessness led to the child's death. The fact that his fault has played this significant role in their [those who are affected by his driving] lives raises a greater question about how they are going to understand their relations with him." (2008, 149) So, for Scanlon, differential responses in moral luck cases are best understood in light of the differential significance the outcomes of actions have for the relationships that agents have with one another.

There is much to like about Scanlon's solution to the problem of outcome luck. However, given that the ability to offer an explanation of cases of outcome luck is one of the key motivating factors for his view (indeed, this ability, or so he suggests, is what gives his view a theoretical advantage over reactive attitude based accounts of blame²), it is surprising that it has not received more attention in philosophical discussions of his account. The ability to explain these cases is so important that it functions, Scanlon thinks, as a necessary condition for a theory of blame. To this end he writes, "An adequate account of blame should either explain how blame can vary in the way that [moral outcome luck] examples suggest or else give a convincing explanation of why it should appear to do so even though it does not." (Scanlon 2008, 126) The Scanlonian picture of blame has been subject to criticism on a number of fronts. Some have criticized Scanlon's reliance on the notion of a "moral relationship," (Sher 2013) others have

² As exemplars of such a view, see Strawson (1962) and Wallace (1994). Scanlon objects to Strawsonian theories of responsibility on other grounds in his other work (Scanlon (1988); Scanlon (1998)), but in the context of his analysis of blame, the primary reason he gives for rejecting reactive attitude accounts is their inability to account for moral luck, saying, "This view, by itself, still fails to explain the plausibility of moral outcome luck. If the reactive attitudes that blame involves are reactions to the *attitudes* of others as manifested in their conduct – for example to the concern for the interests of others that their actions manifest – then moral outcome luck still seems inexplicable." (2008, 128)

criticized the view on the grounds that it denies the necessity of the various so-called blaming emotions, (Wallace 2011; Wolf 2011) and still others have criticized the view for its perceived failure to account for other features of our blaming practices.³ However, very little work has been done examining his proposed explanation of moral luck cases.⁴ In the following section I hope to do just that and to show that Scanlon's account is vulnerable to a different sort of luck challenge, one which I do not believe his theory has the resources to overcome.

§2. A New Luck-Based Challenge

As we have just seen, on Scanlon's view blame cannot occur absent some ground relationship between individuals, and this feature of his account makes it susceptible to a new kind of moral luck challenge. The reason is this: there may be cases in which it is a matter of luck whether one finds oneself in a particular relationship yet it seems perfectly reasonable to blame one independently of whether that relationship obtains. To see this, consider the following case:

The Would-Be Fathers: Sarah has just discovered that she is pregnant. In recent months, she has had two regular sexual partners (neither of whom is aware of the other), and either one of them could be the father of her baby. She informs each of them separately that she is pregnant, and each man, believing himself to be the father, promptly leaves town and abandons her, thus shirking his parental obligations. Sarah eventually gives birth to a healthy child who grows into an adolescent and, after learning of what these men did comes to blame them both deeply for the lack of regard displayed in their abandoning him and thereby causing him to miss out on a number of important experiences and benefits that come along with having a father present.

³ For example, Angela Smith (2013) suggests that the Scanlonian view cannot give an explanation for the element of moral protest that is embodied in our blaming practices. Additionally, David Shoemaker (2013) argues that the Scanlonian conception of blame is such that it cannot make sense when translated into the realm of criminal punishment.

⁴ As one exception, see Cholbi (2014). There, Cholbi criticizes Scanlon's proposed solution on the grounds that it fails to give any normative justification for differential blaming responses in cases of outcome luck. As will be clear below, I do not see this as a problem. It is my view that the best solution to the moral luck problem is to deny that luck makes a normative difference and to offer a descriptive account that makes sense of our differential blaming responses.

It seems to me that the child may appropriately blame the two men equally for their actions. After all, the attitudes and intentions of each are identical, and they each show the same lack of regard for Sarah and her child. Moreover, the significance of each man's actions for the child is identical insofar as either man, had he decided to raise the child, would have been able to support and to care for the child. However, the problem for Scanlon's view is that only one man can plausibly be blamed for his action because only one of the men has actually impaired a normative relationship with the child, and the fact that it is he, and not the other man, who has done so is entirely a matter of luck.

To make this clearer, imagine a case similar to the case of the Would-Be Fathers in which only one man is involved and is known to be the father. That man, let us suppose, decides to leave Sarah and their child in just the same way as the two men in the case described above. In that case, when the child grows up and learns of what has happened surely his blaming the father is appropriate. However, given that the child has never met the man, it may seem as though the two actually are not in a relationship at all, and if this is correct, then it would spell trouble for Scanlon's account. In order for the Scanlonian view to explain why blame is appropriate in this case, we need first to identify the ground relationship that has been impaired, and there are several candidate relationships to which a Scanlonian might appeal. First, perhaps we might think that the child's blame is of a third personal quality. That is, we might think that he blames his father as a result of the way in which his father impaired the spousal relationship with his mother. This may indeed be true, but we could easily re-imagine the case in a way that avoids this possibility. Suppose, for example, that he and his mother are managing well and are not in need of any financial or material support, and that he genuinely believes that his mother is better off with his father out of the picture. He may nevertheless resent his father deeply for causing

him to miss out on a number of experiences or opportunities that go along with having a father present. Thus revised, it seems as though the child is blaming his father on his own behalf and that it is precisely the *lack of a relationship* that he is blaming his father for. But, again, this interpretation is problematic for Scanlon given that some preexisting relationship is necessary for blame.

Scanlon attempts to address cases that are similar to this. He writes,

We can be injured by the wrongful action of someone we have never met ... in such a case, it makes sense to say that we blame that person for bringing about the injury ... This might be explained by saying that there is a special relationship, in the relevant sense, between perpetrators and their victims. In a way this is right, but it cannot be the whole story, since *that* relationship itself cannot be the one that is “impaired” by what the perpetrator does. Rather, the victim’s relation to the perpetrator is impaired relative to the standard relationship between persons generally... (2008, 147)

So, given these remarks, we might say that in the absence of third personal blame, the child can blame his father for violating the standards of the moral relationship. But this doesn’t get things quite right either and for two reasons. First, if the action that ostensibly caused the relationship to be impaired was that of not being present, or of leaving and failing to offer support, the moral relationship cannot ground blame because this does not seem to be something that violates our obligations to persons generally. That is, we cannot rightly be said to have an obligation to stay by someone’s side or offer them our company and support just in virtue of being fellow rational beings. This is an obligation that we have in virtue of being in some special relationship with another person. Second, if the impairment to the moral relationship occurs when the child’s father knowingly leaves a woman whom he has impregnated, Scanlon’s view still doesn’t offer a plausible account of the case. On this interpretation, we might say that, in leaving, the child’s father knowingly displays a lack of due regard and therefore impairs the moral relationship that he can have with people generally. So, because of this general impairment, when the child grows

up he is able to blame his father for violating the moral relationship he is able to have with other rational beings. If this true, however, it results in the implausible claim that *anyone* has *as much* reason to blame the father as the child does.⁵

So, if the child is able to blame his father in this case, it must be because the father has violated the normative standards of the parent-child relationship.⁶ If this is true, however, then the problem posed by the case of the Would-Be Fathers becomes much clearer: only one man can be party to the parent-child relationship in this case. Given this, Scanlon's view is committed to the claim that only one of the men can be blamed by the child despite the fact that the significance of their actions is the same. However, if this is correct, then either man's being legitimately blamed is entirely a matter of luck insofar as it was beyond his control whether he or the other man actually caused the child to be conceived. Insofar as we think that both men are equally blameworthy, then, it seems to be the case that appealing to the significance of an agent's actions in the way Scanlon suggests won't get us out from under the moral luck problem. In short, the Scanlonian account of blame cannot give us a full solution to the problem of outcome luck simply by appealing to relational impairments for the simple fact that whether a relationship obtains at all may itself be the result of outcome luck.

There may, however, be a response in the offing on behalf of the Scanlonian. For it might be claimed that to suggest that the significance of each man's action is the same to the child is to

⁵ Scanlon might respond here that the difference in the child's blame as opposed to, say, yours or mine rests simply in the significance for the child of his father's action. So, Scanlon might say, the grounds for blame are the same, but the significance for the child is much greater and should, therefore, yield a different reaction from the child than it would from you or me. This response, however, won't do. The child's case for blaming his father seems to rest on the fact that, by leaving, a certain kind of relationship is lacking between them, and this relationship is not one that you or I would have claim to rendering our blame different *in kind* from the child's.

⁶ It should be noted, however, that whether this relationship obtains is far from obvious for the very simple fact that at that time of the relevant impairment the child does not exist. As I've set the story up, the child's father left before he was born, and, so, it's not at all obvious that the parent-child relationship could obtain between them in any sense other than a merely biological one. However, surely a mere biological relationship cannot properly be said to be impaired in the sense that Scanlon is interested in. For the sake of argument, however, I will grant that the two are in this relationship. If readers disagree, then there is a much more general objection to Scanlon's view in the offing.

simply beg the question.⁷ It might be true, the Scanlonian could respond, that the attitudes and dispositions of the two men impair the relationships that they can have with others, but, given that only one of the men is actually in this particular relationship his actions have a significance that the other man's actions lack. This significance, then, supports a differential blame response from the child.

In order to see the problem with this response, it will be helpful to look closely at how Scanlon characterizes the notion of significance. Doing so will, I think, show that it is not altogether clear just what Scanlon means by the term. Earlier on in his work, Scanlon uses the concept of significance in the context of his account of an action's *meaning*, saying,

By the meaning of an action for a person, I mean the significance that person has reason to assign to it, given the reasons for which it was performed and the person's relation to the agent. The significance of your action, for me, is thus something I can be mistaken about ... I may be mistaken about this either because I misinterpret your reasons for acting as you did or because I have a mistaken idea of what I am entitled to demand of you, given our relationship. (2008, 54)

On this technical account of significance, it is easy to see how the response suggested just now would be apt. In blaming the man who is not actually his father, the child in our hypothetical case would simply be mistaken about what he is entitled to demand. However, it is not clear that this technical definition of significance is the one that is at work in Scanlon's solution to the problem of outcome luck. This is because if significance is only a function of the reasons for which one acts and the relationship that one has to the person for whom one's action is significant, then it is not at all clear how *this* notion of significance can solve the moral luck problem in the first place.

To see this, consider the case of the negligent drivers. Both drivers act for the same reasons, and both drivers are in the same moral relationship to the parents whose child is killed.

⁷ I'm grateful to an anonymous referee for pressing me on this point.

If this is all that matters for significance, then appealing to significance gets us nowhere on the question of outcome luck. In order to have a solution to the luck problem, then, Scanlon must have a broader conception of significance in mind, and this seems to be borne out by what he says regarding the case of the negligent drivers. Recall, from the passage I quoted above, that Scanlon writes of the unlucky driver, “he is not only the person who killed a child but also the person whose recklessness led to the child’s death. The fact that his fault has played *this significant role in their lives* raises a greater question about how they are going to understand their relations with him.” (149, emphasis added) Here Scanlon seems not to be using “significant” as a term of art but to be using it simply to indicate that the driver’s action played an important role in the lives of those affected.⁸ On this reading of “significance,” however, the charge that my argument above begs the question does not stick. In the case that I have described, the significance (in this general sense) of each man’s actions *is* the same for the simple reason that either man, by acting other than he did or by holding attitudes other than those he held, could have provided for the child and prevented the significant negative effects on the child’s life of being abandoned.

§3. Salience and Imagination

Given the arguments of the previous section, it seems to me that Scanlon’s solution to the problem of outcome luck cannot succeed. Nonetheless, I agree with Scanlon that an adequate account of blame should be able to give some explanation as to why blame characteristically differs in cases of outcome luck. I disagree, however, that the reactive attitude account cannot accomplish this. In this section I will attempt to show that this is the case. My suggestion here is that we can explain away the problem of outcome luck entirely by appealing to certain psychological features of agents and by demonstrating how these features factor into standard

⁸ I’m grateful to Nicholas Sars for making this point to me in conversation.

luck cases. This solution to the problem of moral outcome luck can be characterized as an instance of what Susan Wolf (2001) calls the rationalist position. “According to this position,” she writes, “how much blame one deserves depends on how wrongly one has acted, on how much moral fault is revealed or expressed or instantiated in the action one has performed (or in one’s failure to act).” (6) In short, I think that this rationalist approach is correct,⁹ that the quality of an agent’s will determines the amount of blame that she is due, and that we need not try to give a normative explanation of why unlucky agents *deserve* more blame but a merely descriptive explanation of why they tend to *receive* more blame as a matter of practice. The reactive attitudes conception of blame originates in P.F. Strawson’s “Freedom and Resentment” and holds that to blame another person is simply to hold one or more of the reactive emotions toward her in response to the quality of her will as revealed by her actions. Strawson himself focused on the role of resentment, indignation, and, in the first personal case, guilt in our blaming responses, and most who take this sort of view give special place to these as well.¹⁰ Thus, my feeling of resentment toward the friend who intentionally betrays my trust constitutes a form of blame on this view, and this is so regardless of whether I express this resentment to my friend, act on it in some other manner, or simply experience a private episode of it. Scanlon claims that this sort of view fails to explain our responses in cases of luck, saying, “If the reactive attitudes that blame involves are reactions to the *attitudes* of others as manifested in their conduct ... then moral outcome luck still seems inexplicable.” (Scanlon 2008, 128) More specifically, the suggestion here seems to be that if the reactive attitudes simply track the quality of an agent’s will, then no explanation can be given for why blame seems to differ in cases where two agents evince the same quality of will but where the outcomes of their actions differ

⁹ The “rationalist” moniker, however, strikes me as a bit misleading.

¹⁰ An exception here would be Shoemaker (2015) who argues that talk of resentment ought to be replaced with discussion of what he calls “agential anger.”

wildly as a result of luck. I think Scanlon is mistaken on this count, and my aim here is to provide just such an explanation.

The first step in offering an explanation of our differential experience of the reactive attitudes in cases of moral luck is to inquire about the circumstances under which emotional responses are likely to arise. My suggestion is that we are much more likely to hold the reactive attitudes in cases where an agent's actions make the quality of her will more salient to us. This is importantly different from some views which hold that there is an epistemic difference in cases of luck such that when bad outcomes happen these allow us to really *know* the quality of an agent's will in a way that we otherwise would not.¹¹ Rather, my suggestion is that when we experience the negative consequences in cases of moral luck, these consequences make the quality of the agent's will especially salient. We may judge, in a detached way, that the agent has poor quality of will, but when we are faced with the outcomes of that will its quality becomes salient to us in a way that it might not have been had the agent been luckier. We are able to see the seriousness of the quality of the agent's will, and this leads us to have stronger emotional responses than we would were that seriousness less visible to us.

To see this, consider the case of the two negligent drivers, one of whom hits and kills a child as a result of bad luck. When the unlucky driver strikes the child the poor quality of his will is highly salient to us because we can see the consequences of it in an extraordinarily vivid way. This, of course, is not true in the case of the lucky driver. While we may judge that he has done something wrong, the quality of will implicated in his wrongdoing is not nearly as salient to us because the terrible consequences it could have wrought are not staring us in the face, as it were. However, it may be possible for us to make the actual quality of his will salient through the use of imagination. If we are able to imagine the potential consequences of the lucky driver's actions

¹¹ See Nelkin (2013) for a summary of such views.

in a way that is sufficiently vivid, then it is likely that this will affect us in a way that would give rise to our experience of one or more reactive emotions. In short, imaginative vividness and salience play an important role in our emotional experience, and luck has the ability to make the quality of an agent's will more or less salient.

The role that imagination and vividness play in emotional experience can be seen in a wide range of situations. Consider, for example, the spouse who, after a particularly vivid dream, wakes up feeling angry at his or her partner for a callous remark that was made.¹² Additionally, it is altogether common for one to become angry or resentful all over again when reflecting on a past slight, and, I contend, the extent of this anger or resentment is largely a function of how vivid the memory of the slight is in one's mind. These considerations suggest, I think, that episodic cognition – the ability to create a mental representation of and to reflect on past or future episodes or events – plays an important role in our moral lives.¹³ Episodic future thinking, in particular, helps to make sense of our responses to the lucky driver. One reason that we do not blame the lucky driver to any great degree is that we fail, in many cases, to construct sufficiently vivid representations of the potential outcomes of his actions, and this prevents the poor quality of his will from becoming salient to us.

Appealing to salience can help us to make sense of other cases of luck as well. Consider, for example, the case of two assassins, one of whom shoots and kills his target while the other shoots his target but fails to kill him because the target happens, as a matter of luck, to be wearing a bulletproof vest. Intuitively, there is no difference at all in the degree to which we blame the two shooters. The reason for this, I think, is that the quality of will is *just as* salient in the case of the lucky shooter as it is in the case of the unlucky one. It requires very little, if any,

¹² I owe this example to David Shoemaker.

¹³ I argue for this in more depth in Stout (2016).

imagination on our part to see that the assassin whose target survives demonstrated just as much ill will as the assassin who succeeded in killing his target. A similar analysis is available in the case of the Would-Be Fathers described above. For the child who grows up without a father present the quality of each man's will is highly salient, and he need not engage in any imaginative reflection in order to see this. Therefore, he can appropriately blame both men regardless of whether they, as a matter of luck, are actually responsible for his conception.

Salience and imagination, then, seem clearly to play a role in our ability to perceive and evaluate the quality of an agent's will. However, there is at least one important objection that may be advanced at this point: if the salience of an agent's quality of will is what matters in determining the amount of blame that we direct toward him or her, then it seems to be the case that we should blame the lucky driver and the unlucky driver to the same degree no matter how bad the outcome of the unlucky driver's actions. So, if the unlucky driver finds himself unable to stop at a red light and subsequently hits the broadside of a school bus filled with children, then he is to be blamed to the same extent as the lucky driver who goes about his day without incident. This is an important problem, but it is one to which there is a readily available response. That response is this: in some cases the outcome of an action is so severe and tragic that it raises the salience of an agent's action so much that the quality of the agent's will is judged far more harshly than is appropriate. In short, what is happening in the case of the drivers is likely this: the salience created by the outcome of the unlucky driver's actions causes us to blame him much more than his actual quality of will warrants while the outcome of the lucky driver's actions, coupled with our failure to imagine their potential harms in a sufficiently vivid way, causes us to blame him much less than the quality of his will warrants. However, the fact that we do have differential blaming responses of these kinds in cases of moral luck is well explained by our

tendency to respond more strongly to cases in which the moral quality of an agent's will is most salient to us.

§4. Conclusion

I began this paper by outlining the way in which the Scanlonian account of blame aimed to solve the problem of moral luck by appealing to the significance of an agent's actions. I then attempted to show that this solution to the problem fails in an important way insofar as there may be cases of outcome luck in which one's being a member of a particular relationship with normative standards is itself a matter of luck. Having presented this challenge, I then offered an explanation of our differential blaming responses in luck cases that locates the relevant difference in the increased or decreased salience that luck imparts on the quality of an agent's will. If I am correct, then the arguments offered here cast doubt on Scanlon's view of blame insofar as one of the primary motivations for his account is its ability to handle cases of moral outcome luck. Additionally, the arguments offered here show that a reactive attitudes account of blame is able to give a plausible account of moral outcome luck and, therefore, lend credence to this sort of view as a general account of blame.

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