
The Manifestation View: A Defence of Resultant Moral Luck

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Résumé

We blame a murderer who kills their victim more than the equally malicious person who fails to kill purely due to factors beyond their direct control. Should our blame be sensitive to results in this way? Peter Graham (2014), Andrew Khoury (2018) and Matthew Talbert (2019; 2024) have argued that since blame functions to respond to a wrongdoer's bad motive or intention (her bad "quality of will" (QoW)) that is manifest in her conduct, the degree to which we blame a wrongdoer should not be sensitive to results. Their theories are what David Shoemaker approvingly calls "Pure" QoW theories (2015: 7). In other words, they argue that we should reject so-called resultant moral luck.

In my talk, I argue that these pure QoW theories are mistaken and that we should accept resultant moral luck. I argue for the Manifestation View: blame tracks manifestations of bad QoW (qua such manifestations) rather than manifested bad QoW. Hence, we should blame the murderer more than we blame the malicious person who fails to kill; the former's intention is more fully manifested (or realized) in the world (cf. Lang 2021).

Many assume that there is a tight connection between being responsible for X and being an appropriate target of moral emotions such as guilt or anger in light of X. It is also widely thought that guilt feelings function to motivate relationship repair and the making of amends (e.g. De Hooge 2019). My argument builds on the further idea that the degree of guilt tracks the moral priority of setting certain things right in light of the severity of some wrongdoings when compared to others. This further idea supports the Manifestation View: Relationships are primarily damaged by manifestations rather than by bad motives or outcomes alone.

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Mots-Clés: resultant moral luck, blameworthiness, quality of will, moral responsibility