

## **Kant on Freedom and Moral Luck**

In this contribution, I want to take a fresh look at Kant's theory of freedom by approaching it from a new perspective, namely from the perspective of moral luck. Kant's ethics commonly serves as a paradigmatic example of a theory that aims to insulate moral assessment from factors beyond the agent's control. In a nutshell, Kant is known for the thesis that we are only morally responsible for what we have freely chosen. Moral luck, as defined in the *Stanford Encyclopedia*, "occurs when an agent can be *correctly* treated as an object of moral judgment, despite the fact that a significant aspect of what he is assessed for depends on factors beyond his control". Bernard Williams's article "Moral Luck" (1981) and Thomas Nagel's reply draw attention to a tension in our everyday moral judgments: On the one hand, they are perfused by moral luck. On the other hand, we seem to be committed to the (Kantian) idea that we are only morally assessable for what is under our control.

In the first part of my contribution, I clarify some terminological issues in order to highlight the connections between the debates on moral luck and freedom in Kant. In the second part, I present an overview over Kant's solution of the third Antinomy in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he gives an account of how freedom and determinism are compatible. I argue that Kant's theory of free agency can be understood as a rejection of what has been called "causal luck". In the third part, I turn to Kant's idea presented in the *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* that we choose our "intelligible character". This can be regarded as his rejection of "constitutive luck", i.e. luck in the kind of person one is. In the last part, I draw attention to the – perhaps surprising – fact that Kant acknowledges "circumstantial luck", i.e. luck in the kinds of moral challenges one faces, and discuss the role of this kind of luck for his practical philosophy.