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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Fortune

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Abstract
In this paper I argue that *luck* and *fortune* are distinct concepts that apply to different sets of events. I do so by suggesting that lucky events are best understood as significant events that are either modally fragile or improbable (depending on whether you accept a modal account or a probability account of luck), whereas fortunate events are best understood as significant events that are outside of our control. I call this the *Pure Control Account of Fortune*. I show that this account of fortune forces control theorists about luck to be fortune reductionists but allows those who endorse a modal or probability account of luck to be fortune realists. Additionally, I argue that this account of fortune helps us overcome prominent counterexamples and challenges found in the luck literature.

1 Introduction

Are luck and fortune distinct concepts? Some think no – call this group *fortune reductionists*.[1] Others think yes, we should apply the concepts luck and fortune to different sets of events – call this group *fortune realists*.[2] Despite the existence of fortune realists, there have been few attempts to provide a detailed account of how fortune differs from luck. Providing such an account is the goal of this paper. Because my eventual account of fortune is heavily dependent on the existing accounts of luck, I will begin this paper by providing a brief overview of those accounts.[3] I will then address the

[1] Fortune reductionists include Stoutenburg (2015), Broncano-Berrocal (2015), and Lackey (2008 p. 262).

[2] Fortune realists include Rescher (2014), Prichard (2014), and Levy (2009).

[3] It should be noted that there are also luck and fortune eliminativists. Most notably, see Hales (2020).

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main argument offered by fortune reductionists and offer a few cases to motivate the notion that luck and fortune should be viewed as distinct concepts. Finally, I will argue that if you endorse a particular account of luck it should be accompanied by a corresponding account of fortune. Namely, if you are a control theorist about luck you should be a fortune reductionist. If you are a probability theorist or modal theorist about luck you should be a fortune realist who thinks fortunate events are those events which are (1) significant and (2) outside of our control. I call this the *Pure Control Account of Fortune*.

2 Luck

Luck has played a large role in many areas of philosophy. In ethics, Nagel (1979) and Williams (1981) first showed that luck seems to be relevant to our moral assessments of people. Because of these papers, *moral luck* has become closely associated with control – so much so that moral luck is typically defined in terms of lacking sufficient control.[4] A similar story unfolded in epistemology, where Gettier (1963) popularized the notion that luck could undermine the justified true belief conception of knowledge. Duncan Prichard (2003, 2005) offered a modal account of luck meant to explain what exactly was going on in Gettier style cases.[5] And thus, in epistemology, a modal account of luck is often used to explain why Gettier style cases have their bite.[6]

Over the past few decades, however, philosophers have begun to analyze the concept of luck independently from – but still significantly connected with the ideas presented in – the debates about luck in ethics and epistemology. In this literature, three primary accounts of luck have emerged; (1) control accounts, (2) probability accounts, and (3) modal accounts.[7] Typically, these accounts all incorporate a significance condition. That is, they say that lucky events must be significant to either a real

[4] For example, Nathan Hanna has said "moral luck occurs when someone's moral standing is affected by factors beyond her control, i.e., "luck" (2014, p. 1). Similarly, Robert Hartman has said "moral luck occurs when factors beyond an agent's control positively affect how much praise or blame she deserves" (2019, p. 1). Also, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry for "moral luck" defines it by saying "moral luck 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" (Nelkin 2021, § 1).

[5] Lackey (2006, 2008) has argued against Prichard's modal account.

[6] Some epistemologists, however, opt to endorse a control account of luck. See, for example, Wayne Riggs (2007) who argues that knowledge is credit-worthy true belief, and that we lack creditworthiness in cases where we did not have sufficient control over gaining the relevant bit of knowledge. See Lackey (2007) for criticism of Riggs view.

[7] There are also epistemic accounts of luck. Epistemic accounts suggest the luck is not a feature of the world, but rather a feature of our psychology – i.e. luck is determined by whether we perceive events as being lucky or unlucky. For example Stoutenburg argues that "one and the same event can have different probability assignments for different epistemic subjects, and therefore one and the same event can have different luck assignments" (2015 p. 15). Because I am interested in luck and fortune as a feature of events, I will set aside epistemic accounts of luck for the purposes of this paper. For more on epistemic accounts of luck, see Stoutenburg (2015) and Steglich-Petersen (2010).

agent or an ideal agent.[8] After this point of agreement, however, the three accounts diverge.

> *Control accounts* diverge from the others by arguing that lucky events are those events which are both (1) significant and (2) outside of our control.[9] The primary motivation for accepting a control theory of luck is that lucky (and unlucky) events are typically outside the control of the agent involved. To get a handle on this idea, consider the following case:**Knocking Jeff Over**: Jeff is knocked over by Fred. Originally, Jeff is extremely mad at Fred for knocking him over. But then Jeff learns that Fred was shoved into him by Mary, and so Fred was not in control of whether he knocked Jeff over or not. Fred forgives Jeff.

As we can see from the example above, the unlucky event being described – Fred knocking Jeff over – was outside of Fred's control. Control accounts use this feature of seemingly lucky events to create a definition of luck.

Probability accounts focus on a different feature of lucky events. These accounts argue that lucky events are those which are both (1) significant and (2) improbable.[10] Typically, proponents of probability accounts point to a particular paradigm example of luck to motivate their view: winning a fair lottery. When anyone purchases a lottery ticket it is highly improbable that they have purchased the winning ticket. So, when a person eventually wins, their winning was against the odds. Probability accounts focus on this feature of seemingly lucky events to create a definition of luck.

And finally, *modal accounts* argue that lucky events are those which are both (1) significant and (2) modally fragile.[11] Supporters of modal accounts typically argue that a modal theory can give us the correct results in cases like the knocking Jeff over example and the lottery example, while also making better sense of cases like the following:

> **Russian Roulette**: Steve is playing Russian roulette. He has placed a bullet into a single barrel of a six-barrel pistol. He spins the pistol, puts it to his head, and pulls the trigger. The gun clicks. No bullet gets fired. Steve is safe.

[8] Prichard has recently suggested that we should drop the significance condition in favor of a purely modal account of luck. McKinnon (2013) also offers a view that removes the significance condition, arguing in favor of a purely probabilistic account. For the purposes of this paper, it is not important whether we drop the significance condition. So I will leave it in. If you think we should drop the significance condition, it should be easy enough to drop while keeping the remainder of the arguments in this paper intact.

[9] For more on control accounts, see Riggs (2007) and Coffman (2009). For criticisms see Hales (2020, 2019) and Lackey (2007, 2008).

[10] For more on probability accounts, see Rescher (2014) and McKinnon (2013). For criticisms see Hales (2020).

[11] For more on modal accounts, see Prichard (2014) and Carter & Peterson (2016). For criticisms see Lackey (2008) and Hales (2020). For a hybrid view that combines a modal account and a control account see Levy (2009).

In this case, we are inclined to say that Steve was lucky to have survived. However, it was highly probable that Steve would survive (83.33% likelihood of survival), so probability theory would seem to get the wrong result.[12] The modal theorist will suggest that the luck attribution is best explained in terms of modal fragility. That is, there is a nearby possible world where Steve played Russian roulette and did not survive. So, the modal theorist will argue, we should prefer modal accounts of luck to either probability or control accounts.

Each of these accounts has strengths and weaknesses.[13] My goal in this paper is not to argue in favor of a particular account of luck. Rather, I want to canvas the different accounts to help inform our eventual account of fortune. Developing an account of fortune is important for two reasons. First, because it has the potential to save modal accounts and probability accounts from succumbing to counterexample.[14] And second, it can help save the fortune realists from conceding to fortune reductionists. I will go into further detail about the second upshot later. For now, I will focus on the first. Specifically, I will lay out a counterexample offered by Jennifer Lackey and use it as a motivation for developing an account of fortune. The example goes as follows:

> **Buried Treasure**: "Sophie, soon to die, buries a chest of valuables on the northwest corner of an island, a place of deep importance to her, and a place where she hoped roses would sprout in the future. Sometime later, Vincent comes to the island to plant a rosebush in his mother's memory and finds the only suitable location: the place directly above Sophies buried treasure. He begins digging and finds it" (Stoutenburg 2015 paraphrasing Lackey 2008).

In this example, Vincent finding the buried treasure is a modally robust event. He finds the treasure in every nearby possible world. Thus, on a modal account, Vincent finding the buried treasure cannot be a case of luck (Lackey, 2008). Additionally, it seems safe to say that it was highly probable that Vincent would find the buried treasure.[15] For he was on the island to plant rosebushes and there was only one spot on the island where rosebushes could be planted. Given his goals and the options available to him, Vincent finding the buried treasure seems highly likely. Despite all this, it does seem as though finding buried treasure is a lucky event. Lackey even suggests that this is a paradigmatic case of luck (2008). And thus, she seems to have provided a counterexample to both modal accounts and probability accounts of luck. The most

[12] A probability theorist would respond by arguing the significance of this case is so high it skews the results. In other words, the event is lucky not because of the probability condition but because of the significance condition.

[13] For an overview of the weaknesses of each account, see Hales (2020). Hales argues that all three of these theories fails and that we should be eliminativists about luck (and about fortune). See also Lackey (2008) for a criticism of control accounts and modal accounts.

[14] Lackey (2008) also has a counterexample to control accounts of luck. However, I agree with Lackey that control accounts of luck are inaccurate in their depiction of luck. So, I will focus on the counterexample meant to target modal accounts of luck.

[15] Lackey doesn't make this point, but I think it is salient. For if the Buried Treasure case seems to be a counterexample to modal accounts of luck, then it would seem to be a counterexample to probability accounts as well.

common defense offered against this type of counterexample has been to say that Vincent finding the buried treasure was a matter fortune rather than luck.[16] How this response goes, however, will be dependent on the account of fortune provided. There are three primary suggestions for how an account of fortune might go.[17] I will survey each here, describe how they attempt to respond to Lackey, and explain how they each fail to overcome either the counterexample or an additional problem called *the challenge from ordinary language*.

The notion that luck and fortune are distinct concepts has been defended by Rescher (2014), Levy (2009), and Prichard (2014; 2005). Rescher suggests that fortune "is a matter of what we ourselves make of the opportunities at our disposal" while luck is "a matter of those goods and bads that befall us purely by chance, in a way that is unforeseen, unplanned for, and unexpected—at any rate by the agent herself" (2014, p. 621). This distinction ultimately suggests that luck occurs when good things happen to us by chance, while fortune occurs when we do well with what life has happened to give us.[18] Ultimately, this account of fortune cannot save modal accounts and probability accounts from Lackey's counterexample. This is because Vincent has only found the treasure, he hasn't yet done anything with it. And on Rescher's account, finding the buried treasure is only fortunate if Vincent himself makes something positive of that event.

Alternatively, Prichard argues that fortunate events are best understood as "relatively long-standing and significant aspects of one's life, such as one's good health or financial security" that are outside of our control (2014, p. 13; 2005, p. 144, fn. 15).[19] There are two readings one could take of the *longstanding condition* proposed by Prichard. On the first, 'longstanding' would suggest that fortunate events must satisfy some longstanding and significant desire a person has – such as being financially secure or in good health. In the case of Vincent, then, finding the buried treasure was fortunate because it was an event that was outside of his control and satisfied Vincent's longstanding desire for financial security. This account, however, cannot make sense of mundane cases of fortune, where there was no longstanding desire being satisfied. Consider, for example:

> **Coffee Shop**: Ryan is walking around in a city he has never been to, on his way to a conference. He sees a coffee shop and decides to grab a cup of coffee. After

[16] See for example, Levy (2009) and Prichard (2014).

[17] I call these suggestions because they are primarily quick sketches of what an account of fortune would look like. Of these, Neil Levy's (2009) is the most robustly developed.

[18] My account differs from Rescher's in that on my account events themselves that are fortunate (and people are fortunate when fortunate events happen to them), whereas on Rescher's account it is what people do with how events unfold that makes that person fortunate. On both my account and Rescher's account suggest that control is a relevant factor for fortune.

[19] My account is different from Prichard's because I do not claim that fortune has anything to do with whether events are longstanding or not. The only relevant factors on my account are significance and lack of control. My account also allows that events like winning the lottery are both lucky and fortunate, whereas on Prichard's account events are either fortunate or lucky, not both. I will go into this second point in more detail later in the paper.

> buying the coffee, he takes a long drink and thinks to himself, "it was super fortunate that I passed by that coffee shop."

This seems like a perfectly fine use of the term fortune, even though there was no longstanding desire being satisfied by walking passed the coffee shop.[20] Alternatively, you could read the longstanding condition as applying to the event itself – rather than the satisfaction of a longstanding desire. On this reading Vincent finding the buried treasure was, for a significant period of time, bound to happen. This makes it a longstanding event, which in turn makes the event fortunate. But the case can be revised such that Vincent finding the treasure was not a longstanding event. For example:

> **Buried Treasure Revised**: Sophie buries a chest of valuables on the northwest corner of an island, a place where she hoped roses would sprout. Fifteen minutes after Sophie leaves, Vincent arrives at the location to plant a rosebush in his mother's memory. He chooses that spot because it is the only place on the island suitable for planting rose bushes. He begins digging and finds the treasure.

In this example, the Vincent finding the treasure remains modally robust. But Vincent finding the treasure was not a longstanding event. This is because there was only a fifteen-minute interval when it became modally robust that Vincent would receive it.[21] And so, on either reading of the longstanding condition, Prichard's response to Lackey seems unsatisfying.

The third primary account of fortune in the literature, and the most robustly developed so far, was proposed by Levy. Levy argues that "fortune refers to the non-chancy, and therefore not lucky, effects of luck" (2009, p. 496). Putting this same point slightly differently, "fortunate events are non-lucky events with luck in their proximate causes" (2009, p. 495). On this account of fortune, there are lucky events which cause chancy effects and non-chancy effects. The chancy effects of lucky events are also lucky. The non-chancy effects of lucky events are fortunate.[22] On this account, then, Vincent was fortunate because Sophie burying the treasure in a place that Vincent would find it was a lucky event, but Vincent actually finding the treasure was non-chancy effect of that lucky event (because it happened in all nearby possible worlds). So, Vincent finding the buried treasure was the non-chancy effect of a lucky event – i.e., Vincent finding the buried treasure was a fortunate event

[20] Additionally, this reading fails to explain why Prichard suggests that winning the lottery is not a fortunate event (see 2014, p. 23, fn. 25). After all, winning the lottery satisfies the same longstanding desire that finding buried treasure does – financial security.

[21] To see this point in a slightly different light, you could also devise an example where the event in question was modally robust, but there was still enough chance involved to make it unclear whether the fortunate event would happen or not. For example, consider a raffle that you have 90% chance of winning. You winning the raffle is a modally robust and highly probable event. But it doesn't seem to be a longstanding fact that you will win the raffle (even if you had the tickets for a long time).

[22] My account differs from Levy's in that my account does not require luck to be present at all for an event to count as fortunate. Fortunate events can happen without luck being present as a proximate cause. Additionally, on my account fortunate events can be chancy events. Being chancy is just not a necessary condition for fortune. This differs from Levy's claim that fortunate events are always non-chancy.

on Levy's account. On the face of it, Levy's account seems capable of overcoming Lackey's counterexample. However, it runs into an alternate problem. Stoutenburg (2015) argues that *non-chancy effects* and *chancy effects* of lucky events would be very easy to tell apart. It would be strange if someone was constantly misidentifying these distinct types of effects. And it would also be strange if this misidentification continued even after the distinction was elucidated. If this is correct – and I think that it is – then Levy's explanation does not explain why we would confusedly think that Vincent was lucky when he was merely fortunate.[23]

In the spirit of this problem, Stoutenburg (2015) and Broncano-Berrocal (2015) both independently raised an additional challenge to all fortune realists. That is, they point out that in ordinary language we often use the terms luck and fortune interchangeably without issue. Stoutenburg puts this challenge as follows:

> **Stoutenburg's Challenge From Ordinary Language**: "I doubt there are many, if any, ordinary sentences in English where luck could not be substituted with "fortune" without effecting a semantic change … [This] suggests strong evidence of semantic equivalence, and … defeating that evidence will require some plausible explanation of why we often confusedly attribute luck where we ought to attribute fortune instead" (Stoutenburg 2015, pp. 9–10).

Broncano-Berrocal states the challenge similarly:

> **Broncano-Berrocal's Challenge From Ordinary Language**: Luck and fortune "can be interchangeably used in ordinary discourse without risk of falsity or infelicitousness" (Broncano-Berrocal 2015, p. 15).[24]

For an example of the challenge from ordinary language, consider the following: it seems as though the sentence "Kelly was lucky to win the lottery" could be swapped with "Kelly was fortunate to win the lottery" without any issue. The same can be said for many similar examples. The fortune reductionist suggests that this ability to swap terms is best explained by the terms having the same meaning. The fortune realist, Stoutenburg and Broncano-Berrocal argue, needs to provide an alternative explanation as to why ordinary people often use the terms luck and fortune interchangeably.

As we can see, the challenge from ordinary language raises two burdens for the fortune realist. The first challenge is to describe how luck and fortune are different. The second is to describe how – given those differences – the terms luck and fortune seem to be both commonly mistaken for one another and interchangeably usable.[25] All the accounts so far described pass the first prong of this challenge but fail the second. This is partially because none of the accounts explain why the terms seem interchangeable. But also, each account has additional problems. Rescher's (2014) account doesn't specify how the concepts of fortune and luck are similar enough to

[23] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for clarification on Stoutenburg's argument here.

[24] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for bringing Broncano-Berrocal's version of this argument to my attention.

[25] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for putting these two burdens in clear language.

be mistaken for each other. Prichard's (2014) doesn't explain how we would confuse longstanding events for non-longstanding modally fragile events. And Levy's (2009) account fails because if he is correct then it would be too easy to tell the difference between lucky events and fortunate events.[26] The burden is thus placed on the fortune realist to provide a satisfying argument for how the concepts luck and fortune are distinct. In section three I will provide my own response to the challenge from ordinary language. For now though, my goal is to motivate the notion that fortune realism is a viable position and develop an account of fortune that will help us respond to both Lackey's counterexample and the challenge from ordinary language.

3 Defending Fortune Realism

To get a sense of why the fortune realist would think that the terms luck and fortune do come apart, consider the following cases:

> **Martha's Treasure**: Martha is a hard-working American. She eventually saves up enough to go on vacation with her two children. She takes them all to the Bahamas. Her children really enjoy building sandcastles on the beach. One day Martha is digging a hole in the sand with her children when her shovel hits something solid. It is a chest filled with gold coins.
> **Brad's Inheritance**: Brad is a corporate executive with financial security. Brad's uncle Armond is extremely wealthy. Eventually Armond dies, leaving all his money to his oldest living relative. Brad is Armond's only living relative. Brad's parents died many years ago and he was an only child. So, Brad receives all his uncle's wealth.[27]

When we apply the various theories of luck to these cases, we see that the concepts of luck and fortune do come apart. For example, according to probability accounts Martha was lucky to find the buried treasure because the event was significant and improbable. The chances of Martha finding that treasure were extremely low. In the Inheritance Example, however, the probability theorist will say that Brad was not lucky to receive an inheritance from his uncle. This is because, given the terms of the will, it was extremely likely that Brad would receive the inheritance. In fact – as long as we hold fixed that Brad outlived his uncle – the chances of Brad receiving the inheritance were as near to 100% as you can get. So Martha was lucky but Brad was not lucky. Despite the lack of luck in the Inheritance Example, however, it seems perfectly reasonable to say that Brad was fortunate to receive the inheritance from his uncle. In fact, it seems wrongheaded to say that Brad was not fortunate.

Modal accounts of luck will get the same results. Martha was lucky to find the buried treasure because it was a significant event and in many nearby possible worlds

[26] For more on this criticism of Levy, see Stoutenburg (2015).

[27] I have set up this case such that Brad is already well-off financially. I did this because it strengthens the intuition that Brad is not lucky to have received the inheritance. But it still seems appropriate to say he was fortunate to receive the inheritance. After all, it was still a good thing for Brad that he received that money.

Martha did not find the treasure. Brad was not lucky to receive the inheritance because in all nearby possible worlds Brad received the inheritance money. This is because the inheritance was set to go to the uncles oldest living relative. And since Brad was the uncles only living relative, he was the only person the money could go to. But again, it seems correct to say that Brad was fortunate to receive the inheritance.

Control accounts of luck are the only type of account that gets a different result. According to control accounts, Martha and Brad were both lucky. This is because finding the treasure and receiving the inheritance were both significant events that were outside the relevant agent's control. Martha was not in control of finding the buried treasure. And Brad was not in control of who would receive his uncle's inheritance.

If you think the inheritance example is not an example of luck but is an example of fortune, this gives you a reason to prefer either probability or modal accounts of luck over control accounts. I myself am so inclined. An additional reason to prefer probability or modal accounts of luck over control accounts is that these accounts better capture the intuition that lucky events are events that could have easily not happened. After all, control accounts offer no such requirement.[28] There may be those who don't see a difference between the two cases or don't see the pull of the intuition I mentioned. I have no further argument here. And as such, the remainder of this paper is meant to sketch the implications of your preferred account of luck. I will argue that fortunate events are those that are (1) significant to us, (2) outside of our control. And thus, I will argue that control accounts of luck will be forced into fortune reductionism, while modal accounts and probability accounts will have room to endorse fortune realism.

4 A Theory of Fortune

So, according to two of the dominant theories of luck an event can be fortunate but not lucky. But what makes an event fortunate rather than lucky? As stated earlier, both fortunate events and lucky events are significant. Just as it would be strange to say that a person was lucky to have a lawn made up of exactly 176,005 blades of grass, it would be equally strange to say a person was fortunate (or unfortunate) to have a lawn made up of exactly 176,005 blades of grass. It simply doesn't matter how many blades of grass are growing in a person's lawn. And we typically only say an event is lucky or fortunate if it matters to an agent.[29] This is a good start to developing a theory of fortune. For we now know that fortunate events are significant.

Another feature of fortunate events is that they are outside of our control. Here I will provide two reasons to think this. First, the fact that control accounts of luck cannot seem to be able to distinguish between the treasure case and the inheritance case provides us with reason to think fortune has something to do with control. To see why, reconsider the Martha's Treasure and Brad's Inheritance examples. According

[28] As you can see from the Inheritance Example or Lackey's Buried Treasure Example. These events were bound to happen, but on a control account of luck they would still come out as lucky.

[29] As mentioned earlier you could opt for either a real agent or idealized agent, depending on your preference and reasons.

to probability and modal accounts, Martha is lucky and Brad is fortunate. In other words, there is some feature of either luck or fortune which helps us distinguish fortunate events from lucky events. According to control accounts, however, there is no such distinguishing feature. Brad is just as lucky as Martha because neither Brad nor Martha had sufficient control. This points to lack of control being the feature we care about in the Brad case. We think Brad was fortunate to receive the money because it was significant and something he was not in control of.

The second reason to think that fortunate events are those events that they are outside of our control is that where skill and control go, fortune usually seems to perish. To see this in action, consider the following example:

> **Jerome's Painting**: Jerome graduated from art school a few years ago. He has spent thousands of hours practicing painting. He goes into his studio to paint a portrait for a client. The portrait comes out exquisitely, and the client is very pleased.

In this example Jerome is a skilled painter. As such, it would be misguided – insulting, even – to say that he was fortunate to have created a good portrait.[30] It was because of his skill – the controlled exercise of his talent and training – that he produced the painting he did. Even if Jerome himself were to say that he was fortunate to have created the painting, we would understand that as Jerome simply being humble. If, however, we found out Jerome was not sufficiently in control of whether the painting turned out well or not, we would be more likely to attribute good fortune to the resulting artwork. So, for an event to be fortunate, two necessary conditions must be met: (1) significance and (2) lack of control.

There are two objections one might raise to the account I have just laid out. First, it seems plausible that there are significant events that we have control over that can appropriately be called fortunate. For example, after buying a good cup of coffee, you might say "I am fortunate to be enjoying this cup of coffee." The problem here can be put as follows: buying the cup of coffee is in your control and yet enjoying that cup of coffee can still be fortunate.[31] Here the best explanation is that there are two events being described. The first is buying a cup of coffee. That event is usually in your control and thus is usually not a fortunate event. I say 'usually' here because there could be circumstances under which buying the cup of coffee is not under your control. For example, buying the cup of coffee is only under your control if your payment method – say, your debit card – has no issues. Whether or not your debit card has issues is not usually under your control. This makes it possible for buying the cup of coffee to not be under your control if the card was not working.[32] My account gets the right result in cases like this, as we would say it was *unfortunate* that your debit

[30] This point can also be made for luck as well. If someone has achieved something through the exercise of skill, it would be wrong to say that they were merely lucky to have achieved what they did. This is a non-controversial thing to say in the luck debates. And it can be explained on a probability or modal account of luck by saying that when control is exercised, it often increases the probability or modal robustness of an event. For more on that point, see Hales (2019). Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

[31] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection and providing the example.

[32] Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

card didn't work and that you couldn't buy the cup of coffee. Despite possibilities like these, we usually consider buying a cup of coffee to be under your control. And thus, we usually wouldn't call buying a cup of coffee a fortunate thing.

The second event here is being able to sit back and enjoy the cup of coffee you just bought. This event is often dependent on many factors outside of your control – most notably, it is out of your control whether the barista made your coffee well or not. Other examples include the coffee beans not being to your taste, the coffee shop environment being unpleasant, receiving an emergency call from work that required you to go into the office rather than sit enjoy the coffee, and so on. By saying that you are fortunate to enjoy the cup of coffee, you are really saying that it is good that life unfolded in such a way that you can sit in a cozy coffee shop sipping a well-made cup of Joe. And that truly is a fortunate thing. As with the first event, however, there could be circumstances that break this mold. Specifically, there may be circumstances where you actively take control of whether you enjoy the cup of coffee or not. For example, you could force yourself to drink coffee until you acquire a taste for it, or you could distract yourself from the unpleasant environment with funny videos or go to a different coffee shop altogether.[33] Alternatively, you could spend months scoping out the best coffee shop in town and always go there because you know the coffee is good and the environment is too your taste. These would all be examples of you taking control of your enjoyment of the cup of coffee. And thus, in these cases enjoying the cup of coffee would no longer be fortunate. Rather, you would be making it the case that you enjoyed the cup of coffee. Interestingly, enjoying a cup of coffee turns out to be another example of an (often) fortunate event that (in many cases) isn't lucky. This again seems intuitively correct. The broader lesson here is that fortune ascriptions require us to locate the event that is fortunate and distinguish it from the surrounding events which are not.[34]

The second objection one might raise is to suggest that control should be analyzed in terms of probability or modality (see Hales 2019).[35] For example, by pulling out your camera and taking a photograph, you make it much more probable and modally robust that a photograph will be taken. If this analysis can be applied to all events, then the distinction between fortune and probability or modal accounts of luck would ultimately collapse, leading once again to fortune reductionism. However, while I agree that exercising control often makes an event more probable and modally robust, this view cannot make sense of cases like Brad's Inheritance or Lackey's Buried Treasure. In fact, if control were merely a matter of probability or modal considerations, then these two examples would be unexplainable. For in both cases it was highly probable and modally robust that the relevant agent will receive a large amount of wealth, but it was outside of the agents control whether they received that wealth or not. Thus, control does not appear to always be reducible to probability or modal considerations – even if higher levels of control often correspond to or directly cause higher probabilities and modal robustness.

[33] Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for making this point and offering these examples.

[34] This is a structurally similar argument to the one made by Levy (2009), although it is different because Levy and I have different notions of what it means for an event to be fortunate.

[35] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection.

So, fortunate event must be (1) significant and (2) outside of the relevant agent's control. As mentioned in section one, at least two of the other accounts of fortune have noticed this connection as well. The account I have laid out is distinct from those accounts for two primary reasons. First, because my account only factors in significance and lack of control – no other considerations. Thus, if you know an event is significant and outside of the relevant agent's control, then you know the event was fortunate (or unfortunate). And second, because my account allows that many events can be *both* lucky and fortunate. The three other accounts try to make lucky events and fortunate events mutually exclusive – or, at least, largely exclusive. For example, on my account winning the lottery is both lucky and fortunate. For winning the lottery is both lucky (in both the probabilistic and modal sense) and outside of the relevant agent's control (i.e., fortunate). However, if we were to make the same analysis on the other accounts described, we would find that winning the lottery was only a matter of luck, not fortune. On both Rescher's (2014) and Levy's (2009) accounts this is because lucky events are chancy whereas fortunate events are non-chancy. On Prichard's account this is because winning the lottery is not a longstanding event. Prichard himself says of this case:

> **Prichard on Winning the Lottery**: "Winning a fortune is not the same as being fortunate, however, and once we keep this distinction in mind then the temptation to think of particular lucky events — even those involving large financial gains [e.g. winning the lottery] — in terms of the language of fortune subsides. For example, we are not tempted to describe a lottery win that results not in a financial gain but in some other benefit – say, to have a prominent building named after one — in terms of the language of fortune" (Prichard 2014, p. 23, fn. 25).

I disagree with this sentiment. Intuitively, winning the lottery is fortunate (whether the prize is money or getting your name on a building). My account can accommodate this intuition, because winning the lottery is significant and outside of your control. Thus, my account is the only one that yields the result that winning the lottery is both lucky and fortunate – which is intuitively the correct result. It is because of these two major differences that my account of fortune can handle both the challenge from ordinary language and Lackey's counterexample better than previous accounts. I will explain more on these points in the remainder of this paper. Because my account of fortune lacks the additional conditions that other control-style accounts try to place on fortune, I will call it the Pure Control Account of Fortune. It goes as follows:

> **Pure Control Account of Fortune**: fortunate events are those events that are (1) significant and (2) outside of the relevant agent's control.

According to the Pure Control Account of Fortune, control theorists about luck will just concede to fortune reductionism. Thus, they will say that we use the terms luck and fortune interchangeably because they have the same meaning. They will also simply concede to both the challenge from ordinary language and Lackey's counterexample. Probability and modal accounts of luck, however, can provide a more inter-

esting response to these challenges. They can respond to the challenge from ordinary language with what I will call the overlap response. And they can say that Vincent was not lucky but merely fortunate to find the buried treasure. This is because Vincent finding the buried treasure was both highly probable and modally robust but was also out of his control. I will discuss each of these responses in order.

Remember, the challenge from ordinary language places two burdens on fortune realists. First, the fortune realist must explain how luck and fortune are different. That has been my project so far. I have suggested that luck is best understood in terms of either low probability or modal fragility. Then I argued that fortune was best understood as significant events that are outside of our control. Thus, luck and fortune are distinct. The second challenge is to describe how – given that difference – the terms luck and fortune seem to be both commonly mistaken for one another and (at least very often) interchangeably usable. That is my project here. I call my response to this second burden the overlap response.

> **Overlap Response**: We often confuse luck and fortune and use the terms interchangeably because (1) events can be both lucky and fortunate; (2) events that are both lucky and fortunate are extremely widespread (however, as we have seen, there are events where the two concepts come apart); and (3) some of the implications of both terms are similar. Particularly, statements about luck and fortune will have similar implications about significance, the goodness (or badness) of the events in question, and both will imply that we should pause before ascribing credit to the person involved.

The overlap response offers an explanation as to why ordinary people often confuse these types of events and use the terms interchangeably.[36] It is not because the two terms have the same meaning, as the fortune reductionist would claim. Instead, it happens for three reasons. First, events can be both lucky and fortunate. Because of this, people can properly ascribe both the terms luck and fortunate to some events. Consider the lottery example again. People can say "Kelly was lucky to win the lottery" and "Kelly was fortunate to win the lottery" and both statements will be true according to probability and modal accounts of luck and my proposed theory of fortune. This provides my account with a direct response to Broncano-Berrocal's point that luck and fortune "can be interchangeably used in ordinary discourse without risk of falsity" (2015, p. 15). That is, Broncano-Berrocal is correct – most of the time. However, as we have seen there are cases – like Lackey's buried treasure case and my Brad's inheritance case – where interchanging luck and fortune will result in a false claim.[37]

Second, there are many cases where this overlap happens. Winning a game of Russian Roulette is both lucky and fortunate. As is winning at a slot machine, winning a coin toss, randomly stumbling upon a large sum of money, surviving a long fall with your limbs intact, receiving a lot of your favorite candy while trick-or-treating, find-

[36] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to clarify this response.

[37] Unless a control account of luck is correct.

ing the love of your life on a crowded subway, and so on. There are, in fact, probably millions of cases where this overlap occurs.

Not only can luck and fortune both be properly attributed to many events, but both luck and fortune ascriptions will have overlapping conversational implications. In the lottery case, both the statement "Kelly was lucky to win" and the statement "Kelly was fortunate to win" imply that something significant happened to Kelly.[38] Both statements also imply that something good happened to Kelly.[39] And finally both statements also imply that the recipient of the luck or fortune probably shouldn't take credit for the event. This is because typically both lucky and fortunate events are not the types of events that someone deserves credit for. For example, people cannot take credit when they win a fair lottery. However, this is not a necessary condition for either luck or fortune.[40] Merely a conversational implication that comes with both terms.

Because of these three reasons we can develop an explanation as to why luck and fortune are often used interchangeably in our vocabulary, even though they apply to distinct sets of events. The explanation goes as follows: we often use the terms luck and fortune interchangeably because the truth values and conversational implications of luck and fortune ascriptions will be the same (or at least very similar) in millions of cases. This explains both why we have trouble psychologically distinguishing between luck and fortune and why we often use the terms interchangeably. Because we haven't needed to be very precise with these concepts so many times in our past. If we use either the term luck or fortune to describe events like winning the lottery, people get the point. However, as we have seen, there are fringe cases – such as Lackey's Buried Treasure and my Brad's Inheritance example – where we can see that the concepts do in fact meaningfully come apart. Identifying these cases is one of the reasons why having a robust theories of both luck and fortune is tremendously helpful.

So, if my account of fortune is correct then the fortune realist has a response to the challenge from ordinary language. The second upshot of my account is that it can help probability and modal accounts of luck respond to Lackey's Vincent counterexample. Recall, the counterexample:

> **BURIED TREASURE**: "Sophie, soon to die buries a chest of valuables on the northwest corner of an island, a place of deep importance to her, and a place where she hoped roses would sprout in the future. Sometime later, Vincent comes to the island to plant a rosebush in his mother's memory, and finds the only suitable location: the place directly above Sophies buried treasure. He begins digging and finds it" (Stoutenburg 2015 paraphrasing Lackey 2008).

[38] Being significant is a necessary condition for both, after all.

[39] Inversely, if we were to say that some event was either unfortunate or unlucky, we would understand that the event in question was bad for the person involved.

[40] This is because there are events that break the mold. Think, for example, of a late game half-court shot in basketball. This event was lucky but the person who made the shot still seems to deserve some amount of credit. The same can be said for a Miracle on Ice situation, where the odds are stacked against you but despite those odds you succeed.

This example shows that an apparently paradigmatic case of luck is both modally robust and highly probable. And thus, it seems as though probability and modal accounts of luck cannot be correct. From here, you might be tempted to endorse a control account of luck. Lackey, however, would be dissatisfied with that result, for she has offered a different counterexample to control theories of luck as well (2008).[41] So, if Lackey's counterexamples are both good, then all three of our dominant theories of luck are incorrect.

Rather than give up on all three of these accounts of luck altogether, I think we should use the account of fortune developed above to provide a rescue plan. Here, the first important thing to remember is that it is difficult to tell luck and fortune apart. This often leads to luck attributions where fortune attributions would be more appropriate, and vice versa. So, while it may seem obvious at first that Vincent was lucky to find buried treasure, it may be that Vincent is simply fortunate to find the buried treasure. This explanation has been given before.[42] But since we didn't previously have an account of fortune that could adequately deal with the challenge from ordinary language, the bite of such a suggestion was weaker. Now that we have developed such an account of fortune, however, this criticism of Lackey's counterexample becomes more relevant. For the fortune realist can agree that Vincent appears lucky but argue that the overlap between lucky and fortunate events calls that appearance into question. Additionally, the fortune realist will know that upon applying either probability or modal theories of luck we will find that Vincent was not lucky after all. This is because Vincent finding the treasure was both a highly probable and a modally robust event. Finally, upon applying the pure control theory of fortune we find that Vincent was fortunate. For Vincent finding the treasure was a significant event that he did not have control over. Thus, even though we are liable to say Vincent was lucky – because luck and fortune overlap so often – he was in fact simply fortunate all along.

One might be worried that the ability to cut a single event into multiple events – as I did with the buying and enjoying a cup of coffee example earlier – may throw a wrench into this response. For example, you might try to isolate the digging part of the Vincent example as being a distinct event. If you do, then it might seem that for any instance of digging finding buried treasure would be improbable and modally fragile. Thus, by isolating the digging event in the Vincent example you could generate the intuition that Vincent finding the buried treasure was improbable, modally fragile, and outside of his control. This could once again lead someone to endorse fortune reductionism. However, this example of cutting an event into distinct events is not analogous to what I did in the buying and enjoying coffee example. This is

[41] Lackey's counter example to control theories of luck goes as follows: "Ramona is a demolition worker, about to press a button that will blow up an old abandoned warehouse, thereby completing a project that she and her co-workers have been working on for several weeks. Unbeknownst to her, however, a mouse had chewed through the relevant wires in the construction office an hour earlier, severing the connection between the button and the explosives. But as Ramona is about to press the button, her coworker hangs his jacket on a nail in the precise location of the severed wires, which radically deviates from his usual routine of hanging his clothes in the office closet. As it happens, the hanger on which the jacket is hanging is made of metal, and it enables the electrical current to pass through the damaged wires just as Ramona presses the button and demolishes the warehouse" (Lackey 2009, p. 258).

[42] See Levy (2009) and Prichard (2014).

because this method of cutting the event up leaves out relevant details which fundamentally change the example. To see how, consider the following case:

> **Farmers Market**: Sally and John are co-workers in the town of Sunnyvale. Sally urgently needs to talk with John about work but doesn't have his contact information. As it is a Saturday, she will not be able to talk with John at the office either. Additionally, Sally discovers that she needs carrots and decides to go to her local Farmers Market to buy them. Unbeknownst to her, John has spent every Saturday for the last five years at this Farmers Market and is there today. As it is a small farmers market Sally bumps into John. She is happy that she can talk with him about her problem at work.[43]

This case helps highlight that there are details of every case that are important to our luck and fortune assessments that, if omitted, fundamentally change how we ought to make luck and fortune attributions.[44] For example, it was very important that Sally decided to go to the Farmers Market rather than to just any old grocery store. For if the example had merely stated that Sally decided to go to any old grocery store to buy carrots then Sally running into John would become improbable and modally fragile. But the fact that she decided to go to the Farmers Market made it probable and modally robust that she would run into John. It is the fact that she goes to the farmers market that determines the probability and modal robustness of the later event. Similarly, if we were to say that for any random place that Vincent dug it would be improbable and modally fragile for him to find treasure, then that statement would be true. But it would fundamentally change the example. For Vincent wasn't digging in any old place – he was digging in the only place available too him. That is the fact that determines the probability and modal fragility of the event in question.

This is all to say that cutting a single event into multiple events is fine, but only if you keep the relevant information intact. In the buying and enjoying coffee example I cut a single event into two events, but I didn't omit any relevant information that would drastically change the example. In fact, I suggested that adding or removing information – such as whether your debit card was working or not – should change our fortune assessments about buying the coffee (the same would go for luck assessments). If we abide by this limitation and keep the information that Vincent could only dig in one location intact, then it turns out that Vincent was not lucky – but was fortunate – to find the treasure. For given that Vincent could only dig in one place, his finding the treasure was a modally robust and highly probable event. But it was an event that was not in his control.

[43] Thank you to Julia Staffel for providing this case.

[44] This case also highlights an additional reason we often confuse luck and fortune. That is, our epistemic limitations in determining the odds (or modal fragility) of an events occurrence – in many cases – most likely contributes to our confusion. After all, it would appear to Sally that the odds of bumping into John were very low. However, if she were to learn that John had been at the market every Saturday for the last five years, she would likely reassess the odds. With that shift in belief about the odds there ought to be a shift in her assessment of whether she was lucky to bump into John or not. However, it would still be appropriate for her to say she was fortunate to bumped into him – as she needed to speak with him and bumping into him was outside of her control.

5 Conclusion

I began this paper with an overview of the three most popular accounts of luck: control accounts, probability accounts, and modal accounts. Next, I highlighted Lackey's potential counterexample to probability and modal accounts of luck and suggested that this counterexample might be overcome if we had a well explicated theory of fortune. I then showed that existing notions of fortune failed to provide an adequate solution either to Lackey's counterexample or the challenge from ordinary language. After introducing these challenges, I provided an example which motivated the idea that luck and fortune can be applied to distinct sets of events. I then argued for what I called the Pure Control Theory of Fortune, which states that fortunate events are those events which are (1) significant, (2) outside of our control. This account of fortune forces control theorists about luck to be fortune reductionists, but it allows probability and modal theorists to remain fortune realists by providing a response to the challenge from ordinary language. I called this response the overlap response. A second upshot of this account of fortune is that it gives probability and modal theorists about luck a satisfying response to Lackey's Buried Treasure counterexample. Finally, this definition also allows for there to be plenty of cases where fortunate events are not lucky, thus allowing for fortune realism to be a worthwhile philosophical position.[45]

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[45] Lackey's Buried Treasure, Brad's Inheritance, and the Farmers Market examples being just three of these.

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