

Implicit Attitudes' Challenge to Moral Responsibility

SARAH SONGHORIAN

Abstract: In the last decades, the body of empirical research showing that a significant amount of human behavior is not guided by the agent's explicit intention has been growing enormously, constituting at the same time an intriguing and morally troubling picture. The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between empirical data on implicit attitudes on the one side, and moral responsibility on the other. The guiding question will be whether human beings can be deemed responsible either for letting implicit attitudes play a guiding role in motivating behaviors and speech acts, or for having such attitudes per se (or for both). The paper will explore a way of reconciling our social practice of attributing moral responsibility and implicit attitudes, hopefully steering clear of the symmetrical risks of overextending moral responsibility or claiming that human beings are never to be deemed morally responsible for their actions.

Keywords: Implicit attitudes, Moral responsibility, Argument from awareness, Argument from control.

notizie di POLITEIA, XXXIV, 131, 2018. ISSN 1128-2401 pp. 73-88