

Author: Stefan Lukits

Title: Moral Necessity and the Implementation of Modernity

Affiliation: University of Toronto

Address:

20 22nd Avenue East

Vancouver BC V5V 1T4

sediomyle@gmail.com (for correspondence)

st.lukits@utoronto.ca (institutional email address for publication)

(604) 321-3440

ORCID: 0000-0002-5086-120X

Abstract:

Analytic and continental philosophy follow research programs with respect to moral responsibility that are sometimes perceived to be incommensurable. An analytic philosopher, P.F. Strawson, presents a view of moral responsibility that underlines how essential ordinary moral reactive attitudes are to a meaningful human existence that is not threatened to collapse into a dystopian objectivity. This view challenges the mainstream discourse in analytic philosophy where reactive attitudes are sometimes seen to be derivative of more abstract metaphysical theories, such as determinism. This paper articulates a criticism of Strawson's argument from thinkers who are clearly in the continental milieu, but who use for their account of moral responsibility concepts more usually traded in analytic philosophy. Moral responsibility, in their view, is constitutively linked to accounts of rationality and an assessment of the agent's epistemological possibilities. They (my primary representatives of this view are Kafka and Foucault) fit into the category of Strawson's pessimists, but for reasons that significantly extend the debate and demonstrate how fruitful it can be to view moral philosophy in an exchange of ideas between analytic and continental philosophy.

Keywords:

Franz Kafka; Michel Foucault; P.F. Strawson; freedom and resentment; reactive attitudes; free will; determinism; modernity; moral responsibility; contingency; analytic and continental philosophy; Friedrich Nietzsche; genealogy; ethical intuition; ethical intuitionism