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Affect and Moral Judgment: An Empirical Perspective

Abstract: Out of their zeal to solve the antediluvian debate between reason and emotion, a group of philosophers have recently started to give much coverage to the role of affect, if there is any, in manipulating our moral judgment, drawing upon and themselves conducting folkpsychological research in the area of moral reasoning. Some of them are acclaimed Sentimentalists. But there are philosophers like Shaun Nichols who are on the lookout of some wherewithal to bridge the gap between reason and emotion. They contend that affect is a prime factor that enables us to distinguish moral norm violations from non-moral violations.

Moreover, affect almost imperceptibly shapes the cultural viability of not just moral norms but also non-moral norms that engender abhorrence, if transgressed. The paper aims to capture some of their arguments in support of the hypothesis that affect shapes our ability to make moral appraisal.

Keywords: Affect, Moral Norm Violation, Conventional Norm Violation, Core Moral Judgment, Sentimental Rules.