

Aristotle's Notion of Akratic Action through the Prism of Moral Psychology

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Abstract : Actions are generally evaluated from moral point of view. Either the action is praised or condemned, but in all cases it involves the agent who performs it. The agent is held morally responsible for bringing out an action. This paper is an attempt to explore the Aristotle's notion of action and its relation with moral development in response to modern philosophical moral psychology. Particularly, the distinction between voluntary, involuntary, and non-voluntary action in the Nicomachean Ethics with some basic problems from the perspective of moral psychology: the role of choice, moral responsibility, desire, and akrasia for an action. How to do a morally right action? Is there any role of virtue, character to do a moral action? These problems are analyzed and interpreted in order to show that the Aristotelian theory of action significantly contributes to the philosophical study of moral psychology. In this connection, the paper juxtaposes Aristotle's theory of action with response from David Charles, John R. Searle's, and Alfred Mele theorization of action in the mechanism of human moral behaviours. To achieve this addressed problem, we consider, how the recent moral philosophical moral psychology research can shed light on Aristotle's ethics by focusing on theory of action. In this connection, we argue that the desire is the only responsible for the akratic action. According to Aristotle, desire is primary source of action and it is the starting point of action and also the endpoint of an action. Therefore we are trying to see how desire can make a person incontinent and motivate to do such irrational actions. Is there any causes which we can say such actions are right or wrong? To measure an action we have need to see the consequences such act. Thus, we discuss the relationship between akrasia and action from the perspective of contemporary moral psychologists and philosophers whose are currently working on it.

Keywords : action, desire, moral psychology, Aristotle

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