JOHN DORIS' CRITIQUE ON ARISTOTLE'S CHARACTER FORMATION

MANIK KONCH

Introduction

Aristotle's notion of habit and its role in the formation of moral character is very popularly known in the history of virtue ethics. The habitual action is not only undertaken on a regular basis but is also is personalized, which has moral significance when we evaluate action and personality. For Aristotle, a moral character could be developed by inculcating virtues through habitual action. There are two ways to interpret this Aristotelian theoretical position; namely the naturalistic or behaviouristic perspective and the non-naturalistic perspective. The naturalistic thesis maintains that habit and character formation are inherently present in the form of disposition in human beings and could be causally related to the neuro-physiological function of the brain process. On the other hand, the non-naturalistic thesis upholds a teleological account of the formation of moral character, which is grounded on the power of will. John Doris, on the other hand, vehemently rejected Aristotle's notion of moral character formation. Doris claims that there is inconsistency in the exhibition of moral character, and that is nothing but an evidence of *lack character*. This paper aims to explicate and examine the John Doris notion of moral character, juxtaposed with the situationists' conception of moral character, rather than explain the Aristotelian notion of character formation. Further, the Aristotelian notion of moral character is juxtaposed with the situationist conception of moral character. This juxtaposition shows that situationists' notion of moral character fails to explain the moral significance of character, particularly Doris' notion of local traits in contrast to traditional global traits. The paper is divided into four

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major sections excluding introduction and conclusion. The first section, implicitly illustrates the Aristotelian notion of character formation through habitual action and his teleological act of willpower, which is also known as non-naturalistic thesis of character formation (2018). The second section discusses the naturalistic interpretation is explicated with reference to the notion of instinct and other behaviouristic viewpoints on the explanation of habitual behavior. This behaviouristic account though scientific in its enterprise, seems to provide a narrow conception of habits; especially pertaining to the relationship between habit and moral character. In the third section, the paper explicitly discusses Doris' critical account of the Aristotelian notion of global character traits and its responses where Doris' vehemently rejects Aristotle's non-naturalistic notions of moral character formation and claims that there is inconsistency in the exhibition of moral character, and that is nothing but an evidence of *lack character*. Fourth section of the paper, Julia Annas (2011) defends the Aristotelian notion of moral character is juxtaposed with the situationists' conception of moral character, which shows that situationists' notion of moral character fails to explain the moral significance of character, particularly Doris' notion of local traits in contrast to traditional global traits. In the conclusion, I will discuss the relationship between virtues and moral habits that form a moral character from an Aristotelian perspective and suggest how act of willpower can be of help to inculcate good character which is wrongly overlooked in the behaviorist theorists.

I

Understanding the usefulness of habit with reference to the neuro-physiological functions of the brain processes though is a scientific account still it provides a *narrow* description of habit. The epistemic concern of scientific explanation results in making an objective claim about the nature of habits. Nevertheless, this epistemology of habit does not involve the intentional, reflective attitude of the agency that could intervene in the very process of performing a habitual action and also the teleological articulation of the virtue of inculcating moral habits in human life. This unfolds a *wider* meaning of the notion of habit. For example, in cricket, some batsman holds the bat in their left hand

and some use their right hand. In this case, no conscious choice is made; it might be a spontaneous act to hold the bat in right hand, rather than in the left hand, depending on how only is aptly conducting the act. That is, one is naturally disposed to act in a particular way. And, gradually one becomes habituated to hold the bat perfectly while bating. This is due to the kind of habituation that the person has undergone. Corresponding to this, there is a psychophysical correlation which not only shows the neurological simulation but also is definedin terms of habitual memory. Henri Bergson took this as the model when he described habit as somatic (Malikail 2003). To describe a habitual action as spontaneous action diminishes the force of the *voluntary action.* It gives an impression that such an expression of habitual action is just an instinctive. The instinctive reactions are *unconscious* (Knight1922:88) and in that sense mechanical action. To do something *mechanically* implies an absence of reference to the *freedom of will* and the *purpose* of performing. The notion of *will* and *purpose* are intrinsically associated with the notion of agency. They help in explaining the moral attitude of the agent.

As we mentioned about the notion of *holding*, the normative teleological dimension of the habit of holding could be further illustrated with reference to a batsman's holding of the bat while playing cricket. For instance, a batsman in cricket does hold the bat in a particular way where the holding position is very important. Little change in the manner of holding would affect his ways of playing the desirable stroke. The habit of holding bat cannot be merely spontaneous or *unconscious act*. Had it been always so, a batsman could have retained his form on a regular basis. Seeing the frequent change in their form of batting it is noticed that many times the batsman fails to retain the habitual action. As it is desirable to maintain the form, there is a scope for freedom of exercising the *will* to improve upon habitual action. In this connection, the batsman should reflectively cultivate the habit of holding the bat in the right position as it is one of the key determinants of the loss and gain in the *form* of batting. Thus, holding the bat during the practice sessions are to be reflectively carried out so that while playing the real matches the purposive character of habit is exhibited. Such is not a mechanical

expression of batting. Rather, a cricketer inculcates the habit *consciously* or willfully in order to improve upon his skill of batting. Thus, the notion of habitual action is not merely about the bodily processes but also has to do with choice and effort. This form of developing habit thus involves normative and teleological elements which are reflected in the behaviour of the agent. The agential control, in the case of a batsman, over performing and regulating his stroke shows the capacity of direct intervention. By 'act of will one can intervene and can stop oneself from exercising a given habit' (Pollard 2006:59). On the contrary, suppose that one has the habit of drinking shows how one is addicted to alcohol. To refrain from this habit or at least put some sincere effort to bring to an end of regular drinking is an indication of the act of *will*. As an agent, one has the responsibility to overcome the addictive attitude by rationalizing and understanding this fact that such habit is not *good* for health as *wellbeing* is essential for life. Aristotle construes this attitude is the attitude of will that exhibits courage – moral strength in performing an action that brings *wellbeing*. It is in this connection, "virtuous deeds are a determination of good will. So far as the development of moral character is concerned this strength is derived from the virtue of willpower"(Roberts 1998:228).

The lack of intervention and control over one's own habitual action may lead to unhappiness situation. Particularly, when someone is a victim of addiction or certain compulsion he/she loses moral willpower or authority. The power of will shows 'the possibility of doing otherwise where one retains one individuality or authority. The agent is an author of his/her actions which are intended, planned, and deliberated which shows the intellectual ability. Many times, the agent is inclined to do something, but that may not have a good consequence to ones' life. In this regard, habitual actions *ought to* be connected with the *telos* of life. One must act consistently in order to realize this that his actions are adding up to fulfil the purpose. In this regard, Aristotle emphasizes on a teleological account of understanding the habitual action. It is because the purpose of performing any activities on a regular basis as a habitual action must have moral significance. And the manner in which good habits are pursued shows the way of constituting moral character.

II

The naturalistic account of habits provides a scientific explanation of the source of habits and how habits are causally related to life. In recent times, this is one of the dominant versions of habits delved in neuroscience conceives habits as a routine, very similar to the releasing mechanism that ethnologists employ to analyze instinct (Bernacer and Murillo 2014:4). The main difference between the instinct and habit is that habits are not innate but acquired[1]. Habits refer to certain tendencies which one learns in order to react in a particular way. The reactive pattern of habit similar to the reactive pattern of the instinct, but instinct is basically about the reactive patterns which are mainly about native or inherited tendencies. The manifestation of definite reaction is conditioned by disposition of the structure of nervous system of an organism. The dispositional ability of an organism shows various behavioural patterns. One such ability is about the modification of reaction tendencies that comes through form of learning or acquired. After acquisition, the organism behaves similarly as in the case of instincts: inflexible, automatically and unconsciously. The reaction pattern of instinct is end-directed as a result it appears to be teleological. Here the *telos* of behaviour is construed without taking any 'conscious purpose' into consideration (Kinght 1922:85).

Habits in "contemporary research in psychology show that it is actually people's unthinking routines – or habits – that form the bedrock of everyday life. Without habits, people would be doomed to plan, consciously guide, and monitor every action, from making the first cup of coffee in the morning to sequencing the finger movements in a Chopin piano concerto" (Neal, Wood, and Quinn 2006:198). Most of our daily behaviours are basically habitual actions whether it is about coffee making or using chopstick during eating, as habits, they are developed over a period of daily practice. It

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[1]Aristotle mentioned in *Nicomachean Ethics,* Book II, (1103b20) that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature, - i.e., the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them and are made perfect by habit. See, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, W. D. Ross (trans.). Kitchener: Batoche Book, 1999.

is like *rule-following*; once you learn the rules of addition; one goes on adding all kinds of numbers. Rules become part of life and thus work like bedrock (Wittgenestein 1958). Similarly, habitual actions in that sense are bedrock actions which are unconsciously performed. In other words, habitual actions are performed spontaneously in a situation without any deliberation. The reactions *appear* instinctive. Though it is different, still conceiving the identity relation, Knight Dunlap writes, "All reactions are instinctive: All are acquired. If we consider instinct, we find it to be form and the method of habit formation: If we consider habit, we find it to be the way in which instinct exhibits itself" (Kinght 1922:94). In the analysis of habit and instinct relation, Dunlap's interpretation shows that habitual reactions seem to be instinctive reactions only in terms of its manner. That is, instinctive reactions are unconscious and non-deliberative in nature. On the other hand, habitual reactions are acquired and transformative in nature. Thus, habit is an acquired tendency or pattern of behaviour that is often repeated and is formed by one's own experience or by one's own learning, whereas instinct tends to be similar in nature to habit, but it is acquired naturally without any formal training, instruction or personal experience.

However, it is known to all that human behaviour is a mixture of emotions, patterns, habits and instincts. Many of us must be familiar with habits, but when we are asked to distinguish between habits and instincts, then it becomes little difficult to express the differences. They both are integral parts of behaviour. Humans as well as animals, both tend to possess habits and instincts (Cosmides and Tooby, 1997:3). Habit as generally defined 'a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.' Thus, in simple words, any practice or activity can be termed as habit if it is often repeated. Let us understand with an example stated highlighting the psychological viewpoint. Supposing that *X* visited a Café to have a cup of coffee, for the first time which was located nearby her house, and she liked the coffee very much. Eventually, after her office work, *X* becomes a frequent visitor to that café. This has been part of her routine. Can we call it a habit of sipping the same coffee at the same café? Yes, it is about habit. Now just imagine, one day her (*X*) friend *Y* meets her and tells her to have

a coffee with her in some other café, but *X* is reluctant to go to this other café. Now, you can observe the tendency of a habit; a habit is usually hard to give up. As the old saying goes, 'old habits die hard' which basically means that if the habit was developed a long time back then it is difficult to get over that particular habit and it can change one's behaviours.

Again when we look into instinct, it defines an innate quality of an individual, typically fixed pattern of behaviour in animals in response to certain stimuli' (Mark Hancock,*et al.* 1948).Instinct is a fixed type of behaviour that appears naturally and has not learned by anyone's instructions or previous experiences. For instance, Honeybee comb is a very important source of honey. Honey bees are a perfect example to define the term instinct. Honey bees are neither trained to produce honey, nor do they learnwatching the other bees producing honey. Still, they exhibit this complex pattern of behaviour about manufacturing honeycomb, collecting honey and safely storing it. Each of them is a manifestation of various complex dispositions inherited by this species (Cosmides and Tooby, 1997).The tendencies of the bees are instinctive. They do it naturally having their own means of protection and technique to maintain the optimum temperature inside the comb.

Habit and instinct are similar in nature, but the only difference between them is that both differ in their origin. A habit exhibits the learned type of behaviour, one that has been acquired after undergoing through repetitive encounters of various phases of learning experiences, whereas instinct is related to the naturally inherited type of behaviour. Another important difference between them is that a habit is not innate, i.e., something inborn or inherited from previous generations, whereas instinct is based on the evolving behaviour patterns of the previous generations. A habit can differ from one individual to the other. For example, *X* and *Y* are two brothers; *X* has the habit of rubbing his hands, whereas *Y* has the habit of rubbing his eyes. On the other hand, same instincts tend to be acquired by similar animals. For example, every deer is scared of a tiger and runs to escape from the tiger.

Many psychologists maintain that the habit formation is physical in nature. The basis of this characterization is related to our cognition and emotion which play a greater role in performing cognitive activities, rather than repetition of mere physical acts. The psychological explanation of habit formation is connected with the function of neurons in the brain. Jeanette Kennett is of the opinion that 'moral cognition is causally related to cognitive and affective processes of the brain. Experiments have shown that patients with damage to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and orbito frontal cortex are *adversely* affected by the effective process of learning to develop moral attitude (Kennett& Gerrans 2010). In general terms, on the basis of experimental research in neuroscience, a habit is being defined as a motor or cognitive routine. That is, 'repeated neural representations are built up in basal ganglia during the acquisition of habits. And, with the damage in the different parts of the brain due to neuro-degenerative disorder, it affects not only the procedural memory that helps in developing habits and skill but also the episodic memory' (Jog, et al. 1995:1745). The analysis of habits in terms of neural representation or brain processes are triggered on certain condition which acts like the stimulus and the process is being carried out without conscious supervision (Bernacer and Murillo 2014:1). It shows that as if the entire process is characterized by "unconscious," "rigid," "automatic" and, more importantly, "non-teleological" factors. In other words, developing habits oppose to the goal-directed behaviour(Bernacer and Murillo 2014:1). However, the original and most elegant description of habits, which goes back to Aristotle, defines them as acquired dispositions that improve the agent's performance, making him/her more successful in the quest to achieve a goal and that goal is called happiness or *eudaimonia*.

III

On the contrary to Aristotle's non-naturalistic notion of habit and moral character formation, situationists like John Doris and others[2], who vehemently rejects and critique

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[2] See the books and articles by different situationists and their writings on Aristotle's moral character who has rejected the Aristotelian notion of global or *global character traits* in alternatively they adopted the *local traits*. Philosopher like, Doris, M. John, *Lack of Character*: Personality *and Moral Behavior*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.,Marrit, M. Marriar & Harman, Gilbert, "Character",

his notion of moral character formation. For many technical reasons, we evaluate someone's character or personality. This evaluative process usually assumes that particular behaviour is being necessarily bought by the agent of which he/she is held responsible. The relationship between agent and his action thus holds a substantial relation. A virtuous person, as we have discussed in this chapter, is habituated to perform a good action. The performance of action reveals the character trait of the agent. A virtuous person attracts the attention of others by performing good deeds, while a vicious person repels the attention of good people, but may not fail to attract the attention of some vicious persons. The character is emitted through action that relates the person to the world. However, the character is divided as in character and out of character on the basis of the agent's action performed in different situations. The agent possesses certain natural traits by birth and also by upbringing through the proper inculcation of habits which refers to the notion of in character. For example, honesty could be someone's in character trait. An honest person might develop this trait through the proper inculcation of virtuous action over a period of his/her upbringing. Honesty is a virtue. On the other hand, if the action is performed by the agenton the basis of thesituation, rather than traits that he/she possesses. Here, the mode in which action is brought out by the agent shows that it is out of his character. For example, caring parents sometimes are forced to act dishonestly or compelled to tell a white lie when their children demand to undertake some vicious action. The parents in this situation are forced to neglect their own moral character for the well-being of their children. In a societal setup, often such changes in the character traits are found. Considering this Aristotle had introduced the evaluation of character with regard to their performance of the habitual action and more importantly how the character traits are developed by integrating with the unity of virtue.

According to Aristotle, behavioural reliability of agents with respect to their performance of virtuous action strongly forms the character traits. This conception of a

Handbook of Moral Psychology (edit) John M. Doris, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 355-401, 2010. , Marmodoro, Anna , "Moral Character versus Situations: an Aristotelian contribution to the Debate", *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* Vol. V, No. 2, 2011., Wielenberg, Erik J., "Saving Character," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 461-491, 2006.

traits understood as settled and integrated dispositional feature of the agent in order to have appropriate judgment and appropriate feelings with response to a given situation. In the *Nicomachean Ethics,* he writes:

> It is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor to be practically wise without moral virtue. But in this way we may also refute the dialectical argument whereby it might be contended that the virtues exist in separation from each other; the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another.This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is calledwithout qualification good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues. (1999: 1144b32-1145a2).

A virtuous person is treated as morally wise because s/he performs an action that is morally desirable. And, this performance as we have discussed in the last chapter refers to the notion of practical wisdom. But, moral virtues are necessary for strengthening practical wisdom as well as the moral will of the person. Character of the agent much depends upon these two elements; practical wisdom and moral virtues. A practically wise person tries to integrate virtues while performing anaction which exhibits agent's robust character. This is also termed as global character traits. 'This character speaks about moral virtue and its relationship with choice that the agent makes or considers as something desirable to undertake. The agent's decision here is product of contemplative thinking. Thus, intellectually the agent tries to comprehend the truth in agreement with the desirable action' (Aristotle 1999: 1139-a20-30).

This above realistic conception of Aristotle's moral virtue and character has been criticised by the situationists. The situationists' examine the relevance of agent's physical and psychological well-being taking into account the ethical behaviour. John Doris is one of the well-known situationists[3] along with Marrit M. Marriar and Gilbert

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[3] Situationists referred by John M. Doris in his book *Lack of Character* (2002) such as Walter Michael-Stanford Prison-role, Stanley Milligram-Authority of Obedience, Ross and Nisbett who holds that behavioral differences are due less to individual dispositional differences than to situational ones; that "to a surprising extent," people behave similarly in similar situations; that people "typically" behave without

Harman who argue against the Aristotelian idea of character formation. Doris claims in his book *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (2002) that character-based ethical theories manifest greater 'psychological realism' than their competitors in the context of their discussion of moral psychology maintained by virtue ethicists like Anscombe (1958: 1-15) and Williams (1985:206). Contrary to virtue ethics, Doris and other situationists claim that current character based philosophical approach is skeptical and empirically inadequate (Doris: 2002: 4). This goes against Aristotle's realistic conception of moral character traits – global character traits (globalism) on the basis of various psychological experiments such as Standford Prison-role playing(1973), Stanely Miligram-authority (obedience) (1974), Methews and Cannon (1975), etc. Doris writes:

Four related observations tell against globalism ... (1) Low consistency correlations suggest that behaviour is not typically ordered by robust traits. (2) The determinative impact of unobtrusive situational factors undermines attribution of robust traits. (3) The tenuous relationship found between personality measures and overt behaviour leaves globalist accounts of human functioning empirically under supported. (4) Biographical information often reveals remarkable personal disintegration. Individually, each type of evidence is perhaps only suggestive, butthe collective import is unquestionably awkward for globalism (2002:65).

Firstly, the global character traits reflect consistency between the character of moral agent and his/her behaviours. For Doris, the correlation that gives the impression of such consistency is found to be low. Hence, the global character traits lack a sound ground in order to maintain a robust character trait. Secondly, the robust character trait is also weakened by some of the moral agents who failed to exhibit virtuous character in certain situations. In this connection, Doris is of the opinion that it is difficult to hold a deterministic relationship between moral character and its response to the situational demands. Thirdly, there is lack of empirical support to map the agent's personality. Every person has a private or first-person account of the experience of their own thoughts and feelings which is connected with their character. In this regard, the source of decision

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the consistency required for trait attributions; that evaluatively inconsistent dispositions may co-habit in a single personality. *Lack of Character*: *Personality and Moral Behavior*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

and choice is empirically difficult to measure. The first person account of character is often expressed in autobiography or sometimes reported by the biographers where there is evidence of deviation in character traits. An honest person, for example, at the end of his professional career, is found taking bribe which presents a case of personal disintegration. Sometimes this episode may not be known to the public, but the agent is found to confess them in their own biography. All these points taken together act against the globalism of character trait.

Doris brought up the criticism on the basis of the various experiment that social psychology has conducted taking into account of people's and their responses to certain respective situations. Although the situations demand for performance of virtuous action still ultimately the agents have shown lack of moral character. In this connection, he says, if we accept Aristotle's globalist or prudential character traits, then the experiments result must be in support of Aristotle's proposed thesis on moral character. In other words, if behaviouris typically ordered by global character traits; systematic observation will reveal behavioural consistency (2002: 385). On the contrary, Doris finds that systematic experiment does not reveal the behavioural consistency. And, inconsistency in the exhibition of moral character is nothing but an evidence of lack character.

Doris draws a distinction between character traits into two types, such as global character and local character. Character traits that are developed and shown stable, consistent and integrated character is called global character. This character traits are constitutive of certain traits that are reliably manifested in pertinent cases, "over iterated traits of similar trait-relevant eliciting conditions," but also "across a diversity of trait-relevant eliciting conditions, that may vary widely in their conduciveness to the manifestation of the trait in question" (Doris: 2002: 66). This statement of Doris reflects that a temperament person will act temperately on varying situations: with his/her friends, colleagues or any strangers. On the other hand, local character traits are indexed to the specific kinds of situation in which the agents exhibit trait relevant behaviours such as closed-friend-honesty and good-mood-compassion. Doris writes, "Local traits are likely to be extremely fine-grained; a person might be repeatedly helpful in iterated

trials of the same situation and repeatedly unhelpful in iterated trials of another, surprisingly similar situation." (2002: 65). There is no integral connection between an agent and character traits because we don't have empirical evidence for it; thus, all there is to character aggregation of local traits. That means character traits are not integrated with each other. Therefore, his overall conclusion is that "people typically lack character" (2002: 2).

The central argument on people typically lacks character is based on three dominate conception of global character traits – globalism such as consistency, stability and evaluative integration through which Doris interprets personality as an integrated evaluative association of robust traits. Let's define the following three theses:

i) **Consistency**: The consistency thesis claims that character and personality traits are reliably manifested in trait-relevant behaviour across a diversity of trait-eliciting conditions that may vary widely in their conduciveness to the manifestation of the trait in question (2002:18-20).

ii) **Stability**: The stability thesis claims that character and personality traits are reliably manifested in trait relevant behaviours over iterated trials of similar trait-relevant eliciting conditions (2002: 22).

iii) **Evaluative integration**: The evaluative integration thesis upholds that a given character or personality where the occurrence of a trait with a particular evaluative valence is probabilistically related to the occurrence of other traits with similar valences. (2002: 22)

Doris' argument is primarily against thesis (i) and (iii). The first two claims are about the nature of moral character traits, while the third is a claim about the relationship among traits within a particular individual. Thesis (i) implies that a compassionate person, for instance, will reliably help others in a variety of situations. A compassionate person is one who values the well-being of others, and this virtue will express itself across a variety of morally challenging situations. A person with this kind of virtue will

extend help to others when she has plenty of time and is in a good mood. The same person might not extend help when she is rushed or in a bad mood. Thus, it shows the person lacks consistency in her behaviour. In this regard, Doris claims that lack of consistency would affect the global personality traits as it has been upholding by the consistency thesis. Inconsistent behaviour, for Doris, affects the natural dispositional character trait. Similarly, thesis (iii) suggests a weak version of the unity of the virtue which was endorsed by Socrates and Aristotle. According to Doris, though some virtues are naturally clubbed together, but in their application, these virtues may not be united at all. For instance, compassion and mercy are unified, but it is often also noticed that honest person lack compassion. Hence, it is practically difficult to hold the thesis of integrated character trait on the basis of the unity of virtue.

However, Doris' argument against global character trait, though supported by some empirical experiments, still his concern takes a shift from experimental to ethical inquiry. He argues that global traits of character are not empirically adequate, as most of the Western people possess only local traits of character (2002:67). Conducting a large group of psychological experiment, he advances the idea that most of western human beings are not compassionate. Thus he argues against global traits and says, "if the experimental subjects are globally compassionate, they would have demonstrated helping behavior across a broad range of normal situations, including the normal situation of the experimental setting, in which subjects were not asked to watch the first confederate's belongings" (2009:182). Doris may be only concerned with people belonging to the western civilization, but he accepts local character traits as the means of ethical theorization. In order to strengthen the inquiry of local character traits, he illustrates three central features of character traits held by traditional account of character,[4] such as mentally grounded, dynamic and global. Mentally grounded features

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[4] We are referring here three features of traditional account of character which are adopted by Plato and Aristotle from Socrates, and explain in their different writings which is founded in Plato's *Laches* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* book VI and IX. "Its development and preservation require (a) friendships in which individuals desire the good of others for others' own sakes and (b) political and economic arrangements that promote the conditions under which self-love and friendship flourish". Both Plato and Aristotle believes that excellent moral character involves more than a Socratic understanding of the good.

refer to a character trait where one must possess stable mental features which ought to be grounded on those traits. For instance, a brave person must possess a certain range of beliefs, desire, reasons, willpower, attitudes, and emotions, patterns of deliberation, dispositions, and perceptual sensitivities. Dynamics features of character traits refer to certain features which are appropriate for certain behavioural and attitudinal output. The dynamism is due to character traits that typically enable to possess, flourish, live valuable life in order to live ultimately happy life. Performance of right action is essential as it supports the notion of flourishing life which is articulated through our dynamic engagement with the world. A moral person grows by encountering various challenging situations of life and hence their behaviour has to be dynamic (Upton 2009: 176). Finally, the global feature of character trait holds that certain character traits are global because these kinds of character traits must issue behaviour across the broad range of normal situations. However, the traditional features of character traits are permanently fixed. And the philosophical debate that occurs within this context of the fixed core concerns is due to a variety of distinct and normatively rooted factors. But Doris has initiated additional features over the traditional account of character traits that are about local traits. Local character traits are empirically proven and therefore help in understanding motives of the moral agent. Doris does undermine the significance of global character trait maintained by virtue ethics. The rejection of global character trait thesis has an impact on the notion of unification of virtue as it has been advocated by Aristotle. Thus Doris upholds the thesis of local traits only which is endorsed by social psychological experiment.

In this connection, Candace Upton has provided two supporting arguments in favour of Doris' experimental account on local character traits. According to Upton, local charactertraits deserve to have more substantial argument in order to support the idea of moral character. Upton has given two arguments in support of local traits. "First,

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They think that virtue requires a harmony between cognitive and affective elements of the person. Aristotle tries to explain what this harmony consists in by exploring the psychological foundations of moral character. He thinks that the virtuous person is characterized by a no stereotypical self-love that he understands as a love of the exercise of fully realized rational activity. For that we need self-love.

local traits are necessary for us accurately to morally appraise ourselves and other and, second, local traits are necessary for the concept of justice to retain its normative integrity" (2009: 183). It is necessary for all moral agents to self-knowledge. Unless they know or believe what they can do, it would be difficult to judge their character traits. If a moral agent often aimlessly behaves, then there wouldn't be possible to conceptualize the agent local character traits. The moral agent ought to have integrity in order to perform a just act. The notion of justice demands personal integrity. Individual character traits must be reasonable and independent of empirical situations. And, this is necessary in order to maintain normative stability in moral behaviour.

Doris account of local traits is inadequate to evaluate moral character; this is particularly with reference to the nature and justification of local traits. Virtue ethicists like Candace Upton and Julia Annas have raised criticism against Doris' social psychological approach of local traits. According to Upton, globally courageous agent behaves courageously across a broad range of normal situations. Whereas, Doris believes that someone who is only mountain-climbing-courageous (2009:183) would behave courageously only in that kind of situation; therefore, being courageous is only an evidence of a local exhibition of the courageous trait.

An agent who fails to behave courageously (in the case of mountain-climbing-courage) across a boarder range of kind situations is either the mountaineer is not in right frame of mind or s/he might have been in adverse mental conditions. A close examination of these situations is necessary in order to talk about the nature of global trait which is radically different from Doris thesis on local character trait. As Upton writes, "Doris provides no reason why we should think of mountain-climbing-courage as a normatively-valence character trait at all, rather than merely a disposition to behave, unrelated in any relevant way to the traditionally understood traits of courage. If local traits are not character traits, there is no reason for the virtue ethics to displace or for the virtue ethicist to supplant or their traditional account of character traits" (Upton 2009: 183).

According to Upton, even, Doris does not give any reason to virtue ethicists why does he endorse local character traits. The psychological condition of the agent is not only important to behave morally, but also it helps the agent to deliberate and reason out the action. For example, suppose that S protects herself from her fear of the intimacy of close relationships by lying to friends and family, while she is consistently honest with strangers and acquaintances' (2009:183). In this case, S's fear represents her psychological state; where she is not truthful because she believes that by being truthful to her parents and friends she might lose her intimacy with the partners. The fear is the cause of S's dishonesty. On the other hand, S has been consistent in her honest attitudes with strangers and acquaintances. This ambivalence in character trait is grounded in the psychological state of S. Virtue does not govern the character trait. To be honest, one must be truthful primarily to his/her with friends and family members. Doris while claiming the thesis on local traits has not considered this aspect of the virtuous life of the agent.

Can empirical adequacy threaten the normative function of virtue ethics? According to Doris, the answer is affirmative, because it describes some of the general facts about the normative condition of human life. For Doris, traits are the normative status of the common individuals. The change in the empirical situation need not necessarily affect the normative status of a person. Therefore, Upton claims that Doris' notion of local traits would be empirically and normatively outdated. If the empirical situation prevents normativity, then it would also prevent the notion of the local trait. Hence, Doris seems to Upton only a fair-weather-friend of local traits (2009: 184).

IV

Julia Annas, an exponent of virtue ethics, has been critical of Doris' rejection of global character trait that is maintained by the virtue ethics. But, Annas is not critical of the social psychological approach which Doris carries out to evaluate the moral character traits. Rather, by over emphasizing his position on local character traits "Doris makes heavy use of the situationists' tradition in the social psychology but I think that there is a real issue here about the virtues whether we are relying on current social psychological

or not" (Annas2005:636). Virtue ethics has a larger theoretical framework to speak about global character trait; the situationists have misread the central claim of virtue ethics. The lack of virtue could be due to lack of integrity. Aristotle's virtue ethics in this regard reflects upon a erratic person who morally deviates in their conduct. But that does not seriously affect the theoretical stance of virtue ethics, because "virtue is considered as adisposition to act on reason." (2005: 637) Unless the agent undertakes decision rationally or deliberates before making a choice, it would be difficult to propose the idea of consistent character trait. Moral character develops by a systematic practice of virtue in habitual action. Rational actions are normatively guided by virtue in order to develop moral habits and also to strengthen the will power of the person, as we have discussed in details in the next chapter. However, Annas points out that virtuous life and rational thinking must mutually reinforce each other for the development of moral character. She writes, "The more you develop a virtue, the less important to you is a mere habit, and the more complex and flexible you ability to reason about new and innovative kind of situation you may be faced with. Hence, the more virtuous you are, the more complex and dynamic your character." (2005: 637)   The character of a moral person has to be dynamic and complex as it is nurtured through various unexpected situations of life.

A moral person ought to judge a situation and act accordingly. One might fail in some occasion, but thereby he/she does not cease to be moral. The situational challenges are also not rejected, rather counted in favour of nurturing the moral character of a person that adds to character dynamism. The intelligent decision can make to develop a skill which is important to practical reason. A virtuous person can strengthen their character without paying much attention to the situation, rather by an emphasizing on firmness in intelligent deliberation. A morally weak person can commit blunder whereas a morally strong person is not only intelligent but also exhibit firmness. If in certain situation the agent fails to show that he lacks firmness in character, this is because the agent might have deliberated and considered the action not worth undertaking. This is because, commitment to act in a particular way is not merely an obligation, rather it is an action

to be considered cognitively worth undertaking –Annas calls these "actions are sort of cognitive duty" (2005: 638).

Annas is of the opinion that situationists like Doris underestimates the moral authority of a virtuous person. This only happens when one fails to see that virtues act as a unified normative principle of life. A person exhibits virtues by taking right decision at the right hour. And, there is no superficiality involved in while undertaking a virtuous action. To be virtuous is to perform a virtuous action and live a virtuous life. While undertaking the action he/she realizes the value of action. Practical wisdom or phronesis is logically associated with living a virtuous life. A morally wise person is prepared to take up a good decision about unseen situation. The preparedness is given importance in virtue ethics as it helps the person to be morally fit and take up challenges in future situations. In this regard, Anna emphasizes that "personality trait has to be evaluatively integrated" (2005: 639).

Moreover, Annas says, "the book contains no arguments against virtue ethics in the actual Aristotelian tradition; it sets up as opponent only a radically unintellectual version of virtue" (2005:639). Virtue ethics are not insensitive to situational demand; rather they put more emphasis on evaluation of the situation and appreciate responsible judgment from the side of the moral agent. There may be moral failures; it might happen that one fails to respond reasonably well in some situations. But that need not be counted as a total deviation for the integral approach that global character upholds. The agent must be given opportunity to recovery from the moral loss and to undertake this approach integration of virtues is necessary. That is to say, failing in one situation need not imply that all other possibilities of morally correcting oneself are closed. Reformative paths of learning virtue and their implementation in daily life should always be kept open to all individuals of the society. Thus virtue ethics sound enough as a moral theory to discuss the moral failure and success by undertaking some of the psychological experiments from the everyday life. But, it is also important that we need to reflect deeply the inner potential of virtue ethics that maintains the significance of global character traits thesis.

In this connection, virtue ethics emphasizes upon willpower and moral strength to integrate all virtues or prudential capacities.

Conclusion

In this paper, I proposed to discuss two aspects: whether Aristotle's notions of habits are naturalistic or non-naturalistic, and can good habit help to form a moral character. Along with these two views, John Doris' contrasting notion of local character traits against Aristotle's global character traits was also discussed to understand and revival of Aristotle's notion of character formation. In finale I found that the naturalistic construal of habit has been behaviouristic by associating habit with innate, instinctive nature of life. The development of moral character goes beyond the naturalistic construal of habit in the form of physical skill. Rather the non-naturalistic perspective shows how Aristotle's notion of virtue and its inculcation in everyday life that results in developing moral character is grounded on the normative power of freedom of will. That is to say; the moral character is developed by strengthening the power of will. To behave morally, there is need to follow virtue in everyday life. The process of habituation refines the skill of performing good action. To regulate the habits and formation of right judgment in the right situation, Aristotle brings in the notion of practical wisdom defined in terms of rational ability to deliberate and exercise the power of will to realize eudemonia. The Aristotelian conceptualization of moral agency is grounded in rational ability to inculcate virtue in everyday life. Virtue as guiding principles of moral action is construed delving into the teleological explanation of life. The non-naturalistic interpretation, in this regard, provides a teleological account of the role of virtue and its intrinsic relation in building moral character – that is, "a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to the human good" (1999:1140b20-25).

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