



## **Akrasia as an Intelligent Disposition**

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## Akrasia as an Intelligent Condition

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### Introduction

Elsewhere, I have argued that it is fruitful to regard akrasia primarily as a character trait, instead of as a single and isolated type of action. Aristotle also considers akrasia to be a character trait and holds that this among other things means that akrasia is a moral category. In Book VII of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he presents several factors that play a role in how we should morally evaluate the akratēs. Here, I address a more fundamental question: why assume that the akratēs is susceptible to moral evaluation at all? More particularly, what ground do we have to attribute moral responsibility to the akratēs?

The topic of moral responsibility has received ample attention already in the contemporary literature on akratic action. This attention does not stem from an interest in akrasia as a moral problem, though. It stems from the fact that akratic action can only be considered a proper action if it can be rightfully attributed to a person, that is, if a person can be held morally responsible for the action. The basic concern is to find a criterion by which to distinguish akrasia from compulsion or compulsory addiction<sup>1</sup>, as people are commonly thought to be morally responsible for the former but not the latter. One popular suggestion is that a person who acts akratically could actually have done otherwise at the moment of action, whereas a person whose acts are compelled could have not. In contemporary literature there is much debate on whether akratic actions are indeed different from compulsion in this respect and thereby also on whether moral responsibility for akratic actions can be based on the ability to could have done otherwise.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I add the adjective 'compulsory', because it is often assumed by philosophers that addiction is a form of compulsion. Annemarie Kalis points out that psychologists, on the other hand, commonly think of addiction and compulsion as separate conditions (2009, 134-140). For a more detailed discussion of addiction and compulsion, see Neil Levy (2010).

<sup>2</sup> Gary Watson's article on akrasia (1977) plays a central role in this discussion. For some of the more recent responses, see Jeanette Kennett (2001) and Michael Smith (2003).

A treatment of moral responsibility and akrasia as a character trait has a different emphasis. Obviously, the concern on a character approach is not just being responsible for a single akratic action. The prime concern is whether a specific type of person, the *akratēs*, can be held morally responsible, be it for his akratic actions, his akratic character, or both. This is likely to have consequences for the concept of moral responsibility that it is most suitable to work with.<sup>3</sup> On a character approach it seems more natural to turn to a notion of moral responsibility that relies on broader features of a person, such as a person's general capacities or history, rather than on an episodic feature like the ability to could have done otherwise. This raises a first possible challenge to a character approach. On the upside, one may not have to concern oneself with the difficult task of defending that a person who acts akratically could actually have done otherwise. However, it also means that on a character approach we probably need to find a different criterion than the ability to could have done otherwise in order to distinguish akrasia from compulsion.

Secondly, there is a challenge relating to moral responsibility that comes specifically with regarding akrasia as a character trait. This is the so called 'automaticity challenge', which will receive most attention in this chapter. A person who acts from a character trait allegedly responds to trait-relevant situations in certain ways automatically. The question is therefore in what way character traits differ from mindless habits. If character traits turn out to be mere routine, it seems illegitimate to base attributions of moral responsibility on them. A person's behavior would then resemble the motions of an a-rational animal or that of a machine. In order to set character traits apart from other conditions, it is not uncommon to define them as, for example, intelligent conditions (John Doris 2002, 17) or as conditions that are reasons-responsive (Kristján Kristjánsson 2010, 27). In virtue of such a kind of 'rational' feature, character traits are eligible as a ground for moral responsibility. It is not immediately clear whether this sort of solution works for akrasia, however, as it is a paradigm example of *irrationality*. Can an akratic condition qualify as a character trait – in particular as a ground for moral responsibility – given the rational feature that is a common part of the definition of a character trait?

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<sup>3</sup> I do not claim, however, that some concepts of moral responsibility are exclusively available to either an action approach or to a character approach.

In this chapter, I defend the view that akrasia can be considered a sufficiently intelligent or reasons-responsive condition to serve as a ground for moral responsibility. Although it is not my goal to develop a full theory of the moral responsibility of the akratēs, I do want to explore some essential preconditions of and fruitful directions for such a theory. First, I address Julia Annas' attractive solution to the 'automaticity challenge' for virtue. She draws an analogy between virtue and a certain type of practical skill to show that virtue is not mindless but is very much an intelligent condition. I argue that this 'skill analogy' is unfortunately not applicable to akrasia, but that it reveals some important preconditions for successfully arguing that akrasia is a sufficiently intelligent or reasons-responsive condition. Next, I turn to John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza's account of moral responsibility. Their account is promising, because it can deal with the disharmonic nature and the kind of historical development that are typical of akrasia as a character trait. Lastly, I briefly mention three possible strategies that Fischer and Ravizza's account offers for distinguishing akrasia from compulsion without relying on the ability to could have done otherwise.

### **Annas' skill analogy and akrasia**

In her book *Intelligent Virtue* (2011), Julia Annas addresses the 'automaticity challenge' for virtue. The challenge arises because virtue is said to be the product of habituation and the virtuous person supposedly acts in a virtuous way immediately and automatically. Annas argues that virtue is nonetheless an intelligent condition by showing that it is analogous to a certain type of skill.<sup>4</sup> The crux of her theory is that virtue comes about and functions in a similar way as practical skills that are all too familiar, such as playing the piano, building, and practicing a sport.

Annas holds that, first of all, like a practical skill, virtue involves the 'need to learn'. It is not something that a person is simply born with, but it needs to be acquired through practice (although the one person may have more natural talent for a practical skill or virtue than the other). At first, learning a skill requires conscious thought. The novice piano player has to explicitly think about basics such as where to put his fingers, how to attempt to play a scale, and so on. He improves by doing it over and over again (2011, 13-14). Similarly, it

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<sup>4</sup> The skill analogy originally stems from Aristotle. See Daniel Russell (2015) for a discussion of Aristotle's comparison between virtue and practical skills such as playing a musical instrument or building a house.

takes repeated effort for a person to acquire virtue. He must learn to feel, think and act in appropriate ways and 'it [virtue] requires time, experience, and habituation to develop it' (2011, 14).

Secondly, Annas maintains that, like expertise in a practical skill, virtue involves 'understanding what you do, self-directedness, and a drive to improve' (2011, 27). She calls this combination of elements the 'drive to aspire'. Through constant and ongoing repetition, the expert pianist has made the skill of piano playing his own. He need not consciously think about how to play the piano anymore but the result is not mere routine. The expert pianist can teach the skill to others and his play is not mechanical but flexible and innovative. Annas stresses that for the expert pianist 'the result [of constant repetition] is not mindless routine but rather playing infused with and expressing the pianist's thoughts about the piece' (2011, 13-14). The virtuous person has mastered virtue in a similar way. He need not consciously think about how to respond to a situation anymore. However, he does not just copy a teacher or a role model, but appropriately adapts his response to the specifics of a situation. Moreover, he has come to understand *why* certain responses are appropriate and he is able to articulate this, for example, in teaching others or when asked to. The virtuous person has acquired a condition 'not just to act reliably in certain ways but to act reliably for certain reasons' (2011, 27). Virtue is an intelligent condition, because the virtuous person has learned through repetition to act immediately on reasons for action that he finds suitable.

Can the skill analogy also show that akrasia is an intelligent condition? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Although akratic behavior need not be static and can sometimes be adaptive<sup>5</sup> – for example, an *akratēs* may use different excuses to turn down a friend's repeated invitations to come along to the gym –, virtue and akrasia are importantly different. People become virtuous by striving to be virtuous (or, in any case, to be generous, just, and so on; Annas 2011, 74). It does not make sense for a person to want to become an *akratēs*, though. This observation by itself does not yet render the skill analogy inadequate for akrasia. For, it is also inconceivable that people would strive to become vicious, but Annas argues that at least in certain instances the skill analogy can be extended to vice

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<sup>5</sup> This also seems to be what Aristotle has in mind when he remarks that even though akrasia is incompatible with practical wisdom, the *akratēs* can nonetheless be 'clever' [*deinos*] (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1152a8-13).

(2015).<sup>6</sup> She points out that it is possible to acquire a vicious character by gradually becoming better at what one is aiming for. For example, a vicious person may have learned ‘to make money in ways not guided or restrained by honesty’ (2015, 103), and be good at it. The skill analogy thus works for virtue and vice insofar as these are character traits that have developed through learning how to act for reasons for action that a person finds suitable.

It must be said that theoretically it is possible that the sort of development that is captured by the skill analogy forms part of the history of an *akratēs*. For example, a person may in the early stages of the shaping of his character have a different idea of what it is worth pursuing than later on. He could then first enthusiastically and actively learn to act for certain reasons for action, and only later come to prefer acting for other reasons for action. The skill analogy could then help to illuminate how the *akratēs* comes to have certain behavioral tendencies. It would still not tell the whole story. For instance, how does the person’s change of perspective fit in? However, on this sketch, the skill analogy would show that at least at the outset the *akratēs*’ behavior was not formed in a mindless way.

The mainstream background of an *akratēs* does not seem to involve this kind of history, though. *Akrasia* typically involves a disharmony between the reasons that a person judges it best to act on and the reasons or motivations that actually tend to influence his behavior. Therefore, it is much more likely that the history of an *akratēs* is characterized precisely by a *failure* to learn to act for the reasons for action that he finds suitable. If this is correct, a conscious effort to achieve what one aspires is not usually part of developing an akratic condition. The *akratēs* can, of course, have aspiration, but this would be an aspiration to change his behavior, not to reinforce it. Because of its typical disharmonic nature, then, it is implausible that *akrasia* has the kind of history that matches with the skill analogy.

As it stands, therefore, the skill analogy cannot help to show that a condition like *akrasia* is sufficiently intelligent or reasons-responsive to serve as a basis for moral responsibility.<sup>7</sup> I consider this to be a serious shortcoming of the analogy. Perhaps the skill analogy could be adjusted or extended to cover *akrasia*, but at the moment I do not see how

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<sup>6</sup> Annas has an Aristotelian notion of vice in mind. This entails that a vicious person acts as he thinks he should, but is mistaken about which goals it is good to pursue.

<sup>7</sup> In fact, Annas’ skill analogy also does not seem to cover the development of all virtuous and vicious character traits either. See, for example, Nancy Snow (2016) for a discussion of two other ways in which virtue – or, at least, states that are very near to virtue – are likely to develop.

this could be done. Nevertheless, the discussion of the skill analogy teaches us something important in relation to akrasia. It reveals two preconditions that a successful theory on akrasia as an intelligent or reasons-responsive condition must meet: the theory must be able to deal with the typical disharmonic nature of akrasia and with the kind of history that comes with acquiring such a condition.

### **Fischer and Ravizza and akrasia as a sufficiently reasons-responsive condition**

John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza's account of moral responsibility, as presented in their book *Responsibility and Control* (1998), offers a promising way to understand that akrasia is an intelligent or reasons-responsive condition.<sup>8</sup> Their notion of moderate reasons-responsiveness fits the disharmonic nature of akrasia<sup>9</sup>. And, their account of what makes a mechanism the agent's own can do justice to the kind of history involved in acquiring an akratic condition. So, Fischer and Ravizza's account can meet the two preconditions I mentioned above. Furthermore, other than the skill analogy, it already provides a comprehensive theory of moral responsibility.

The core of Fischer and Ravizza's theory is that a person is morally responsible if the mechanism (or, process) that leads to an action, consequence, omission, and so on, is a) moderately reasons-responsive and b) the agent's own. It is not the ability to could have done otherwise that grounds moral responsibility on their account. I will discuss the part on moderate reasons-responsiveness first. The interesting thing is that Fischer and Ravizza break this notion down into two parts: regular reasons-receptivity and weak reasons-reactivity (1998, 82).

By reasons-*receptivity*, Fischer and Ravizza mean 'the capacity to recognize the reasons that exist' (1998, 69). They hold that moral responsibility demands *regular* reasons-

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<sup>8</sup> A critical reader may worry that Fischer and Ravizza mainly discuss moral responsibility for actions. I want to point out that in their book they present a more comprehensive theory, which includes moral responsibility for consequences, omissions, and, importantly, 'trait actions'. Fischer and Ravizza's account has much to offer to both a character approach as well as to an action approach. I will not further address their discussion of trait actions (1998, 85-89 and 195-196), because despite of its appealing features it cannot help to tackle the automaticity challenge for akrasia as a character trait.

<sup>9</sup> It is not surprising that Fischer and Ravizza's notion of moderate reasons-responsiveness fits akrasia, as they reject the more demanding notion of *strong* reasons-responsiveness as a proper basis for moral responsibility precisely because it fails to accommodate for akrasia (1998, 44-45 and 68).

receptivity. They warn that the level of reasons-receptivity must not become ‘so loose that it also ascribes responsibility to agents who act on mechanisms that respond only in unusual or incoherent ways’ (1998, 68). Fischer and Ravizza state that regular reasons-receptivity ‘requires a pattern of actual and hypothetical recognition of reasons that is understandable and minimally grounded in reality’ (1998, 76). In other words, the reasons for action that a person acknowledges must be intelligible.

By reasons-*reactivity*, Fischer and Ravizza mean ‘the capacity to *translate* reasons into choices (and then subsequent behavior)’ (1998, 69). They argue that moral responsibility requires only *weak* reasons-reactivity. According to them, a mechanism need not *actually* react to reason in order for a person to be morally responsible for it, as long as the mechanism has the *general capacity* to do so:

...we believe that if an agent’s mechanism reacts to *some* incentive to (say) do other than he actually does, this shows that the mechanism *can* react to *any* incentive to do otherwise. Our contention, then, is that a mechanism’s reacting differently to a sufficient reason to do otherwise in some other possible world shows that the same kind of mechanism can react differently to the *actual* reason to do otherwise. This general capacity of the agent’s actual-sequence mechanism – and *not* the agent’s power to do otherwise – is what helps to ground moral responsibility. (1988, 73)

In other words, a mechanism is weakly reasons-reactive if there is at least one possible scenario in which a person would act on a sufficient reason to do otherwise.<sup>10</sup>

The division between regular reasons-receptivity and weak reasons-reactivity fits akrasia well. Regular reasons-receptivity corresponds with the judgment-side of akrasia. Someone who fails to abide by his judgment may in principle also err in identifying the best reasons for action, but this is not what the akratēs is commonly criticized for. The process of judgment-formation typically functions just fine in the case of this type of person. Up to the extent that the akratēs indeed forms sound judgments, the mechanism that leads to his typical behavior can by all means be considered regularly reasons-receptive.

Weak reasons-reactivity relates to the motivation/action-side of akrasia. Fischer and Ravizza provide an example about Jennifer that illustrates that akrasia, or, to be more

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<sup>10</sup> Note that this does not require that a person is actually able to do otherwise in the given situation. For more details on what Fischer and Ravizza count as a possible scenario, see (1998, 51-54).



precise, the mechanism that leads to akratic behavior, can be weakly reasons-reactive.<sup>11</sup>

Jennifer attends a basketball game despite of judging it best to work on a paper with an oncoming publication deadline. Fischer and Ravizza remark that ‘Even though Jennifer is disposed to be weak-willed under some circumstances [as in the example], there are other circumstances in which she would respond appropriately to sufficient reasons’ (1998, 45).

Let me pause for a moment to note that Fischer and Ravizza talk about being *disposed* to be weak-willed here. They do not elaborate on what they mean by ‘disposition’ and I am not sure how carefully they chose this formulation. It could mean they agree with me that akrasia is primarily to be regarded as a character trait. However, without more to go on, there is no way to tell whether Fischer and Ravizza are committed to a specific conception of akrasia.

What matters most here is that according to Fischer and Ravizza there is at least one possible scenario in which Jennifer refrains from going to the basketball game and works on her manuscript: ‘Suppose, for instance, that Jennifer is told that she will have to pay one thousand dollar for a ticket to the game. In this situation, she presumably would not go to the game’ (1998, 45). Fischer and Ravizza hold that the fact that there is a possible scenario in which Jennifer reacts to *a* sufficient reason to do otherwise, means that the mechanism leading to the action has the general capacity to react to the *actual* reason to do otherwise. Hence, they maintain that the mechanism leading to Jennifer’s akratic behavior is weakly reasons-reactive.

Can we take it for granted that for every instance of akrasia there is a possible scenario in which the relevant mechanism reacts to a sufficient reason to act otherwise? Cases like that of Jennifer are not uncommon as examples of akrasia, so it seems to me the example about Jennifer can be considered representative. However, not everyone might be convinced so quickly. Possible critics could perhaps be persuaded to at least acknowledge weak reasons-reactivity for cases in which an akratēs has already testified of having the relevant capacity to react to a sufficient reason to act otherwise on previous similar occasions. For example, someone whose akrasia pertains to bodily exercise might nonetheless have managed for a little while to regularly visit the gym. This person has shown

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<sup>11</sup> Fischer and Ravizza actually talk of weak reasons-*responsiveness* in this context. However, the difference between weak and moderate reasons-responsiveness lies in the criterion of regular reasons-*receptivity*, so the example about Jennifer holds its ground with regard to weak reasons-*reactivity*.

that he is capable of following through with his better judgment. I therefore think it safe to conclude that the mechanism leading to the *akratēs*' typical behavior in any case *can* be weakly reasons-reactive.

The mechanism that is relevant to the *akratēs*' character thus meets the two criteria for moderate reasons-responsiveness: regular reasons-receptivity and weak reasons-reactivity. Due to this division, Fischer and Ravizza's account can deal with the disharmonic nature of *akrasia* very well. Hence, the account fulfills the first precondition that I mentioned of a successful theory of *akrasia* as a sufficiently intelligent or reasons-responsive condition.

Recall that I formulated a second precondition as well: that of doing justice to the kind of history that is likely to be involved in acquiring an *akratic* condition. The need for this second precondition is reflected in Fischer and Ravizza's account. They hold that for moral responsibility a mechanism must not only be moderately reasons-responsive. They emphasize that it must also be the agent's own. This basically means that it must have a history that is not responsibility-undermining (1998, 170 and 196). Someone lacks responsibility for behavior or anything of the sort if it is, for example, the product of hypnosis or an unwilling surgery by an evil neurologist, and also – considering the automaticity challenge – if it is the result of mindless habituation. Hence, next to being sufficiently reasons-responsive, for moral responsibility the relevant mechanism must also be the agent's own, that is, it must have the right kind of history.

What makes a mechanism the agent's own, according to Fischer and Ravizza? They hold that this requires some sort of process of taking responsibility for the mechanism (1998, 200 and 207). In general, taking responsibility involves 'a person recognizing his agency and accepting that he is an apt target for the reactive attitudes on the basis of exercising that agency' (1998, 214).<sup>12</sup> In particular, 'an agent takes responsibility for acting from a particular kind of mechanism' (1998, 215; emphasis removed). Behavior may spring from different

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<sup>12</sup> Fischer and Ravizza borrow the term 'reactive attitudes' from Peter Strawson. According to Fischer and Ravizza, this term captures that 'when we regard someone as a responsible agent, we react to the person with a unique set of feelings and attitudes – for example, gratitude, indignation, resentment, love, respect, and forgiveness' (1998, 5).

sources, such as practical reason or nonreflective mechanisms. A mechanism is an agent's own, if he takes responsibility for that which issues from the mechanism.<sup>13</sup>

The question is, then, whether the history of the *akratēs* involves a process of taking responsibility for the mechanism that leads to his typical judgment-violating behavior.

Fischer and Ravizza do not address this, but I believe the answer is affirmative.

For starters, mindless habituation *does* seem to play an important role in developing an akratic condition. In particular as far as his behavioral tendencies and motivational preferences are concerned, the *akratēs* probably did not have much influence on the way these turned out, especially if they developed when he was only a child. The tragedy is that by the time the *akratēs* comes to disapprove of his behavior, (some of) his behavioral and motivational patterns are likely to have already firmly taken shape.

Mindless habituation does not constitute the whole story of developing an akratic condition, though, because it cannot account for the part where reflection comes in. Not every *akratēs* may reflect very deeply on his behavior, and certainly not all the time. However, *akrasia* cannot but involve *some* amount of reflection. In order to qualify as an *akratēs*, it is not enough that a person has certain behavioral and motivational tendencies. It is not even sufficient that these tendencies conflict with a person's better judgment. An *akratēs* is at least at some point also *aware* of this conflict. The reflective element constitutes his akratic condition, so to speak. It is due to his knowledge of the judgment-violation that he disapproves of his behavior. The *akratēs* thus reflects on his behavior at least insofar as he notices the discrepancy with his better judgment.

It is also in virtue of this reflective element that the *akratēs* can be said to take responsibility for the akratic behavior that issues from his character. The key is that the *akratēs* has a particular view of himself. As has been emphasized multiple times by now, this type of person disapproves of his typical behavior. It is also not uncommon that this goes accompanied by feelings such as regret or shame. In Fischer and Ravizza's terms, we could say that the *akratēs* has a negative reactive attitude towards himself. This implies he considers it justified that other people also have this or related reactive attitudes towards his character and the behavior that tends to flow from it. If he would not find this justified,

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<sup>13</sup> Someone need not take responsibility explicitly. Fischer and Ravizza point out that a person can have some sort of "standing policy" with respect to a mechanism (1998, 216).

this would raise doubts about the sincerity of his attitude of disapproval and thus about whether this person is truly an *akratēs* and not rather vicious. The *akratēs* therefore takes responsibility for the relevant mechanism, that is, he makes it his own, by means of noticing his typical judgment-violating behavior and disapproving of it.

We now have the means to face the automaticity challenge for *akrasia* as a character trait. Recall that the main worry is that if *akrasia* turns out to be (just) a mindless habit or mere routine we cannot ascribe moral responsibility to the *akratēs*. With the help of Fischer and Ravizza's account of moral responsibility, I have shown that this worry can be set aside. The mechanism that leads to the *akratēs*' behavior is, first of all, moderately reasons-responsive. Secondly, the *akratēs* has made this mechanism his own because it is in his very nature to take responsibility for his *akratic* behavior. This ensures that the aspect of moderate reasons-responsiveness is not put in place by a responsibility-undermining process. *Akrasia* can thus be considered a sufficiently reasons-responsive condition to serve as a ground for moral responsibility.

To close off, I would like to point out that Fischer and Ravizza's account also provides several leads to deal with the other issue that can trouble a character approach to *akrasia* and moral responsibility: the issue of how to distinguish between *akrasia* and compulsion without relying on the ability to could have done otherwise. I see three possible strategies to draw this distinction on their account. First of all, other than *akrasia*, compulsion may fall short with respect to the regular reasons-receptivity part of moderate reasons-responsiveness. The compulsive would in that case, for example, acknowledge a set of reasons that is incoherent or not grounded in reality. Secondly, compulsion may not meet the other component of moderate reasons-responsiveness, that of weak reasons-reactivity. This would mean that whereas for the *akratēs* there is at least one possible scenario in which a person reacts to a sufficient reason to do otherwise, for the compulsive there is no such possible scenario.<sup>14</sup> A third option to distinguish *akrasia* and compulsion on Fischer and Ravizza's account is to maintain that the relevant mechanism of the compulsive is not the

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<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, we may wish to distinguish between *akrasia* and compulsion by means of the *type* of possible scenario that is open to a person, such as whether it is a common scenario or an extreme one. We could, for example, turn to Gary Watson's idea that *akrasia* is relative to some sort of standard of normal self-control, whereas compulsion falls outside the scope of what is considered to be normal human conduct. Jörn Müller (2014) discusses a similar idea.

agent's own. The history of the mechanism could involve, for example, hypnosis or an unwilling surgery by an evil neurologist, and so on, or the compulsive may not have gone through a process of taking responsibility for that which the relevant mechanism leads to.<sup>15</sup> I will not develop these strategies any further, but they each could have something to it. Perhaps all three strategies apply to different instances of compulsion, either separately or combined. Most importantly, I have shown that Fischer and Ravizza's account offers several different ways to do justice to the fact that we wish to attribute moral responsibility in relation to akrasia but not to compulsion.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I argued and illustrated that there is sufficient ground to attribute moral responsibility to the akratēs. One way to qualify akrasia as a character trait on the basis of which we can hold a person morally responsible, is to show that an akratic condition is sufficiently intelligent or reasons-responsive. Julia Annas' skill analogy works for virtue (and vice) in this respect, but is unfortunately not applicable to akrasia. Fischer and Ravizza's account of moral responsibility does meet the required preconditions. The account helps to make clear that the relevant mechanism involved in akrasia is sufficiently (that is, moderately) reasons-responsive for moral responsibility. We have also learned that the relevant mechanism is not troubled by a responsibility-undermining history. The akratēs by his very nature reflects and disapproves of his akratic behavior and in this way can be said to take responsibility for it. Lastly, I discussed that Fischer and Ravizza's account offers three possible strategies to try and distinguish akrasia from compulsion.

I have far from said everything there is to say about moral responsibility and akrasia as a character trait. Furthermore, much has been written on moral responsibility and in particular on moral responsibility and akrasia that would probably be of relevance but that I did not address here. As I stressed from the beginning, it was not my aim to provide a full theory of the moral responsibility of the akratēs. My purpose was to show that it makes sense to morally evaluate the akratēs. I believe that with the help of Fischer and Ravizza's account of moral responsibility I have shown this to be the case.

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<sup>15</sup> Fischer and Ravizza argue that under normal circumstances it is not an attractive option to evade taking responsibility, however (1998, 217-219).

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