The Four Causes of ADHD: Aristotle in the Classroom

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Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most well-established and at the same time controversial disorders to the extreme of being placed in doubt. In the first of two parts, the established position is critically reviewed, beginning with showing fallacious reasoning on which the diagnosis is based, lacking clinical proof. Similarly, a certain rhetoric and metaphysics in genetic and neurobiological research are highlighted, where, for example, a meager accumulation of data is offered as robust conclusions, and correlates and correlations as causes and bases. However, that may be, the controversy is silenced in a dialog of the deaf between “defenders” and “critics” with no way out in sight in empirical and scientific terms. A new meta-scientific position is necessary to analyze the science of ADHD itself and its social uses. In this respect, the second part introduces Aristotle’s four causes, material, formal, efficient, final, as an instrument of inquiry. According to this analysis, ADHD is not the pretended clinical entity as presented, but a practical entity providing a variety of functions. The implications would be rather different from the usual.