



Aristotle on Thought and Feeling

Aristotle's discussion of the motivation of the good person is both complicated and cryptic. Depending on which passages are emphasized, he may seem to be presenting a Kantian style view according to which the good person is and ought to be motivated primarily by reason, or a Humean style view according to which desires and feelings are or ought to be in charge. In this book, Paula Gottlieb argues that Aristotle sees the thought, desires and feelings of the good person as interdependent in a way that is *sui generis*, and she explains how Aristotle's concept of choice (*prohairesis*) is an innovative and pivotal element in his account. Gottlieb's interpretation casts light on Aristotle's account of moral education, on the psychology of good, bad and half-bad (akratic) people, and on the aesthetic and even musical side to being a good person.

Paula Gottlieb is Professor of Philosophy and Affiliate Professor of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is the author of *The Virtue of Aristotle's Ethics* (Cambridge, 2009) and of numerous articles, including the entry on Aristotle on non-contradiction in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04189-9 — Aristotle on Thought and Feeling
Paula Gottlieb
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04189-9 — Aristotle on Thought and Feeling
Paula Gottlieb
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Aristotle on Thought and Feeling

PAULA GOTTLIEB
University of Wisconsin–Madison



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04189-9 — Aristotle on Thought and Feeling
Paula Gottlieb
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107041899

DOI: 10.1017/9781107323544

© Paula Gottlieb 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-04189-9 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04189-9 — Aristotle on Thought and Feeling
Paula Gottlieb
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To Nesta Phillips

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04189-9 — Aristotle on Thought and Feeling
Paula Gottlieb
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	page x
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction	1
Aristotle's View of Thought and Feeling as <i>Sui Generis</i>	1
The Doctrine of the Mean	3
Kant and Hume	4
Philosophical Method	6
Synopsis of Chapters	9
1 The Psyche	13
1.1 Describing the Psyche	13
1.2 Theoretical vs Practical Thinking	16
1.3 The "Function" Argument	18
1.4 A Problem about Desire	20
1.5 A Platonic Suggestion	20
1.6 Toward Choice (<i>Prohairesis</i>)	21
2 Aristotelian Feelings	24
2.1 The Anatomy of a Feeling: A Preliminary Account	27
2.2 Indexical Insight	29
2.3 The Relationship between Different Feelings, especially Sympathy and Fear	30
2.4 The Neutrality of the Feelings	34
2.5 More on <i>Phantasia</i>	36
2.6 Feelings, Pleasure and Pain, and the Direction of Desires for Action	38
3 Developing Thought and Feeling	42
3.1 What Is Habituation? A Preliminary Discussion	43
3.2 The Dispute between Kosman and Joachim	45
3.3 Acting with Feeling in Situations Characterized by the Feelings they Provoke	46
3.4 Becoming Good	47
	vii

viii	<i>Contents</i>
3.5	Oneself, Others, and the Polis 52
3.6	Becoming Bad 55
3.7	Becoming Half-Bad and the Example of Neoptolemus 61
3.8	How Important is Shame as a Stage in Moral Development? 62
4	Aristotelian Choice 65
4.1	Distinguishing Choice from Other Phenomena: Why are Those Phenomena at Issue? 67
4.2	An Inclusive View of Choice: Desiderative Thought or Thoughtful Desire 69
4.3	What Kind of Thinking is Involved? 70
4.4	What Kind of Desires are Involved? 74
4.5	A Question about Wish 77
4.6	The General Picture 78
5	<i>Akrasia</i> 81
5.1	An Interpretation of the Practical Syllogism 83
5.2	Aristotle's Account of <i>Akrasia</i> (EN VII 3) 86
5.3	Three Problems 92
5.4	Neoptolemus, Virtue of Character, Thoughtfulness, and the Katalog Mentality 97
5.5	Further Questions 102
6	Thoughtfulness and Feelings 104
6.1	The Good Person's Psyche 105
6.2	Is this View too Demanding? 106
6.3	Two Types of Bad People 109
6.4	What Counts as a Pleasant Life 113
6.5	The Thought in Thoughtfulness 117
6.6	The Purpose of Studying the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> 118
7	To Kalon and Music 122
7.1	Why Would <i>to Kalon</i> Lack Aesthetic Force in Aristotle's Ethics? 123
7.2	<i>To Kalon</i> in Aristotle's <i>Metaphysics</i> , <i>Biology</i> , and <i>Poetics</i> 125
7.3	From <i>Metaphysics</i> , <i>Biology</i> , and <i>Poetics</i> to Ethics 127
7.4	The Relational Structure View 128
7.5	The Importance of Music and its Ethical Dimension 129
7.6	The Musical Dimension of Ethics 136
7.7	Acting for the sake of <i>to Kalon</i> 138

<i>Contents</i>	ix
7.8 Final Reflections on Music, Contemplation, and the Happy Life	140
Conclusion	143
Thought and Feeling	143
Learning to be Good on a Continuum	144
Kantian Style and Humean Style Views	144
Virtue Ethics made Visible	145
Virtue for the Polis	145
<i>Glossary of Key Terms</i>	147
<i>References</i>	149
<i>General Index</i>	164
<i>Index Locorum</i>	170

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all those who have wittingly or unwittingly contributed to this book: past teachers, past and present undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, students at Jefferson High School and beyond, “the Greeks,” other philosophical friends, conference participants, and the long train of translators and interpreters of Aristotle.

I have always admired the work of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and so am pleased to have been awarded a fellowship for 2018–19, which has proved invaluable in completing this book. Of course, any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

First, I should like to thank Richard Kraut and the late Larry Becker for their comments on the original prospectus, both on the content and on the structure of the proposed book. Thanks to Richard Kraut, the resulting book is less aporetic than it would otherwise be, and thanks to Larry Becker there is a chapter on becoming good, a topic that was dear to his heart. I am sorry that he is not here to read the final version. I should also like to thank the anonymous clearance reader for Cambridge University Press, whose suggestions I have gladly accepted.

Special thanks to Richard Kraut, Hendrik Lorenz, Rachel Singpurwalla and Iakovos Vasiliou for their thought-provoking questions. I have benefited from the detailed comments of Susan Sauvé Meyer on several chapters of a recent draft. I am also grateful to Lynne Spellman and David Keyt for their support.

At Madison, I should like to thank the “work in progress” group in my department for helpful comments: John Bengson, John MacKay, Farid Masrour, James Messina, and especially Elliott Sober. Thanks also to “the Greeks,” especially Ruth Saunders for her friendly criticisms and Terry Penner for his encouragement of a work that he considers to be wrong-headed. Last, but not least, my thanks go to

Acknowledgments

xi

Emily Fletcher for many fruitful conversations and for being an exemplary colleague over the past several years.

I am grateful to the following for discussions of Aristotle's ethics: Claudia Card, Mavis Biss, Tony Chu, Daniel Coren, David Ebrey, Corinne Gartner, Dan Hausman, Marta Jimenez, Monte Johnson, Rachana Kamtekar, Mitzi Lee, Patricia Marechal, Julie Maybee, Emily McRae, Josh Ober, Peter Railton, Christof Rapp, Bryan Reece, Douglass Reed, Sheri Ross, Krisanna Scheiter, Maria Silvia Vaccarezza, Andrea Veltman, Matt Walker, Dave Yount, and Inara Zanuzzi. My thanks also go to UW–Madison students David Arbelaez, Emily Barrett, Andrew Chang, Alexandra Cohn, Hadley Cooney, Lydia Du Bois, Melady Elifritz, Mason Johnson, Augusta Moore, Justin Morton, Michael Promisel, David Stern, Yang Zhong, and Jefferson High School students, especially Jacob Willgrubs and Sylvia Rutkowski.

I presented fledgling ideas about feelings at conferences at Emory and Union College. I should like to thank the following participants for helpful comments: at Emory, Jamie Dow, Corinne Gartner, Craig Henchey, Marta Jimenez, Stephen Leighton, Hendrik Lorenz, Jozef Müller, Tim O'Keefe, Rachel Parsons, Christof Rapp, Clerk Shaw, Melpomeni Voiatzi, and Marco Zingano; and at Union College, my commentator, Thornton Lockwood, Adam Beresford, Jakub Jirsa, Monte Johnson, Jacob Klein, Stephen Leighton, Hendrik Lorenz, Jessica Moss, Christiana Olfert, Michael Pakaluk, Nathan Powers, Christof Rapp, Susan Sauvé Meyer, Krisanna Scheiter, and Matt Walker.

In Chapter 2 I have incorporated some of the thoughts on sympathy that I presented at the American Philosophical Association and in the inaugural Lynne Spellman lecture at the University of Arkansas. I was helped by the following participants on those occasions: Vivi Atkin, David Ebrey, Emily Fletcher, Warren Herold, Sam Johnson, Mary Krizan, Sheryl Tuttle Ross, Jack Lyons, Edward Minar, Thomas Senor, and especially, Oksana Maksymchuk and Lynne Spellman.

Chapter 2 also contains some re-worked material from "Aristotelian Feelings in the *Rhetoric*," in David O. Brink, Susan Sauvé Meyer, and Christopher Shields, *Virtue, Happiness and Knowledge: Themes from the Work of Gail Fine and Terence Irwin*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, 169–183, reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press (global.oup.com).

Earlier versions of Chapter 4 received an airing at Marquette and at Boulder, Colorado. I should like to thank Yoon Choi, Owen Goldin,

John Longeway, Sebastian Luth, and Margaret Walker for helpful comments at Marquette; and Daniel Coren, Anthony D'Alessio, Alison Jaggard, Alastair Norcross, Robert Pasnau, Naomi Reshotko, Gagan Sapkota, Julia Staffel, Michael Tooley, Ajume Wingo, and especially Mitzi Lee, at Boulder. Thanks to Tony Chu for helpful written comments.

I presented earlier versions of my views on *akrasia* at Toronto, Berlin, Arkansas, Marquette, Stanford, and Northwestern. Thanks to the participants at all these gatherings, especially Chris Bobonich, Philipp Brüllman, David Charles, Ursula Coope, David Ebrey, Susanne Foster, Owen Goldin, Richard Kraut, Daniel Levine, Pierre Morel, Carlo Natali, Josh Ober, Martin Pickavé, Christof Rapp, Arlene Saxonhouse, Melissa Shew, Lynne Spellman, Daniel Tovar, Jennifer Whiting, and John Wynne. Special thanks to the commentators, Brooks Sommerville in Toronto, and Matthew Darlingum at Stanford. Thanks also to Terry Irwin, Hendrik Lorenz, and Terry Penner for separate helpful discussions of the topic.

I would like to thank Audrey Anton, Corinne Gartner, and Hendrik Lorenz for helpful discussion of the issues in Chapter 6.

I presented part of Chapter 7 at a conference on *to kalon* at Fonte Aretusa in Sicily, organized by Heather Reid and Susi Kimbell. I have benefited from discussion with and questions from the participants, especially Audrey Anton, Emily Austin, Deborah DeChiara-Quenzer, Mary McHugh, Heather Reid, William Wians, and Charlotte Witt, and from the helpful comments of Tony Leyh.

I have received permission to incorporate the published version of “Aristotle, *to Kalon*, and Music,” in Heather L. Reid and Tony Leyh, *Looking at Beauty to Kalon in Western Greece: Selected Essays from the 2018 Symposium on the Heritage of Western Greece*, Parnassos Press: Fonte Aretusa, 2019, 229–242, into Chapter 7 of this book. Earlier, I benefited from attending a conference on *to kalon* in Chicago, where I commented on a paper by Rachel Barney (Barney 2010; Gottlieb 2010).

More recently, I presented work on Chapter 3 to Susan Sauvé Meyer’s seminar on Aristotle’s ethics at the University of Pennsylvania. The seminar ended up ranging over the topics of most of my book and has led to many clarifications. I should like to thank the participants, especially Daniel Fryer, Jesse Hamilton, Justin Hughes, Dylan Manson, Matthew Solomon, Rebecca Sharp, and, of course,

Acknowledgments

xiii

Susan Sauvé Meyer, for their questions. I presented some ideas on this chapter and on others to the History of Philosophy Workshop organized by Anat Schechtman at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Thanks to Kerry Balden, John Bengson, Iqbal Bozkaya, Kyle Davis, Emily Fletcher, Farid Masrour, Will May, James Messina, Anat Schechtman, Mike Titelbaum, George Wright, and Inara Zanuzzi for helpful questions.

I am pleased to thank Beatrice Rehl and, more recently, Hilary Gaskin, editors at Cambridge University Press, for their encouragement and help. Thanks also to Melissa Ward, Anne Elliott-Day, and Raghavi Govindane.

This book is dedicated to Nesta Phillips, my high school classics teacher at South Hampstead High School GPDST (Girls' Public Day School Trust), London, who inspired me to study ancient Greek.

Finally, I should like to thank Henry, with love.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations for Aristotle's works are as follows:

<i>A Post.</i>	<i>Analytica Posteriora</i>
<i>A Pr.</i>	<i>Analytica Priora</i>
<i>Cael.</i>	<i>de Caelo</i>
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Categoriae</i>
<i>de An.</i>	<i>de Anima</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Ethica Eudemia</i>
<i>EN</i>	<i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>
<i>GA</i>	<i>de Generatione Animalium</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Historia Animalium</i>
<i>Insomn.</i>	<i>de Insomniis</i>
<i>MA</i>	<i>de Motu Animalium</i>
<i>Mete.</i>	<i>Meteorologica</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Magna Moralia</i>
<i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Metaphysica</i>
<i>PA</i>	<i>de Partibus Animalium</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politica</i>
<i>Po.</i>	<i>Poetica</i>
<i>Rh.</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topica</i>

Aristotle's works are cited by book, chapter (according to the Roman figures in the Oxford Classical Text) and Bekker page, column, and line numbers (from Bekker's edition of 1831).

Abbreviations for Plato's works are as follows:

<i>Chmr.</i>	<i>Charmides</i>
<i>Lg.</i>	<i>Leges</i>
<i>R.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>

Plato's works are cited by dialogue, Stephanus pages, and columns.