

## JOZEF MÜLLER

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Citizenship: Slovak Republic (E.U.)  
 Permanent Residency: U.S.A.

### EMPLOYMENT

2011 – Present      **Department of Philosophy, University of California, Riverside**  
*Assistant Professor of Philosophy*  
 Affiliated Member: Tri-Campus (UCI-UCSD-UCR) Classics Graduate Program

2006 – 2011      **Department of Philosophy, University of Florida, Gainesville**  
*Assistant Professor of Philosophy* (provisional status: 2006-2008)

### EDUCATION

2001 – 2008      **Princeton University**  
*Ph.D. in Philosophy*  
 Program in Classical Philosophy  
 Dissertation: *Aristotle on Decision and Actions from Lack of Control*  
 Advisors: John M. Cooper & Hendrik Lorenz

1996 – 2001      **Faculty of Philosophy, Comenius University, Slovakia**  
*Mgr.* (Master) cum laude, 2001  
*Philosophy & Aesthetics* with additional concentration in *Classics*.  
 Slovak Republic Secondary Education Teaching Certificate for  
 Philosophy, Civic Education, Aesthetics, and History of Art

04 – 07/2000      **Institute of Philosophy, University of Hamburg, Germany**  
 undergraduate visiting student (*Philosophy*)

1998 – 1999      **Rutgers University**  
 undergraduate exchange student (*Philosophy & Classics*)

1997 – 2000      **Faculty of Management, Comenius University, Slovakia**  
*Mgr.* (Master), *Human Resource Management*, 2000

1994 – 1997      **Faculty of Management, Comenius University, Slovakia**  
*Bc.* (Bachelor), *Business Administration*, 1997

### RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

**Area of Specialization:** Ancient Philosophy  
**Areas of Teaching Competence:** Aesthetics, History of Ethics, Philosophy of Action & Free Will,  
 Early Chinese philosophy

## PUBLICATIONS

### Peer-reviewed Articles:

1. "Aristotle and the Origins of Evil," forthcoming in *Phronesis*, 2020, vol. 65., no. 2.
2. "Aristotle on Virtue of Character and the Authority of Reason," *Phronesis*, 2019, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 10-56.
3. "Practical and Productive Thinking in Aristotle," *Phronesis*, 2018, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 148-175.
4. "What Aristotelian Decisions Cannot Be," *Ancient Philosophy*, 2016, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 173-195.
5. "Agency and Responsibility in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*," *Phronesis*, 2015, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 206-251.
6. "Aristotle on Actions from Lack of Control," *Philosopher's Imprint*, in March 2015, vol. 15, no. 8, pp. 1-35.
7. "Aristotle on Vice," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 2015, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 459-477.

### Article in a Peer-reviewed Volume:

8. "The Politics of Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's *Republic*," in N. Thaler, and S. Weisser, *Strategies of Polemics*, Brill, 2016, 93-112.

### Reviews:

1. T. Angier: *Techne in Aristotle's Ethics*, in *Ancient Philosophy* 2013, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 213-217.
2. P. Gottlieb, *The Virtue of Aristotle's Ethics*, in *Phoenix (Journal of the Classical Association of Canada)*, vol. 66, 2012
3. D. Konstan: *Before forgiveness: the origins of a moral idea*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* vol. 132, 2012.
4. H. May: *Aristotle's Ethics (Moral Development and Human Nature)*, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (<http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=23670>)

### Interview:

*O filozofii, jej dejinách a spôsobe ich skúmania* (On philosophy, its history, and history of philosophy as a discipline): *Ostium* 15:3 (<http://ostium.sk/language/sk/o-filozofii-jej-dejinach-a-sposobe-ich-skumania-rozhovor-pavla-labudu-s-jozefom-mullerom/>).

## WORK IN PROGRESS

### Books:

*Aristotle's Characters* (under contract with OUP for 2020)

(A study of Aristotle's moral psychology)

*Aristotelés o pôžitku* (*Aristotle on Pleasure*)

(Slovak translation of *NE* 7.11-14 and 10.1-5, incl. introduction and commentary)

## TALKS, COMMENTS, SEMINARS & PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

### Upcoming:

December 9-10, 2019

University of Pittsburgh

Past:

- April 20, 2019                      Comments on Tyler Haddow, “Habit, Familiarity, and Perceptiveness,” Pacific APA, Vancouver
- March 25-27, 2018                “Aristotle on Practical Wisdom” & “Aristotle on Self-Control,” Cornell University (Ancient Philosophy Visitor)
- November 27-28, 2018            “Aristotle on Virtue of Character and Practical Wisdom,” Universidade de São Paulo (cancelled due to illness, to be rescheduled)
- March 27-30, 2018                Comments on Corinne Gartner: “Aristotle on Friends and the Activity of Self-Observing,” Aristotle *Symposium*, Pacific APA, San Diego
- December 15, 2017                “Aristotle on the Authority of Reason,” NYU
- November 28, 2017                “Aristotle and the meaning of *to kalon*,” UCR Faculty Colloquium
- September 29, 2017                “*Posterior Analytics* 2.11,” Charles University, Prague (Czech Republic), South-East European Association for Ancient Philosophy workshop on Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*
- August 26, 2017                    “Productive and Practical Thinking in Aristotle,” Conference *Virtue, Skill and Practical Reason*, University of Cape Town (South Africa)
- May 21, 2017                        Comments on Willie Costello: “Socrates and Plato against the immoralist: Responding to Callicles’ critique,” 10th West Coast Plato Workshop, UC Davis
- April 13, 2017:                      “How Is the ‘Chiming Together’ of the Rational and the Non-rational Part of the Soul Possible?” Symposium Paper, Pacific APA, Seattle
- December 5, 2016:                Comments on Brennan McDavid: “Aristotle and the Uniqueness Thesis”, Princeton Classical Philosophy Colloquium
- September 19, 2016:              “On the ‘Chiming Together’ of the Rational and the Non-rational Part of the Soul in Aristotle”, Catholic University, Ružomberok, Slovakia
- September 14, 2016:              “Varieties of Injustice”, Prague Workshop on *NE V.1-5*, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
- September 12, 2016:              “On the ‘Chiming Together’ of the Rational and the Non-rational Part of the Soul in Aristotle”, Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia
- July 22, 2016:                        “On the ‘Chiming Together’ of the Rational and the Non-rational Part of the Soul in Aristotle”, Munich-Princeton-Renmin Conference on Ancient Philosophy, Renmin University of China, Beijing China
- May 23, 2016:                        "Aristotle and the Origins of Evil", World Congress of Philosophy, Aristotle: 2400 years, Thessaloniki, Greece
- September 20, 2015:              “*Magna Moralia’s* Criticism of the Form of the Good” Berkeley-Munich Ancient Philosophy Conference, UC Berkeley.
- June 22, 2015:                        “Emotions and Decision,” IHP workshop *Aristotle on Emotions*, Emory University.
- April 4, 2015:                        “Aristotle on the Origins of Evil,” Symposium “*Is Aristotle’s appeal to human nature an ‘Archimedean point’ in his ethics?*” Pacific APA, Vancouver.
- February 28, 2015:                “Decision, Pleasure, and Moral virtue,” Aristotle “Bash” Conference, UCLA.
- December 18, 2014:                “The Necessary and The Fine,” Louvain Workshop on *EN IV.1 and 3*, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium.
- November 7 & 14, 2014:            “*De Anima* 3.3,” Ancient Philosophy Seminar, UC Berkeley.
- May 23, 2014:                        “Agency and Responsibility in Aristotle,” UC San Diego.

- April 14, 2014: “Aristotle and the Origins of Evil,” UCR Ancient Philosophy Conference.
- December 5, 2013: “Agency and Responsibility in Aristotle,” Colgate University.
- June 23, 2013: “Causes, Norms, and Responsibility in Aristotle,” Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.
- March 9, 2012: “Aristotle on the role of *Phantasia* in Uncontrolled Behavior,” UC Irvine.
- May 14, 2010: “Aristotle’s Theory of Uncontrolled Action,” UC Davis.
- January 13, 2010: “Pleasure and Decision,” Harvard University.
- May 1, 2006: “Tug of War: Aristotle on *Akrasia*,” Workshop: Aristotle on Knowledge and *Akrasia*, University of Toronto, Canada.

### OTHER TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

- March 14, 2011: “Why Do We Value Art? And Should We?” Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, Gainesville

### ORGANIZING EXPERIENCE

UCR Ancient Philosophy Conference: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, and (upcoming) 2020.  
(the programs are available at <https://www.jozefmuller.org/ucr-conference.html>)

### TEACHING & SUPERVISION

#### Dissertation Committee:

Current:	T. de Liège	<i>A Problem for Neo-Aristotelian Ethics</i> (co-chair)
2012:	C.S. Sevier:	<i>Thomas Aquinas On the Nature and Experience of Beauty</i> (member)

#### Graduate Courses:

##### University of California, Riverside:

Spring 2020:	PHIL 282: Academic Skepticism (upcoming)
Spring 2019:	PHIL 282: Aristotle’s <i>Posterior Analytics</i>
Spring 2018:	PHIL 282: Plato’s <i>Protagoras</i> and <i>Gorgias</i>
Spring 2017:	PHIL 282: Aristotle on Agency
Spring 2015:	PHIL 282: <i>Plato’s Republic</i>
Spring 2014:	PHIL 281: <i>Aristotle’s De Anima</i>
Spring 2013:	PHIL 282/CLAS 220: <i>Ancient Theories of Emotions</i> ( <i>Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Plotinus, and Augustine</i> ) (The seminar was offered as part of the Tri-Campus Classics Graduate Program housed at UC Irvine)
Spring 2012:	PHIL 282: <i>Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics</i>

#### Graduate and Faculty Reading Groups:

Winter 2014 (with Mark Wrathall):  
Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* Θ 1-3 and Heidegger’s Commentary on *Met.* Θ 1-3

#### Selected Undergraduate Courses:

University of California, Riverside

PHIL 169e:	<i>Ethics</i>
PHIL 100:	<i>Sophomore-Junior Seminar (includes readings in both contemporary and history philosophy, including non-western philosophy):</i> <i>Spring 2019: Human Nature</i> <i>Winter 2015: Friendship</i> <i>Winter 2014: Free Will</i> <i>Winter 2012: Pleasure</i>
PHIL 120e:	<i>Ancient Greek Philosophy</i> <i>Plato: Theaetetus, Philebus, &amp; Timaeus</i> <i>Plato: Protagoras &amp; Gorgias</i> <i>Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics</i> <i>Plato: Republic</i> <i>Aristotle: De Anima</i>
PHIL 122e	<i>Topics in History of Philosophy</i> <i>Hellenistic Ethics (Cicero's De Finibus)</i>
PHIL 030e:	<i>Introduction to Ancient Greek Philosophy (Presocratics, Plato, Aristotle)</i>
PHIL 030f:	<i>Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy (Stoics, Epicureans, Skeptics)</i>

University of Florida:

PHH 3100:	<i>Ancient Greek Philosophy</i>
PHP 4930:	<i>Love and Friendship</i>
PHI 3930:	Special Topics: <i>Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art</i> <i>Aristotle: Physics</i>
PHI 4662:	<i>Ethical Theory</i>
PHH 4141:	<i>Plato: Parmenides &amp; Sophist</i> <i>Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics</i>

**Supervised Honors Theses:**

Spring 2011:	Van Tu:	<i>Aesthetic Contextualism: An Explanation and Defense</i>
Spring 2010:	Corbin Page:	<i>The Necessity of Flourishing: An Aristotelian Response to Kant's Critique of Eudaimonism</i>

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

**Peer Review:**

Philosophy:	<i>Ancient Philosophy, Apeiron, Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, Australasian Journal of Philosophy, British Journal for the History of Philosophy, Dialogue, History of Philosophy Quarterly, Inquiry, Journal of Value Inquiry, Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, Philosopher's Imprint, Philosophical Explorations, Review of Metaphysics, Sophia, Organon F (Slovak Rep.), Filozofia (Slovak Rep.)</i>
Classics:	<i>Polis, Classical Review, Eirene (Czech Rep.), Listy Filologické (Czech Rep.)</i>

**DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE**

**University of California, Riverside**

- Placement Committee (2011-present)
- Lecturer in Philosophy Search Committee (2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18)
- Library Committee (2016-2018)
- 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Century Continental Philosophy Search Committee (2013-14)

- Graduate Admission Committee (2012-13)

**University of Florida:**

- Graduate Admission Committee (2007-11)
- *Ad Hoc* Peer-review Committee (2010-11)
- Ethics Search Committee (2009-10)

**UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

**University of California, Riverside**

Student Services Fee Advisory Committee (2011-2012)

**University of Florida:**

Center of Humanities and Public Sphere, Advisory Board (2009-2011)

**LANGUAGES**

Slovak (native), Czech (native level competency), English (fluent), German (fluent), French (proficient),  
Classical Greek, Latin (professional reading competence)

**RESEARCH STATEMENT**

My current research aims to understand Aristotle's view of the human condition through his account of the four paradigmatic ethical characters that he recognizes – the virtuous, the self-controlled, the uncontrolled, and the vicious. With two exceptions ('The Politics of Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's *Republic*' and 'Aristotle and the Origins of Evil'), all my published articles stem from this general interest, dealing either with topics directly related to Aristotle's accounts of the various characters ('Aristotle on Actions from Lack of Control', 'What Aristotelian Decisions Cannot Be', 'Aristotle on Vice', 'Aristotle on Virtue of Character and the Authority of Reason') or with closely related (although in some ways independent) issues ('Practical and Productive Reasoning in Aristotle', 'Agency and Responsibility in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*'). This project will see its completion in my forthcoming book, entitled *Aristotle's Characters*. The book builds on the published articles (often modifying them substantively) as well as adds entirely new chapters on practical wisdom and self-control. Since my view of Aristotle's ethics and moral psychology has developed overtime, I will first outline the development as it is reflected in the published articles, before I briefly describe the book project (part I). I will conclude with a description of the articles that stand somewhat apart from this project (part II).

## I

One way to characterize my general approach is by focusing on the tension that arises among Aristotle's various characterizations of what constitutes a character. The four characters seem to fall into two groups. On the one hand, the virtuous and the vicious characters seem to be best characterized in terms of the values that people of those characters exhibit – the virtuous person has the right values (i.e., knows what is good and bad), while the vicious person does not (i.e., is ignorant of what is good and bad). On the other hand, the self-controlled and the uncontrolled characters seem to be best characterized in terms of the way in which the two ethically relevant parts of the soul, the rational and the non-rational one, cooperate – in the self-controlled agent the non-rational part obeys the rational part, while in the uncontrolled agent it does not. The division between these two groups can be further strengthened by observing that we sometimes find self-control and lack of control ascribed to the virtuous (self-control) and the vicious (lack of control) characters as their features rather than being treated as full-fledged characters themselves.

The leading question of my research is then this: what is the relationship between the values one holds and the level of cooperation between the two soul parts? The usual answer to this question in the literature is that the obedience of the non-rational part is not tied, in any particular way, to the kind of values one holds. The non-rational part obeys the rational part whether one has the right values (as in the virtuous or the self-controlled person) or does not have them (as in the vicious person). In fact, it appears to disobey it even when one has the right values (as in the uncontrolled person). The main line of my research can be seen as first accepting this framework, concentrating on the problem of uncontrolled actions but gradually developing a different view, one according to which there is a close relationship between one's rationally adopted values and the way in which one's non-rational desires cooperate with the prescriptions or commands of reason (this thesis will see its full-fledged defense in the book).

In one of my first publications, '[Aristotle on Actions from Lack of Control](#)', I have assumed the usual view that the uncontrolled agent has the right values and so knows that her uncontrolled action is bad in the strong sense, that is, as judged in view of the right values as she herself possesses them. The paper then argues that Aristotle accepts two, on the face of it incompatible, claims: (1) that knowledge of what is good provides decisive motivation to action (and that the uncontrolled agent *has* that knowledge); and (2) that the uncontrolled person nevertheless ends up acting against her knowledge of what is good. This creates a philosophical puzzle (for Aristotle) and the paper tries to offer an interpretation of the content of Aristotle's solution along with an interpretation of the structure of the famously complicated *NE* 7.3 in which the solution occurs.

Briefly, I defend three claims in the paper. First, I argue that the first part of *NE* 7.3 contains the description of the overall state of mind of the agent *while* she acts without control rather than, as has been traditionally thought, preliminary logical distinctions. Aristotle's solution to the problem of uncontrolled action lies in the analogy between the uncontrolled agent and people who are drunk, mad, or asleep. I interpret the analogy as meaning that the uncontrolled agent, while acting without control, is still in possession of her knowledge but she is unable to use it *as* knowledge due to the temporary disablement of her reason by appetite. I distinguish the ability to use knowledge *as* knowledge from the ability to use information contained in what one knows. The uncontrolled agent's disablement concerns only the former ability. As I argue, due to this disablement, the uncontrolled agent is temporarily unable to be

motivated to act by her knowledge and acts merely on her appetite. Second, I argue that the second part of *NE* 7.3 provides an analysis of the particular mental state from which the uncontrolled action issues. Its central passage (the famous two-syllogism passage) is a description of the uncontrolled agent's state of mind *before* the uncontrolled action and not, as it has been traditionally understood, a description of her state of mind during the uncontrolled action. Third, I argue that, on Aristotle's view, the transition from the state before the uncontrolled action to the state in which the agent already acts without control does not involve any psychological or mental state or act that would constitute the agent's choice to abandon her decision and give in to her desires. The explanation of this transition proceeds, according to Aristotle, on a physiological level.

A crucial feature of my account of Aristotle's view of uncontrolled actions is the idea that the uncontrolled agent acts against her decision (*prohairesis*) which expresses her knowledge or beliefs about what she should or should not do. The paper assumed the widely accepted view that decisions are purely rational psychological states, based on (and constituted solely by) a rational kind of desire Aristotle calls 'wish' and the agent's deliberation. In my second paper, 'What Aristotelian Decisions Cannot Be', I have come to doubt the correctness of this view of decision, even as I have continued to think that some features of the accepted view are correct (for example, that decisions have essential connection to deliberation and that wish always plays a crucial role in the formation of a decision). The argument in the paper turns on the existence of the so-called harmless pleasures and the possibility that the virtuous person engages in actions that aim at such pleasures. Harmless pleasures are characterized by two features: (1) the fact that they have no further (whether good or bad) consequences and (2) the fact that they do not possess any fineness (as opposed to mere pleasantness). Plato, for example, sees them as unworthy of pursuit. Aristotle, however, assigns them a particular function in the life of the virtuous agent – they are useful for the sake of relaxation that enables one to recuperate and, subsequently, engage in serious (virtuous or fine) activities again. However, in order to fulfill this function, harmless pleasures cannot be pursued instrumentally. Rather, they fulfill their purpose only when they are pursued simply as such, that is, simply for enjoyment. But this means that the virtuous agent can and sometimes does *decide* to engage in certain activities simply because they are pleasant or enjoyable, without aiming on anything else beyond that pleasure. The problem is that, given the usual assumptions about Aristotle's conceptions of decision, rational desire, and deliberation, such decisions (of the virtuous agent) cannot be explained merely by her rational desires and deliberation – their explanations must appeal to non-rational desires. This, however, should not be the case – on the standard view, decisions are fully explained by rational desires and deliberation about such desires.

'What Aristotelian Decisions Cannot Be' is a largely negative paper. It suggests a problem in the way in which we conceive of the virtuous person's psychology of decisions but it does not offer much in terms of answers about how to solve the problem (whether by modifying some parts of the standard view or by changing the framework in which the problem occurs entirely). I took a further (and more positive) step away from the standard conception of Aristotle's moral psychology in 'Aristotle on Vice'. In this paper I argued that the widely held view that Aristotle's vicious agent is a principled follower of a wrong conception of the good whose soul, just like the soul of the virtuous agent, is marked by harmony between his reason and non-rational desires is an exegetical mistake. Rather, Aristotle holds – consistently and throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* – that the vicious agent lacks any real principles of action (i.e., a conception of the good) and that his soul lacks unity and harmony even more than the soul of the uncontrolled (akratic) agent.

Although the paper itself does not explore the issue, its conclusion suggests that the vicious agent, due to her lack of knowledge of what is good (and so due to her having the wrong values) cannot bring her non-rational desires into harmony with (and under the control) of her reason. This consequence along with the issues explored in 'What Aristotelian Decision Cannot Be' led me to doubt the validity of the standard understanding of Aristotle's conception of virtue of character and of the distinction between the rational and the non-rational part. As is well-known, the standard understanding generates a number of exegetical problems:

1. It is difficult to explain how Aristotle can think that non-rational desires, which are not supposed to be sensitive to judgments of goodness, can come to desire (or otherwise relate to) things *directly* as the result of reason prescribing it. In fact, the standard view must argue that Aristotle does not think (despite his frequent statements to the contrary).

2. It is difficult to explain why Aristotle defines virtue of character in terms of decisions when decisions seem to be the work of reason and virtue of character is primarily the state of the non-rational part of the soul.
3. It is difficult to explain why Aristotle thinks that practical wisdom and virtue of character cannot exist apart when the former is supposed to be the virtue of the rational part and the latter of the non-rational part and the parts do not seem to obviously depend on each other.
4. It is difficult to explain why Aristotle treats activities of virtues of character as intrinsically good things that constitute happiness while also explicitly identifying happiness with contemplation.
5. It is difficult to explain why Aristotle repeatedly asserts that virtue makes the goal correct and practical wisdom the things that promote it while at the same time recommending a life that is guided by and led by reason.

It seemed to me that the problem is not so much that no solution to these problems can be offered (after all, many have been offered) but, rather, that the available solutions are exegetically very difficult and hard to square with textual evidence. Moreover, it is striking that Aristotle does not seem to be aware of these problems, even as they are rather obviously generated by his own division of the soul. For example, why would he not see that if he denies that practical wisdom sets or provides the goals for actions, he should not be claiming (at least not without much clarification) that good life is a life guided by (and lived according to) reason and not according to feelings and emotions?

In ‘Aristotle on Virtue of Character and the Authority of Reason’, I came to think that the fault lies in several tacit (and on the face of it innocuous) assumptions that the standard view accepts. There are at least three such assumptions:

- A. The division of the soul into the rational and the non-rational parts is to be *primarily* understood in terms of the different cognitive (and to them corresponding conative) features or characteristics of those parts.
- B. The rational and the non-rational parts have not only different but also independent spheres of interest.
- C. The mechanism of rational guidance of non-rational desires, however it is to be understood, is in principle available to all types of agents (virtuous or not).

The paper explored Aristotle’s view of virtue of character while rejecting these assumptions. Instead, it argues that the following claims should be adopted:

- A\*: The division of the soul into the rational and the non-rational parts in the ethical and political works is to be *primarily* understood in terms of prescribing and commanding directions, rules and plans (for the rational part) and of following or obeying them (for the non-rational part).
- B\*: The interests of the two parts of the soul can intersect insofar as through habituation the non-rational part can come to find the activities of the rational part attractive. In fact, given its natural disposition to follow or obey the rational part, it can come to *enjoy* following or obeying the rational part. Hence, it is possible that the interest of the non-rational part come to depend on those of the rational part.
- C\*: The virtuous person has at her disposal mechanism of rational guidance of non-rational desires that is specific to her since it is enabled only by the virtuous disposition of the non-rational part of the soul.

The resulting account of Aristotle’s conception of virtue of character can be summarized as follows. The central feature of virtue of character is a certain kind (the virtuous one) of self-love. In its essence, virtue of character is a non-rational, habitual attachment to *true* reason and intellectual activities. The virtuous person finds (non-rationally) pleasant primarily her internal intellectual activities, in particular her deliberative processes (and does so insofar as they are true) rather than the various correct external things with which her actions are concerned (e.g. the right kinds of food). This is perhaps the most striking feature of the account, one that makes the view markedly different from other interpretations of virtue of character. She is the kind of person who loves, and so *feels a need* to think or deliberate about what to do whenever that is possible and appropriate. She is the lover of correct reason and good reasoning and ‘for each person that which he is said to be the lover of is pleasant’ (NE 1.8, 1099a7-8). This view enables me to offer, among other things, a new interpretation of Aristotle’s definition of virtue of character as *hexis*

*prohairesis* (problem 2 above) as a state of the non-rational part of the soul that makes one prone to making and acting on decisions in virtue of that part's standing in the right relation to (correct) reason.

Insofar as my book project (*Aristotle's Characters*) is concerned, 'Aristotle on Virtue of Character and the Authority of Reason' forms the first half of Part I of the book which is concerned with the virtuous character. The second half provides separate accounts of practical thinking and of practical wisdom, building on 'Practical and Productive Reasoning in Aristotle'. In this paper, I spell out what makes practical thinking *practical* by contrasting it with productive thinking rather than, as it is usually done, with theoretical thinking. As I argue, the contrast with theoretical thinking cannot tell us what makes practical reasoning practical. Practical thinking is distinguished from theoretical one by being goal-oriented in the sense of aiming at something beyond its own activity. But that feature distinguishes theoretical thinking not only from practical but also from productive thinking. And yet productive thinking is not, on Aristotle's view, capable of initiating movement or production (whereas practical thinking is). Hence, if we want to find out what makes it *practical*, we need to see what distinguishes it from productive thinking. As I argue, on Aristotle's account, *practical* thinking is thinking whose origin (*archè*) is a desire that has as its object the very thing that one reasons about how to promote. This feature distinguishes practical from productive reasoning since in the latter the desire that initiates it is not (unless incidentally) a desire for the object that one productively reasons about. This has several important consequences: (a) there is only a contingent relationship between the desire that one practically reasons about how to satisfy and the action one decides on; (b) practical thinking and action cannot be separated from the agent, whereas productive thinking and production can be outsourced to someone else.

This account of practical thinking suggests a problem for the way scholars have generally discussed practical wisdom. A widespread view of Aristotle's conception of practical wisdom (though certainly not universally accepted one) is that it consists in the correct grasp of the true conception of *eudaimonia* from which the agent reasons out how to act in a given situation. However, if there is only a contingent relationship between the desire that one practically reasons about how to satisfy and the action that one decides on, how could a correct grasp of *eudaimonia*, in and of itself, make one capable of figuring out how to promote it, that is, make one practically wise? The chapter on practical wisdom argues that it cannot do so. More importantly, it argues that practical wisdom is not primarily knowledge of *eudaimonia* but, rather, knowledge (distinct from knowledge of *eudaimonia*) that enables one to correctly and reliably figure out what to do in order to promote it. This account can be (very briefly) summarized as follows. If the central feature of virtue of character is a certain kind (the virtuous one) of self-love, the central feature of practical wisdom is self-knowledge, both in the sense of knowledge of one's own particular practical self and of human nature in general. This self-knowledge constitutes the content of practical wisdom which enables the agent who possesses it to engage in the characteristic activity of agents that are practically wise, namely in good deliberation about 'living well in general'.

This interlocking account enables elegant and simple solutions to a number of exegetical problems, including the ones listed above. For example, concerning problem 3 above I argue that since virtue of character centrally involved habitual love of practical wisdom (manifested in the agent's need to guide her life by deliberation), it becomes obvious why it cannot exist without practical wisdom. Similarly, the kind of knowledge that constitutes practical wisdom essentially involves understanding and acceptance of the truth of the *normative* or *ideal* development of human nature. But such understanding cannot be acquired (i.e., accepted and believed to be true) without appropriately attuned sensibility to the fine or beautiful order and workings of nature in general and of *human* nature in particular. But to develop the right sensibility to things insofar as they are fine or beautiful (*kala*) just is to develop virtue of character as Aristotle understands it. One can only truly believe what human beings should be like if one is sufficiently similar to that ideal development. As Aristotle says, most people cannot be persuaded by arguments (no matter how good) about what they should be like or be doing because they have never 'tasted the fine'.

Part II of the monograph turns to the three non-virtuous characters recognized by Aristotle, namely the self-controlled, the uncontrolled, and the vicious character. Although this part builds on 'Aristotle on Actions from Lack of Control' and 'Aristotle on Vice', it departs significantly from the understanding of the uncontrolled character (even if the details of the interpretation of uncontrolled action remain the same). It also adds a new chapter on the self-controlled character. Since the view of vice remains the same as discussed above, I focus on the other two cases. Scholars generally think that the virtuous, the self-controlled, and the uncontrolled person all have correct beliefs (or knowledge) and so engage in correct reasoning about what to do. They differ insofar as the self-controlled and the uncontrolled person's non-rational desires are not in agreement with reason, that is, are not directed at the right external things (or not directed at them in the right way) as the virtuous person's desires are.

I argue that this picture is incorrect. First, I argue that both the self-controlled and the uncontrolled person have false beliefs (and so lack knowledge) about what is good. Although they reason correctly about what to do in cases in which their non-rational desires urge them to act in wrong ways, their reasoning is not grounded in (correct) understanding of human nature and in the (associated) acceptance of true values. They do reason correctly but only because the wrong actions to which their desires urge them conflict with the demands of virtues independently of whether those virtues are adopted by the agents as intrinsically good ends or as merely instrumentally good things. As I argue, both the self-controlled and the uncontrolled agent have only instrumental conceptions of virtues precisely because their character (i.e., the state of their non-rational desires) lacks the right orientation towards reason. This means that they cannot experience virtuous goals and actions as truly intrinsically worthwhile. Consequently, their commitment to virtues is always conditional. Nevertheless, unlike the vicious person they do have stable (even if only partially correct) conceptions of what is good or worthwhile, and this allows them on the relevant occasion to manipulate their desires to conform to virtues.

## II

### Agency and Responsibility in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*

One of the central problems for any account of Aristotle's theory of character and action, especially of uncontrolled character and action, is the way in which the agent can be held responsible for her character and actions. The paper defends two main theses. First, I argue that Aristotle's account of voluntary action focuses on the conditions under which one is the cause of one's actions in virtue of being (*qua*) the individual that one is. Aristotle contrasts voluntary action not only with involuntary action but also with cases in which one acts (or does something) due to one's nature (for example, in virtue of being a member of a certain species) rather than due to one's own desires (i.e. *qua* individual). An action can be attributed to one *qua* individual in two distinct ways depending on whether one is a rational or a non-rational animal. One is responsible for one's action in both cases, but only in the former case is one also responsible for being the sort of individual that performs it. Aristotle also distinguishes two ways in which an action can be compelled while still being an action of the agent. In the first case, one is compelled by (physically) external forces or circumstances to act against one's internal impulse. In the second case, one is compelled to act on (internal) impulses that are fixed by one's nature against one's own individual impulse. This latter kind of compelled action is only possible in the case of rational agents. Second, I argue that Aristotle's conception of what it is to be a cause of an action inevitably brings in certain normative features which support evaluative judgments and the practice of praise and blame. On Aristotle's view, any goal-directed behavior that is properly attributable to an individual is (normally) subject to standards that pertain to behavior of that sort. At the most basic level, these standards establish what counts as a successful realization of the goal that one aims at. Thus even in the case of non-rational animals (or children), one can judge the success of what they are doing and encourage (or discourage) similar behavior by praise or blame. These standards are applicable to one's conduct simply insofar as one is the controlling origin (or efficient cause) of one's action *qua* individual. In the case of rational agents, the practice of praise and blame can involve a further normative layer since they can be praised or blamed not only for acting in a certain way so as to encourage or discourage them with a view to the future, but also for being – and having become – individuals of a certain sort. Nevertheless, the applicability of such evaluative judgments and of praise and blame is still warranted by one's being the controlling origin of one's actions *qua* the individual one is (in this case, *qua* rational individual). As I argue, it is true, as some scholars maintain, that Aristotle's theory of responsibility is a causal rather than moral one, but it is not true that it is completely separated from questions of values. In a way, my interpretation mediates between scholars who see Aristotle's theory as a theory of moral responsibility and those who see it as a theory of causal responsibility by shifting the focus of the debate onto a different kind of theory of responsibility.

### Aristotle and the Origins of Evil

In this paper, I address the following question: why do human beings, on Aristotle's view, have an innate tendency to badness, that is, to developing desires that go beyond, and often against, their natural needs? Given Aristotle's teleological assumptions (including the thesis that nature does nothing in vain), such tendency should not be present. I argue that the culprit is to be found in the workings of rationality. In particular, it is the presence of theoretical reason that necessitates the decoupling of human desires from human natural needs and, in turn, accounts for the limitless nature of human non-rational desires. In order to locate the precise moment in which human desires become decoupled from human natural needs,

the paper employs a philosophical (rather than exegetical) method of creature construction, constructing human beings with only productive thought (*Homo Faber*), with productive and practical thought (*Homo Prudens*) and finally with the addition of theoretical thought (*Homo Sapiens*).

The Politics of Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's *Republic*

This is a paper on a special topic, written on invitation to contribute to a volume on polemics. The paper concentrates on some of the more peculiar, perhaps even polemical, features of Aristotle's discussions of Plato's *Republic* in the second book of the *Politics*. These features include Aristotle's several rather sharp or ironic remarks about Socrates and his project in the *Republic*, his use of rhetorical questions, or his tendency to bring out the most extreme consequences of Socrates's theory (such as that it will destroy the *polis* and that it will lead to incestuous relationships). As I argue, some of these polemical features result from the special character of Socrates' theory that Aristotle criticizes whereas others are consciously aimed at countering the attractive force of Socrates's image of the ideal city, which can and does appeal to readers over and above its theoretical, purely rational credentials.