

Found in Translation:
Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 3. 5, 1113^b7-8 and its Reception

SUSANNE BOBZIEN

THIS paper is distinctly odd. It demonstrates what happens when an analytical philosopher and historian of philosophy tries their hand at the presently trending topic of reception. For a novice to this genre, it seemed advisable to start small. Rather than researching the reception of an author or a book, chapter, section, or paragraph, the focus of this paper is on one sentence: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 3. 5, 1113^b7-8. This sentence has markedly shaped scholarly and general opinion alike with regard to Aristotle's theory of free will. In addition, it has taken on a curious life of its own. Part one of the paper examines the text itself. Part two explores its reception from antiquity to the present day, including present-day popular culture, later ancient, Byzantine, Arabic, Latin Medieval, Renaissance, Victorian and contemporary scholarship. There are some surprises on the way.

Part I: The Text of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.5 1113b7-8

1. *EN* 1113b7-8: an English translation and the Greek text

One of the most famous sentences from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN*) comes from his discussion of the voluntary (τὸ ἐκούσιον), choice (προαίρεσις) and of what is up

© Susanne Bobzien 2013

Thanks to Dimitri Gutas, Stephen Menn and Geoffrey Moseley for assisting me with the Arabic text of the *EN*; to Katerina Ierodiakonou, for sharing some of her expertise in Byzantine philosophy; and to the audience at the Princeton Colloquium in April 2011, where I presented parts of this paper (under the title 'Found in Translation') in draft form. Additional thanks go to Charles Brittain for his insightful remarks on a later draft, to Dorothea Frede and Brad Inwood for their judicious suggestions for further improving the paper, and to Sara Protasi for help with the bibliography.

to us or in our power (ἐφ' ἡμῶν), towards the beginning of *EN* III.5. Here is a much-quoted translation of the lines:

(A)(1) For where we are free to act we are also free to refrain from acting, (2) and where we are able to say No we are also able to say Yes.¹

The phrases 'we are free to' and 'we are able to' both (seem to) translate ἐφ' ἡμῶν <ἐστίν>. This sentence from the *EN* often seems to be considered crucial for the interpretation of Aristotle's view on the question of whether humans have indeterminist free choice.² Here are the Greek lines of which (A) is purported to be a translation, from Bywater's Oxford edition:³

(B)(1) ἐν οἷς γὰρ ἐφ' ἡμῶν τὸ πράττειν, καὶ τὸ μὴ πράττειν, (2) καὶ ἐν οἷς τὸ μὴ, καὶ τὸ ναί·

There are no variants for our sentence in the *apparatus criticus*. (C) and (D) are two word-by-word literal (and thus somewhat unsightly) translations:

(C)(1) For, where to act is up to us, also to not act <is up to us>, and where to not <is up to us>, also to yes <is up to us>.

(D)(1) For, where (the) acting is up to us, also (the) not acting <is up to us>, (2) and where (the) not <is up to us>, also (the) yes <is up to us>.

¹ Arist. *EN* 1113b7-8, tr. Rackham, 1926.

² P. Destrée, 'Aristotle on Responsibility for one's Character' ['Character'], in M. Pakaluk & G. Pearson (eds.), *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle* (Oxford, 2003), Sections I and II; F. Sparshott, *Taking Life Seriously: A Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics [Life]* (Toronto, 1994), 130; C. Rapp, 'Freiwilligkeit, Entscheidung und Verantwortlichkeit (III 1-7)' in O. Höffe (ed.), *Aristoteles: Die Nikomachische Ethik [Freiwilligkeit]* (Berlin, 1995), 109-133, at 131; also many of the authors mentioned in Section 7 below. The general idea is often that our free (unpredetermined, uncaused or unforced) choice is manifested or expressed in our ability to say either 'no' or 'yes' to (to either reject or choose) the course of action we deliberate about. For a detailed discussion see S. Bobzien, 'Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1113b7-8 and Free Choice', in P. Destrée, R. Salles and M. Zingano (eds.), *What is up to us? Studies on Causality and Responsibility in Ancient Philosophy* (Sankt Augustin, 2013), forthcoming. See also below, Section 13.

³ J. Bywater, *Aristotle's Ethica Nicomachea* (Oxford, 1894).

The insertions in angled brackets in (C) and (D) seem not to be questioned by anyone. So I will not argue for them. (C) and (D) differ as follows. (C) keeps the syntactical role of the Greek τὸ the same in (1) and (2), i.e. as introducing an infinitival clause; in (2) these clauses would be abbreviated. (D) replicates the grammatical category of the Greek word τὸ (as definite article) by adding the English 'the' in brackets. It does not imply a parallelism of infinitival clauses between (1) and (2). I do not see how one can retain both points in one English translation, which is why I have opted for two.

Now to the points that matter: (i) There is no word for 'saying', or for anything similar, in the Greek text. In any rendering that has a verb of saying, meaning, intending, etc., this verb is an *addition* by the translator. And in supplying such a verb, translators imply that they read or interpret the passage in a particular way. (ii) There is no word for 'no' in the Greek text. The word that appears to have been translated by 'no' does not mean no, and in the present use it means not.

For something like (A) to be justified as a translation of (B), we hence should want at least two of the following three points satisfied: **2.** We would want some textual parallels, in which the Greek for 'to not ... to yes' has the meaning of 'to say 'no' ... to say 'yes' ', with a verb of saying either explicitly given or indubitably understood; these passages should preferably be by Aristotle, or roughly from Aristotle's time (plus/minus 500 years, say). **3.** We would want an explanation how exactly to read (B) to mean something like (A), i.e. involving a verb of saying and 'yes' and 'no'. **4.** We would want there to be no reasonable alternative interpretation that does not insert a verb of saying and does not render μή by 'no'. We take these three points in turn.

2. Parallel passages considered

Our *EN* passage seems unique in ancient Greek texts in having τὸ μή and τὸ ναί directly opposed to each other, functioning as part of an abbreviation for something (if unclear so far for what). *A fortiori*, there seem to be no parallels in which the Greek for 'to not ... to

yes' has the meaning of 'to say 'no' ... to say 'yes' ', with a verb of saying either explicitly given or indubitably understood. Or in any event nobody has put one forward yet. The closest passages in Aristotle's oeuvre are apparently the following six:

- A dialectical proposition must be such that one can answer it with yes or no.
ἔστι γὰρ πρότασις διαλεκτικὴ πρὸς ἣν ἔστιν ἀποκρίνασθαι ναί ἢ οὐ· (*Top.*158a15-17)
- But if the question is clear and simple, he should answer either yes or no.
ἐὰν δὲ καὶ σαφὲς ἦ καὶ ἀπλοῦν τὸ ἐρωτώμενον, ἦ ναί ἢ οὐ ἀποκριτέον.
(*Top.*160a 33-4)
- The person questioned should answer either yes or no.
τὸ ἢ ναί ἢ οὐ ἀποκρίνεσθαι τὸν ἐρωτώμενον. (*Soph.Elen.*175b9-10)
- The answerer must say either yes or no.
ἢ ναί ἢ οὐ ἀνάγκη λέγειν τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον. (*Soph.Elen.*175b13-14)
- It is possible ... to be true to say either yes or no.
ἐγχωρεῖ ... ἢ ναί ἢ οὐ ἀληθὲς εἶναι λέγειν· (*Soph.Elen.*176a10-11)
- ... he should not say (the) yes or no in the case of homonyms.
οὐδ' ἐπὶ τῶν ὁμωνύμων τὸ⁴ ναί ἢ οὐ λεκτέον· (*Soph.Elen.*176a15-16)

What makes these passages at least worth contemplating is that they each have a Greek verb of saying⁵ combined with the standard Greek words for 'yes' and 'no'. However, the passages are not close enough to provide support for the reading of our Greek sentence (B) as (A). First, they are all in the context of Aristotle's *dialectic*. Saying or answering 'yes' or 'no' was part of the dialectical game or method, as is well established.⁶ There are no comparable passages in Aristotle in contexts of human agency where the agent says 'yes' or 'no' as a way of making a choice (deciding, agreeing, telling themselves) to do or not to do something.

⁴ Several manuscripts do not have the τό. Some have ἦ before τό.

⁵ These are 'to say' (λέγειν) and 'to reply' (ἀποκρίνεσθαι).

⁶ Cf. e.g. C.W.A. Whitaker, *Aristotle's De Interpretatione: Contradiction and Dialectic* (Oxford, 1996), at 101.

The passages from Aristotle's dialectic fail as parallels for two further reasons. None of them has a definite article ($\tau\omicron$) in front of the 'yes' and the 'no', as (B) has; and all have $\omicron\upsilon$, the Greek word used equally for 'not' and for 'no', not $\mu\eta$. But (B) has $\mu\eta$. Now, $\mu\eta$ is a word used adverbially for 'not' in certain grammatical contexts – but not for 'no'.⁷ So the six passages are not parallel passages. Nor are there any other parallels in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* (or in any of the ancient Greek texts in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*) which have $\tau\omicron$ $\mu\eta$ and $\tau\omicron$ $\nu\alpha\iota$ opposed in a sentence or sequence of sentences.⁸

Christopher Taylor, one of the very few philosophers who attempt to explain the – presumed – 'saying' in (A),⁹ suggests a possible parallel in Aristotle's *Ethics*. He writes:

It is ... possible that Aristotle is thinking of acting as itself a way of giving an affirmative answer to the question 'Should I Φ ?' and not acting as a way of giving a negative answer to that question. Cf. <EN> VI.2, 1139a21-2, 'what assertion and denial are in thought, pursuit and avoidance are in desire', which seems to mean that pursuing some end is itself a way of asserting that the thing is to be pursued (or that it is good) and avoiding something a way of denying that it is to be pursued (or that it is good).¹⁰

This is a brave attempt, though unsuccessful. The passage Taylor quotes does not 'seem to mean' what he suggests. If a and b are in thought what c and d are in desire, it is neither implied nor indicated that c -ing and d -ing are *ways of a-ing and b-ing*. For illustration: if I say that truth is in thought what the good is in desire, it does not follow that the good is a kind of truth. Rather, the case suggests that there is something that a

⁷ The grammatical contexts in which $\mu\eta$ is used adverbially for 'not' are typically one of the following: with the imperative; with the subjunctive; with the optative; with the infinitive; and with participles when they have a conditional or general force and in certain indirect questions; cf. H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge MA, 1920), at 604-6, 608-30.

⁸ See below for some Byzantine Greek parallels. By contrast, there are quite a few passages that oppose $\tau\omicron$ $\nu\alpha\iota$ and $\tau\omicron$ $\omicron\upsilon$.

⁹ The reader is not told, though, that there is no expression for 'saying' in the Greek.

¹⁰ C.C.W. Taylor (tr. and comm.), *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics: Books II – IV [NE]* (Oxford, 2006), at 164.

and *c*, and *b* and *d*, respectively, share. What that something is would need to be separately identified.

If we put this point aside and take Taylor by his word, what Aristotle seems to intend to say is

(E)(1) For, where to act is up to us, also to not act <is up to us>, (2) and where to not *act* <is up to us>, also to *act* <is up to us>.

We will see below that to obtain (E) no verb of saying needs to be invoked. The problematic translation (A) would thus be unnecessary.

3. 'Not' and 'Yes' as 'Don't' and 'Do'

Can one provide a plausible justification for the insertion of a verb of saying and the translation of μή as no? Not one of the scholars proposing (A) seems to have provided one. Here is one suggestion as to what they could have provided.

First, there is the fact that the ancients had no quotation marks, and that the definite article τὸ was frequently used in a way similar to quotation marks in English, to indicate that an expression or sentence is mentioned, not used. This fact could be exploited to justify the translation 'the 'not'' and 'the 'yes''. Second, perhaps Aristotle's use of μή in (B) is not meant to be equivalent to 'οὐ', meaning 'no', as used in answers to questions. Rather, μή may be employed by Aristotle the way it is used in independent clauses that express a command, as in μή πράξῃς, 'don't act!':¹¹ a person deliberates whether to do something; it is up to them to choose not to do it; in this case, their choosing involves their telling themselves 'don't act!'.

In support of this reading, reference could be made to Aristotle's sporadic allusions to the use of syllogisms in practical reasoning in the *Ethics*. An example would be *EN*

¹¹ This use of μή with the subjunctive aorist has a parallel in the Latin *ne*.

1147a34, of a universal premise, ‘it says to avoid this’ (ἡ μὲν οὖν λέγει φεύγειν τοῦτο). Another passage one might adduce is *EN* 1143a8-9, ‘for practical wisdom gives commands. For its end is <the question> what one must do or not <do>.’ (ἡ μὲν γὰρ φρόνησις ἐπιτακτική ἐστιν· τί γὰρ δεῖ πράττειν ἢ μὴ, τὸ τέλος αὐτῆς ἐστίν.) Moreover, it could be adduced that Plato takes thinking to be internal speech; and that a century after Aristotle, the Stoic Chrysippus had a theory that, in rational beings, the impulse to act takes the form of the agent’s reason prescribing or commanding the agent to act (Plutarch *Stoic.Rep.*1037F). One could imagine this to take the following form: Zoe to herself ‘Don’t eat the baklava!’ or Zoe to herself ‘Eat the baklava!’. Thus we would get a reading of the kind:

(F)(1) ἐν οἷς γὰρ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν τὸ πράττειν, καὶ τὸ μὴ πράττειν, (2) καὶ ἐν οἷς τὸ μὴ <πράξις> καὶ τὸ <πρᾶξον>;

in translation:

(G)(1) For, where to act is up to us, also to not act <is up to us>, (2) and where the ‘don’t <act!>’ is up to us, also the ‘do <act!>’ is up to us.

This seems to go some way toward explaining the τὸ μὴ (as opposed to τὸ οὐ) in conjunction with an implicit verb of saying.¹² Still, such imperative understanding of τὸ μὴ poses its own difficulties.

- The understanding of the definite article τὸ in lieu of quotation marks obliterates the – expected – parallel between the two uses of τὸ in (1) and its two uses in (2).
- The μὴ is no longer on a par with the ‘ναί’. In particular, grammatically ναί is not part of positive commands, and cannot be short for ‘do act!’.
- Moreover, with this reading one would still expect the sequence positive–negative in both (1) and (2), now taking the form ‘do!’ – ‘don’t!’ in (2). Instead the reading has ‘don’t!’ – ‘do!’.

¹² I have not found this reading of (B) explicitly defended anywhere, but I doubt that I am the first to consider this option. Perhaps Taylor, *NE*, 164 (quoted above) had something similar in mind.

- And last but not least, we would need some supporting evidence in Aristotle's text for the assumption that τὸ μὴ in the middle of **(B)** can be short for our telling ourselves 'don't act!'. Some hints at practical reasoning in other books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are not sufficient; nor are references to Plato's internal speech and Stoic impulses. We would need evidence that in Aristotle τὸ μὴ can be a reference to a self-addressed imperative, which I believe we do not have.

So **(F)** is not a viable option. (Nor, of course, would **(A)** be a translation of **(B)** *understood as (F)*.) Thus, as far as I can see, there is no legitimate way of getting a translation like **(A)** from **(B)**.

4. Alternative ways to translate and understand the sentence as abbreviation

No doubt, **(B)** does involve some abbreviation, ellipsis, contraction, *and* there is no straightforward easy reading. Still disregarding its linguistic context, I next ask: how else could one complete the elliptical clause **(B2)**? First I look at τὸ μὴ; then at τὸ ναί.

There is a natural and simple way of supplementing τὸ μὴ. This is by supplementing the infinitive 'to act' (πράττειν) and reading τὸ μὴ as short for 'to not act is up to us' (τὸ μὴ πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῶν).

(H)(1) For, where to act is up to us, also to not act <is up to us>, (2) and where to not <act is up to us>, also

There are quite a few examples in Aristotle in which μὴ is short for μὴ πράττειν (or a similar verb of doing or happening); several are in the context of what is ἐφ' ἡμῶν. In all cases, just beforehand in the sentence we find πράττειν (or that other verb of doing or happening).¹³

¹³ *EN* 1110a17-8 ὧν δ' ἐν αὐτῷ ἡ ἀρχή, ἐπ' αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ πράττειν καὶ μὴ (i.e. πράττειν); *EN* 1143a8-9 τί γὰρ δεῖ πράττειν ἢ μὴ (i.e. πράττειν), τὸ τέλος αὐτῆς ἐστίν; *EE* 1223a5-8 φανερόν ὅτι ἐνδέχεται καὶ γίνεσθαι καὶ μὴ (i.e. γίνεσθαι), καὶ ὅτι ἐφ' αὐτῷ ταῦτ' ἐστὶ γίνεσθαι καὶ μὴ (i.e. γίνεσθαι), ὧν γε κύριός ἐστι τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι. ὅσα δ' ἐφ' αὐτῷ ἐστὶ ποιεῖν ἢ μὴ ποιεῖν. Cf. also *Met* 1042b7-8 τίς μὲν οὖν διαφορὰ τοῦ ἀπλῶς γίνεσθαι καὶ μὴ (i.e. γίνεσθαι) ἀπλῶς, ἐν τοῖς φυσικοῖς εἴρηται; *Rhet* 1359a36 τῶν ἐνδεχομένων καὶ γίνεσθαι καὶ μὴ (i.e. γίνεσθαι); *Athen.Const.* 43 section 5 καὶ περὶ τῆς ὄστρακοφορίας ἐπιχειροτονίαν διδῶσιν, εἰ δοκεῖ ποιεῖν ἢ μὴ (i.e. ποιεῖν).

(H2) unquestionably provides the most natural way of supplementing τὸ μὴ in the context of the whole sentence (B). So it is a good starting point. What are we then to do with τὸ ναί? τὸ ναί seems not to square straightforwardly with τὸ μὴ, no matter how interpreted. Any interpreter is saddled with this issue. Still, if (H) provides the correct supplementation after τὸ μὴ, it is clear what τὸ ναί is intended to convey: the alternative 'to act'. So, assuming (H) to be correct, we get:

(I)(1) For, where to act is up to us, also to not act <is up to us>, (2) and where to not <act is up to us>, also to <act is up to us>.

(1) ἐν οἷς γὰρ ἐφ' ἡμῖν τὸ πράττειν, καὶ τὸ μὴ πράττειν, (2) καὶ ἐν οἷς τὸ μὴ <πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῖν>, καὶ τὸ <πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῖν>.

In other words, τὸ ναί is short for 'to act is up to us' (τὸ πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῖν), *as contrasted with* 'to not act is up to us'; i.e. with emphasis on 'act'. (I) is indeed the way countless translators and scholars across the ages have read (B). Sometimes, (B2) is simply rendered by 'and *vice versa*'. This may be to evade the awkwardness of the τὸ ναί; or to reflect the extreme brevity of (B2). (Henceforward, I call all translations of type (I) *vice-versa* translations.)

Can τὸ ναί be read as an abbreviation of 'to act <is up to us>' – as contrasted with 'to not act'? Grammatically, this amounts to having to show that in the phrase τὸ ναί the Greek word usually translated 'yes' can be an abbreviation for an *emphatic* 'to Φ', contrasted with 'to not Φ' (where Φ stands for a verb in the infinitive). Can this be shown? Not by *ancient* Greek parallels.

However, there are several Byzantine Greek parallels for just such a use of ναί and even of the phrase τὸ ναί. For example, we find such an abbreviatory use of ναί several times in the work of the 9th century grammarian Georgius Choeroboscus, where he is talking about the conjugation of verbs. (His views have survived in notes taken by his pupils.)

Here is one instance: ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἔστι τὸ α χαρακτηριστικὸν τῶν τρίτων προσώπων τῶν ἐνικῶν· τὸ δὲ ε ναί, οἷον ἔτυπτε ἔλεγε.¹⁴ ('... since the alpha is not a characteristic of the third person singular; but the epsilon *is*, for example ἔτυπτε ἔλεγε.' The emphatic '*is*' translates 'ναί'.) In this clause, the ναί is short for ἔστι χαρακτηριστικὸν τῶν τρίτων προσώπων τῶν ἐνικῶν ('is a characteristic of the third person singular), which is contrasted with the previous clause, which negates the same predicate phrase; just as the ναί in **(B)** does in the *vice-versa* reading **(I)**. The earliest surviving parallel (of at least three) for the use of τὸ ναί as abbreviation of an infinitive or infinitival phrase occurs in the third of the *Orationes* of the bishop and philosopher Eustratius of Nicaea (c. 1050/1060-c.1120), where he discusses the *Filioque*. He writes: Ὁ Λατῖνος. Καὶ δεῖξόν, φησιν, οὗ τῆς Γραφῆς εὔρηται τὸ μὴ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεσθαι. Πρὸς τοῦτο ἐγώ. Οὐκ ἔγω γε ἀπαιτοῦμαι δεῖξαι τὸ μὴ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς τὸ ναί.¹⁵ ('The Latin [i.e. the Roman Catholic]: and, he says, show me, where in Scripture it is found that it (the Spirit, πνεῦμα from line 22) does not proceed from the Son. Against this I <say>: I am not required to show that it (the Spirit) does not <proceed from the Son>; but *he* <is required to show> that it *does* <proceed from the Son>.') Here the emphatic 'that it *does*' translates τὸ ναί and is short for 'that it *does* proceed from the Son'. So there is good evidence that in the Greek language **(B)** would naturally have been understood as an abbreviation for the Greek version of the *vice-versa* reading **(I)**.

The abbreviatory use of ναί has at least partial parallels in contemporary languages. Thus the German emphatic 'doch' corresponds to ναί in this use, and allows an almost literal translation of **(B)** in the spirit of the *vice versa* translations:

¹⁴ A. Hilgard (ed.), Georgius Choeroboscus, Prolegomena et scholia in Theodosii Alexandrini canones isagogicos de flexione verborum, (GG. Pars IV, vol. 2), (Leipzig, 1894), at 86.29-31; cf. *ibid.* 85.17-18; 86.34-5; 336.25-6.

¹⁵ A. Demetrapoulos (ed.), *Eustratius of Nicaea, Orationes*. Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1866) (repr. Hildesheim, 1965), Oration 3, at 86.23-6. The other two parallels are: J. P. Migne (ed.), [the Patriarch] *Joannes XI Beccus, Four Books to Constantine Meliteniotes, Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 141 (Paris 1865) 337-396, at 388.16-18: ἕτερον τῶ τὴν ἐξ Υἱοῦ διδόντι ἐκπόρευσιν φήσειε τις εἶναι διὰ σπουδῆς, ἢ ἀπεναντίας τοῖς ἀντιλέγουσι, (15) μετεῖναι τῆς αἰτίας ταύτης τῶ Υἱῶ συνιστᾶν; Εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἄρνησις διὰ τὸ μὴ, ἢ ὁμολογία πάντως διὰ τὸ ναί, and J.P. Migne (ed.), [the Emperor, orator and theologian (1350-1425)] *Manuel II Palaeologus, Dialogi cum mahometano*, dialogue 17, in *Piissimi et sapientissimi imperatoris Manuelis Palaeologi opera omnia, theologica, polemica, panegyrica, paedagogica. Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 156 (Paris 1866), at 221.29-31: Ἀλλ' εἰ τὸ μὴ διαφέρειν οὐκ εὐλογον, ὅπερ ἐχρήν, ἀποδέδεικται· εἴη γὰρ ἂν εὐλογον τὸ διαφέρειν, ἀδύνατον γὰρ εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ καὶ τὸ ναί ἐν ἐνὶ τῶ ζητουμένῳ.

(**J**)(1) Denn wenn es bei uns liegt zu handeln, <liegt es> auch <bei uns> nicht zu handeln, (2) und wenn <<es bei uns liegt>> nicht <<zu handeln>>, dann auch doch <<zu handeln>>¹⁶

The English 'yes' or 'too' can – informally – stand in for what is expressed by the emphatic 'doch' in German. Take this dialogue: 'this is green' – '(no,) it isn't' – '(yes,) it is' – 'no' – 'yes'; or its American English variation: 'this is green' – '(no,) it isn't' – '(yes,) it is' – 'is not' – 'is too'. So in English, a crude equivalent to (**J**) would be:

(**K**)(1) For, where acting is up to us, also not acting <is up to us>, (2) and where not <<acting is up to us>>, also <<acting>> too.

The German seems grammatically just fine and the English would at least be likely understood by a native speaker. Thus we have sufficient reason to conclude that (**B**) is the Greek equivalent to (**J**) and (**K**); and moreover, given the grammatical restrictions of the English language, that English *vice-versa* translations like (**I**) that express the fleshed-out Greek version (**I**) of (**B**) represent the correct way of translating (**B**). Thus we have a reading of (**B**) which is superior to all others in that it makes full sense of the text as it stands.¹⁷ Overall, then, (**I**) is vastly preferable to (**A**). Not only are there clear Greek parallels to (**I**) but not to (**A**). In addition, unlike (**A**), first, (**I**) does not require the supplementation of a verb of saying; second, (**I**) reads μή correctly as 'not'; and finally, (**I**) requires no complex not-quite-fitting interpretation.¹⁸

¹⁶ Double angled brackets are here used to indicate what would be understood, but is not required to be supplemented in the translation for the translation to make sense.

¹⁷ The reading (**I**)(**J**)(**K**) differs from the don't/do reading (**G**)(**H**). In (**I**)(**J**)(**K**) the *vaí* stands in as an abbreviation for a phrase that occurred in the exact same form earlier in the same sentence (i.e. πράττειν). In the don't/do reading (**G**)(**H**) this is not so.

¹⁸ Moreover, (**I**) makes perfect sense of the order affirmative/negative – negative/affirmative in the sequence of the two conditionals (**B1**) and (**B2**). If instead (**B2**) also had the order affirmative/negative, this would simply be a repeat of (**B1**). It is thus ruled out. The interpretations behind (**A**) do not explain the inverted order. Proponents of (**A**) could plead the rhetorical device of chiasmus, but it would be a somewhat unusual and strained case.

Based on reading **(I)**, we can also explain what Aristotle's point of stating **(B)** is. It is to make explicit an important element of the logical structure of the notion of something's being up to someone ($\epsilon\pi\lambda$ + dative), an element which Aristotle indicates in at least ten other places: This is its two-sidedness.¹⁹ Aristotle never provides a philosophical account of what it is for something to be $\epsilon\phi'$ $\eta\mu\tilde{\iota}\nu$ (as he does of the voluntary, deliberation, choice, virtue, etc.). He uses $\epsilon\phi'$ $\eta\mu\tilde{\iota}\nu$ and other $\epsilon\pi\lambda$ + dative personal pronoun constructions as expressions of ordinary language which are generally understood by speakers of the language. In reading **(I)**, sentence **(B)** makes explicit something people who speak the language assume: that doing something is up to us *if and only if* not doing it is up to us, too. To express this bi-conditional, both **(B1)** and **(B2)** are required.

Why does Aristotle state this biconditional at the beginning of *EN* III.5, though? The reason is this: he needs to make explicit the logical structure of the notion of $\epsilon\phi'$ $\eta\mu\tilde{\iota}\nu$ at this point, since he exploits it as part of the argument *EN* 1113b6-14.²⁰ That is, the biconditional is needed for the context of **(B)**.

5. The linguistic context of **(B)** taken into account

Hence, next I consider how readings **(A)** and **(I)** of the Greek sentence **(B)** fare, when one takes the immediate linguistic context into account.²¹ To start with, note the following three points:

First, the sentence before **(B)** is

(L) Now, virtue is up to us, too, and equally also vice.

¹⁹ *EE* 1123a6, 7-8, 1223a5-6, 1225a9-10, 1225b35-6, 1226a27-8, 1226b30-1, *EN* iii 1 1110a17-8, *EN* iii 5 1115a2-3, 1125a26; cf. S. Bobzien, 'The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem' ['Free Will'], *Phronesis*, 43 (1998), 133-75. See 143-5, also 139-40.

²⁰ At *EN* 1113b14, Aristotle moves on to consider a possible objection.

²¹ Here I ignore the debate whether (i) the whole paragraph 1113b6-14 is meant to show that vice is up to us, with Aristotle taking it to have been shown already that virtue is up to us (the *asymmetry reading*); or whether (ii) the whole paragraph is meant to show that both virtue and vice (acting virtuously and acting viciously) are up to us. I believe (ii) is right, and that a good case can be made for this, which I hope to do elsewhere. For the question whether *EN* 1113b7-8 supports undetermined choice in Aristotle, this debate is only of minor importance. (Cf. also the next footnote.)

ἐφ' ἡμῖν δὴ καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ κακία.²² (*EN* 1113b6-7)

Second, the argument ends with

(**M**) then it will be up to us to be virtuous people and to be vicious people.

ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἄρα τὸ ἐπιεικέσι καὶ φαύλοις εἶναι. (*EN* 1113b13-14)

This final clause of the argument states almost the same thing as (**L**). Third, our sentence (**B**) immediately follows (**L**) and begins with 'for' (γάρ). It thus provides a reason for (**L**).

Considering also what we know about Aristotle's dialectic, we get the following set-up of an argument from (**L**) to (**M**), or from 1113b6 to 1113b14: Aristotle provides the thesis he intends to prove in (**L**) at the beginning of his argument. This is standard in Aristotelian dialectic. He then argues for (**L**) up until and including the antecedent of the sentence 1113b11-14. The consequent of the sentence is (**M**). It provides the conclusion of the argument. Thus from (**B**) to (**M**) (i.e. from 1113b7-8 to b13-14) Aristotle provides an argument for the thesis that (not just actions but also) virtue and vice are up to us. This is so regardless of what exactly the thesis (**L**) and the conclusion (**M**) amount to. (**B**) is a premise in this argument.

With the sentence following (**B**), Aristotle argues towards an intermediate conclusion: it starts with ὥστ', which in grammatical contexts as ours is translated most naturally as 'hence':

(**N**) Hence, (1) if to act, being noble, is up to us, also to not act, being shameful, will be up to us, and (2) if to not act, being noble, is up to us, also to act, being shameful, <will be> up to us.

²² In all the manuscripts that are considered in the Oxford edition the sentence does not have the particle δὴ ('hence', 'now'), but the particle δέ. Modern editions of the *EN* tend to give δὴ. The difference is not relevant for present purposes. I just mention that Aristotle does use the particle combination δέ καὶ ... δέ ... elsewhere in the *EN* in one sentence. Cf. e.g. ἐπαινοῦμεν δέ καὶ τὸν σοφὸν κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν· τῶν ἕξεων δέ τὰς ἐπαινετὰς ἀρετὰς λέγομεν (*EN* 1103a8-10).

ὥστ' (1) εἰ τὸ πράττειν καλὸν ὃν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐστί, καὶ τὸ μὴ πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῖν
ἔσται αἰσχρὸν ὃν, καὶ (2) εἰ τὸ μὴ πράττειν καλὸν ὃν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, καὶ τὸ πράττειν
αἰσχρὸν ὃν ἐφ' ἡμῖν. (*EN* 1113b8-11)

(I have use bold to indicate complete textual agreement with **(B)** and underlining to indicate parallels to understood additions in **(B)** that are generally accepted.)

This striking parallel provides a *strong* reason for reading (B2) as an abbreviation along the lines which I – in agreement with numerous other scholars – have suggested; that is, as short for

(B2) καὶ ἐν οἷς τὸ μὴ <πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐστί> καὶ τὸ <πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐστί>

(J2) and where to not <act is up to us>, also to <act is up to us>.

This reading provides four perfectly matching cases, in the right order. The only substantive difference is that in (L) each time an evaluative attribute (καλόν, αἰσχρόν) is added.²³ The apparent lack of regularity in **(B)**, from positive/negative in (1) to negative/positive in (2) finds a full explanation in the move from noble to shameful in the two conditionals of **(I)**. Aristotle's intent is to cover all four possibilities and their interrelations (noble action is paired with shameful inaction; noble inaction with shameful action), and for each interrelation he starts with the noble case.

The parallel between **(B)** and **(N)** also provides *strong* reasons for not adding a verb of saying as readings of type **(A)** do. First, with **(A)**, the inferential 'hence' (ὥστ') is very hard to explain. Second, no mention is made of saying yes or no, or the like, ever again in the argument at issue. But if **(A)** was correct, we would *expect* some such mention, given

²³ For the *purpose* of this addition at this point in book III of the *EN* see S. Bobzien, 'Choice and Moral Responsibility in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* iii 1-5', in R. Polansky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge 2013) (forthcoming). For a different view see R. Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause and Blame. Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory [Necessity]* (London, 1980) at 248 n.14 and 230.

the parallel structure of (N) and (B). We can be more precise: if (A) were correct we would expect the second half of (N) to be something like (O2):

(O2) and if saying yes, being noble, is up to us, also saying no, being shameful is up to us.

But we do not have this. Rather, if (A) were correct, (N2) would just hang in the air, so to speak. There is nothing in the previous sentence for it to latch onto. Given that even without the linguistic context, (A) was somewhat grasping at straws, it appears that the linguistic context (N) provides the bale of straw that would break the camel's back.

Part II: The Reception of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.5 1113b7-8

Next I move to the startling phenomenon that, despite its utter implausibility, versions of the saying-no translation have made their way into the general consciousness of what Aristotle himself stated. That is, I now move to the topic of the reception of *EN* III.5 1113b7-8.

6. Reception in 'Popular Culture'

Let us begin with the reception of (A) in what may be called popular culture. It is equally popular on blogs, Tweets, self-help and alternative-healing websites, in coffee-table books, and generally in collections of famous quotations.

- (A) is number two of the immortal Proverbs, Sayings and Curses at angelfire.com.²⁴
- It made it into the inspirational quotations for Teens at oxygenfactory.com, categorized under 'yes'.²⁵
- In Willow's Dreamscapes it is one of the quotations in the category 'daydreams' and the subcategory 'choose freedom'.²⁶

²⁴http://www.angelfire.com/moon/immortal_quotations/proverbs.html, accessed 1/27/2013.

²⁵<http://oxygenfactory.com.au/teen-quote/>, accessed 1/27/2013.

²⁶<http://www.dreamscapes.co.za/daydreams/dd025>, accessed 1/27/2013.

- At morequotations.com, in Life Quotes, Cute Quotes, Funny Quotes we find it as number one under the heading 'will'.²⁷
- The keynote speech of the 'Workshop on Clinical Teaching' in 2009, delivered by the dean of the Faculty of Medicine, UiTM, includes the lines: 'Sometimes we are overcome by doubts and self-inflicted inertia. Aristotle realized that and he opined, 'Where we are free to act, we are also free to *refrain* from acting, and where we are able to say NO, we are also able to say YES'.²⁸
- Elsewhere, we find sentence (A) as 'A Positive Thought For Saturday, March 15, 2008'.²⁹
- We find it as the quote accompanying a photo of a charity celebration in Ninna Gay, *Shifts: Beyond the Visible*, Central Milton Keynes: AuthorHouse 2010, p.26.
- In Ian McTavish's *A Prisoner's Wisdom: Transcending the Ego* (A) is interspersed to encourage choice that transcends the Ego.³⁰
- (A) is one of the truths men live by in John A O'Brien, *Truths Men Live By*.³¹
- (A) was the Tweet of the day 10/3/11 at Dance_with_life.³²
- And finally, in the world of blogs, Edith Hall, in *The Edithorial* (Saturday, 10 March 2012) uses (A) to gently criticize Queen Elizabeth II: 'But Aristotle's response to her record as ruler would immediately have been to point out that avoiding error is not enough to qualify a person as good. "Where we are free to act we are also free to refrain from acting, and where we are able to say 'No' we are also able to say 'Yes'; if therefore we are responsible for doing a thing when to do it is right, we are also responsible for not doing it when not to do it is wrong.'" (Nicomachean Ethics 1113b2 (*sic*)).³³

²⁷ <http://morequotations.com/Quotations/will.html>, accessed 1/27/2013.

²⁸ <http://medicine.uitm.edu.my/index.php/home/244?date=2010-10-01>, accessed 1/10/2010.

²⁹ http://therabexperience.blogspot.com/2008/03/positive-thought-for-saturday_15.html, accessed 1/27/2013.

³⁰ I. McTavish, *A Prisoner's Wisdom: Transcending the Ego* (Bloomington, 2012), at 56.

³¹ J. A. O'Brien, *Truths Men Live By [Truths]* (New York, 1946), at 247.

³² https://twitter.com/Dance_With_Life/status/120787725531103232, accessed 1/27/2013.

³³ <http://edithorial.blogspot.com/2012/03/on-treason.html>, accessed 1/27/2013.

In some of these occurrences, the alleged Aristotle quote is used (in an un-Aristotelian way) to remind us of our free will. In others, it is used (in an equally un-Aristotelian way) as a source for optimism: don't wallow in your apathy and misery; say 'yes' to life.

Well, Aristotle is dead, his copyright has run out, or, more accurately, never existed in the first place, and he is not the only philosopher who is used for alien and perplexing purposes in popular culture. The extra twist in our case is that Aristotle never wrote a Greek equivalent of (A) in the first place. But even this is in no way unique.³⁴ So, too much weight should not be put on this part of the reception of *EN* 3.5 1113b7-8, from the point of view of veridicality. What we have, however, is evidence of how the same word-shell can be filled with different meaning in different millenia, catering to the varying and changing consumer desires for titbits of wisdom. Given the continuous stream of quotations of the saying-no translation it may not be an exaggeration, though, to proclaim that the saying-no translation has become a meme.³⁵

7. Reception in Popular Philosophy and Non-Ancient Philosophy

Things get just a tad more serious when we move to popular philosophy and to professional philosophers who do not specialize in ancient philosophy. A good number of them who are not Aristotle scholars make use of (A) in their publications. We mention just some examples: Teodros Kiros in *Self-construction and the formation of human values: truth, language, and desire* in the context of discussing human choice;³⁶ Jeremy Naydler in *The Future of the Ancient World: Essays on the History of Consciousness*, attributing the birth of freedom of choice to Aristotle;³⁷ George Stack in 'Aristotle and Kierkegaard's Existential Ethics';³⁸ John A. O'Brian in *Truths Men Live by*;³⁹ Max

³⁴ For instance, many of the anecdotes in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the philosophers* are told, often almost *verbatim*, about different philosophers, sometimes in the same work, sometimes in other ancient authors. Cf. M. Marcovich (ed.), *Diogenes Laertius: Vitae Philosophorum*, vol. I (Berlin, 1999).

³⁵ The reader is encouraged to Google 'where we are able to say no, we are also able to say yes' (with the quotation marks) for verification.

³⁶ T. Kiros, *Self-construction and the formation of human values* (Westport CT, 1998), at 84.

³⁷ J. Naydler, *The Future of the Ancient World: Essays on the History of Consciousness* (Rochester, 2009), at 197-8.

³⁸ G. J. Stack, 'Aristotle and Kierkegaard's Existential Ethics', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 12 (1974), 1-19.

Hamburger in *Morals and law: the growth of Aristotle's legal theory*, 'assuming that when we can say 'no' we also can say 'yes' and that it is therefore in our power to act in harmony with goodness as well as with badness.' With reference to 1113b7-11;⁴⁰ David Buchanan in *An ethic for health promotion: rethinking the sources of human well-being*, uses (A) as evidence that Aristotle held that human choices are undetermined by prior causes;⁴¹ similarly Bob Doyle, in his e-book on *Free Will*, quotes (A) in support of Aristotle being an agent-causal libertarian.⁴²

The majority of the authors mentioned use (A) in order to attribute to Aristotle a theory of freedom of choice, uncaused choice or agent causation, thus perpetuating the myth that Aristotle endorsed undetermined choice between alternatives. And if it was not for this (a false interpretation of Aristotle on a most important philosophical topic, based on a mistranslated sentence from the *Nicomachean Ethics*), the question of the reception of *EN* 1113b7-8 might be of little interest. As it is, it seems worthwhile to ask: how did we ever get to the general acceptance of the saying-no translation? Let us start at the beginning.

8. Ancient and Byzantine Commentators and commentaries⁴³

There appear to be no saying-no translations of (B) in antiquity, Byzantine and Latin Medieval texts. For antiquity, the only extant ancient commentary on book III of the *EN* is by the early commentator Aspasius (*floruit* 2nd CE). Aspasius considers and explains only the first clause of 1113b7-8, (B1),⁴⁴. He is silent on (B2). So is the Anonymus

³⁹ O'Brian [*Truths*], at 248.

⁴⁰ M. Hamburger, *Morals and law: the growth of Aristotle's legal theory* (New Haven, 1951), at 31.

⁴¹ D. R. Buchanan, *An ethic for health promotion: rethinking the sources of human well-being* (Oxford, 2000), at 55.

⁴² <http://www.informationphilosopher.com/solutions/philosophers/aristotle/>, accessed 1/27/2013

⁴³ For detailed information about the Ancient commentaries on the *EN* see H.P.F. Mercken, 'The Greek Commentators on Aristotle's *Ethics*' in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed* (London, 1990), 407-410. For detailed information about the Byzantine commentaries on the *EN* see C. Barber and D. Jenkins, *Medieval Greek commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Leiden, 2009).

⁴⁴ G. Heylbut (ed.), *Aspasius, In Ethica Nicomachea quae supersunt commentaria. Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 19.1 (Berlin, 1889), at 76.8-16.

commentator of book V (who wrote in the later 2nd CE). I could find nothing of relevance in Alexander of Aphrodisias' writings, or in any other ancient commentators. (We know that Porphyry wrote a commentary on the *EN*, but it is lost, though it may have been translated into Syriac and Arabic.)⁴⁵

The later ancient or, more likely, Byzantine Anonymous Paraphrase (in the past wrongly attributed either to Andronicus of Rhodes or to Heliodorus of Prusa)⁴⁶ butchers *EN* 1113b7-8 in a strange and unhelpful way (50.8-16). **(B1)** has an unmotivated τὸ ἀγαθὸν inserted, and the γὰρ is moved from **(B1)** to **(B2)**. The result is:

(P) εἰ δὲ τὸ πράττειν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, καὶ τὸ μὴ πράττειν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐστίν· ἐν οἷς γὰρ τὸ μὴ, καὶ τὸ ναί ([Heliodorus], *EN*, 50.10-11).

This makes little sense, both taken on its own and in its context.

Among (other) Byzantine commentators on the *EN* neither Eustratius of Nicaea nor Michael of Ephesus comment on Book III.⁴⁷ George Pachymeres' very brief commentary or paraphrase does not touch on the passage.⁴⁸ The Byzantine Anonymous commentary on books II-V has a short paragraph concerned with *EN* 1113b6-14,

⁴⁵ Cf. A. A. Akasoy and A. Fidora (eds.), *The Arabic Version of the Nicomachean Ethics [Arabic NE]* with intr. and tr. by D. M. Dunlop (Leiden, 2005), at 23-7 for the evidence.

⁴⁶ G. Heylbut, (ed.), [*Heliodorus of Prusa*], In *Ethica Nicomachea paraphrasis, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 19.2 (Berlin, 1889). The date of composition is unknown. The *terminus ante quem* is 1366, the date of the earliest MS. Michele Trizio argues that the anonymous author relied on Eustratius of Nicaea's *EN* commentary (M. Trizio, 'On the Byzantine Fortune of Eustratius of Nicaea's Commentary on Books I and VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*', in K. Ierodiakonou and B. Bydén (eds.), *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy* (Athens, 2012), 199-224.)

⁴⁷ G. Heylbut, (ed.), *Eustratios of Nicaea, Eustratii et Michaelis et anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea commentaria, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 20 (Berlin, 1892). M. Hayduck (ed.), *Michael of Ephesus, Michaelis Ephesii in librum quantum Ethicorum Nicomacheorum commentarium, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 22.3 (Berlin, 1901).

⁴⁸ K. Oikonomakos, (ed.), *Georgios Pachymeres, Philosophia 11, Ethica Nicomachea, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi, Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina*, vol. 3 (Athens 2005).

(*Anonymi in Eth. Nic.*, 154.17-32), but there is nothing recognizable in it as paraphrase of, or comment on, 1113b7-8.⁴⁹

9. Medieval Latin Translations and Commentaries (12th and 13th centuries)

In the 12th century, Burgundio of Pisa (possibly the first translator of the *Nicomachean Ethics* from Greek into Latin) provides this translation:⁵⁰

(Q) *In quibus enim in nobis operari, et non operari; et in his, utique et non.*

In the early 13th century, Robert Grosseteste (1175 –1253), probably revising Burgundio, translates the sentence even more literally as:⁵¹

(R) *In quibus enim nobis operari, et non operari; et in quibus non, et eciam.*

Such very nearly word-by-word translations were standard in Medieval Latin translations of Greek texts. Grosseteste's translation is kept in the revision usually attributed to William of Moerbeke (c. 1215 – 1286) dating from later in the 13th century,⁵² and consequently becomes part of the Latin standard translation. (I return to this translation below in Section 12.3)

The two earliest medieval commentaries of the *EN* are by Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. They were both influential for centuries. Albertus Magnus (c.1200-1280) provides a clear vice-versa reading of 1113b7-8:

⁴⁹ G. Heylbut (ed.), [*Anonymus*], in *Aristotelis ethica Nicomachea ii-v commentaria*, in *Eustratii et Michaelis et anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea commentaria, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 20 (Berlin, 1892), 122-255.

⁵⁰ *Burgundius Pisanus translator Aristotelis – Ethica Nicomachea*: translatio antiquissima librorum II et III siue 'Ethica uetus' Clavis: 26.1.1 (M), liber: 3, cap.: 6, p. 32.22. Six commentaries on the *EN* were also translated by Burgundio of Pisa, but I have not been able to check these; two are yet unpublished.

⁵¹ R. Grosseteste (tr.), *Ethica Nicomachea*: libri I - III; VIII.1-5 (6) ('recensio pura' – Burgundii translationis recensio) Clavis: 26.2.1 (M), liber: 3, cap.: 7, p. 187.23. This translation was known as the *recensio pura*.

⁵² William of Moerbeke (tr.), *Aristotelis secundum exemplar Parisiacum – Ethica Nicomachea* ('recensio recognita' – Roberti Grosseteste translationis recensio) Clavis: 26.3, liber: 3, cap. 7, p. 418.10. This translation was known as the *recensio recognita*.

(S) *In quibuscumque enim in nobis est operari illa, in illis eisdem in nobis est non operari eadem: et in quibus in nobis est non operari aliqua, in illis eisdem est etiam in nobis operari eadem.* (Albertus Magnus, Liber III *Ethicorum Tract. I*, Caput XXI 28 (Borgnet p.227))⁵³

Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274) in his literal commentary provides an extended exposition of the vice-versa reading of 1113b7-8.

(T) *Et dicit quod simili ratione etiam malitia est voluntaria et in nobis existens, quia operationes eius sunt tales. Et hoc sic probat: quia si operari est in potestate nostra, oportet etiam quod non operari sit in potestate nostra. Si enim non operari non esset in potestate nostra, impossibile esset nos non operari: ergo necesse esset nos operari: et sic operari non esset ex nobis, sed ex necessitate. Et similiter dicit quod in quibus rebus non operari est in potestate nostra, consequens est quod etiam operari sit in potestate nostra. Si enim operari non esset in potestate nostra, impossibile esset nos operari. Ergo necesse esset nos non operari: et sic non operari non esset ex nobis, sed ex necessitate.* (Aquinas, *Sent.Eth. lectio 11* ([73201] *Sententia Ethic.*, lib. 3 l. 11 n. 2))⁵⁴ (Bold mine)

There are quite a few Latin *EN* commentaries written between the late 13th and the 15th century, many of them not available in modern editions, and including those by Walter Burley (written 1334)⁵⁵, Albert of Saxony, Gerald of Odo, and John Buridan.⁵⁶

10. Arabic Translations and Commentaries

⁵³ A. Borgnet (ed.), *Albertus Magnus, Opera omnia* (Paris, 1891), vol.7 (*Ethica*).

⁵⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri ethicorum*, in R. A. Gauthier (ed.), *Opera omnia*, vol. 47.1 (Rome, 1969).

⁵⁵ Walter Burley, *Expositio librorum Ethicorum*, (Venice, 1481, 1500²). Burley provides a vice-versa translation and there is no hint of a saying-no understanding in the commentary. Burley is concerned with the relation between what is ἐφ' ἡμῖν and Aristotle's notion of two-sided possibility or contingency. Sorabji [*Necessity*], at 234 and 228 n.1 makes a similar point about (B)

⁵⁶ J. Buridan, *Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum* (Paris, 1513). Repr. as *Super decem libros Ethicorum* (Frankfurt a. M., 1968). Buridan's commentary is in question-and-answer format and I have found nothing in it that concerns (B) directly.

The interest in Aristotle's *EN* by early Arabic philosophers plays a key role in the reception of *EN* 1113b7-8, and I turn to it next.

10.1. Arabic Translations

In the 1950s the Maghribī manuscript of an Arabic translation of Aristotle's *EN* was discovered, in two parts, in Fez. The manuscript (Fez MS) is dated to 1222 CE. Most certainly at least books I to IV go back to a 9th or early 10th century translation, translated by Ishāq b. Ḥunain,⁵⁷ presumably via a Syriac intermediate.⁵⁸ This manuscript is the oldest surviving text which has a verb of saying added in the translation of **(B)** (i.e. *EN* 1113b7-8). A literal rendering from the Arabic of the corresponding sentence into English would be

- (U) (1) For the things that are up to us to do, <then> it is up to us not to do; (2) and the things concerning which *we say no(t)*, <then> concerning those *we say yes*.⁵⁹
(italics mine)

One can see that, apart from the two occurrences of 'we say', the Arabic is virtually a literal, word-by-word translation of the sentence – as was common for early translations into Syriac, Arabic and Latin alike. We can illustrate the fact that we have – almost – a word for word translation by placing the Greek from **(B)** in parentheses after the English translation of each of the respective Arabic phrases, with phrases lacking a Greek ancestor put in bold. Thus we obtain in the parentheses a sort of back-translation from Arabic into Greek (with omission of the two verbs of saying):

- (V) (1) For (γὰρ) the things that (ἐν οἷς) are up to us (ἐφ' ἡμῖν) to do (τὸ πράττειν), <then> (καὶ) it is up to us (<ἐφ' ἡμῖν>) not to do (τὸ μὴ πράττειν); (2) and (καὶ)

⁵⁷ Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 1-2, 27-8, 94-5.

⁵⁸ Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 26, 62, 106.

⁵⁹ The Arabic is:

وذلك أن الأشياء التي إلينا أن نفعلها فإلينا ألا نفعلها والأشياء التي فيها نقول لا فيها نقول نعم

(Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 207.1-2).

the things concerning which (ἐν οἷς) **we say** no(t)⁶⁰ (τὸ μὴ), <then> (καὶ) concerning those (<ἐν οἷς>) **we say** yes (τὸ ναί).

In addition to the two occurrences of ‘we say’, in the Arabic translation the ἐφ’ ἡμῖν that is understood in the Greek in **(B1)** and the *implicit* reference to ἐν οἷς in the Greek in **(B2)** are supplied and thus made explicit in the Arabic. The translation is not, as it stands, a saying-no translation. For this, we would in addition need two modal expressions in **(V2)**. These could be taken as understood in the Arabic. Dunlop, in his translation of the Arabic behind **(U2)**, reads the text in this way and makes them explicit:⁶¹

(W) (1) That is, the things which are in our power to do are in our power not to do, (2) and we may also say No in regard to the things in regard to which we may say Yes.

In form at least, **(W)** qualifies as a version of the saying-no translation, if with a reversal of the order of the ‘No’ and the ‘Yes’ (which is not present in the Arabic). In any event, note the terminological mismatch between the two occurrences of ‘in our power’ and the two occurrences of ‘may’ in **(W)**. The Greek **(B)** requires that two ἐφ’ ἡμῖν be understood in **(B2)** – even by those who chose a saying-no rendering. Whether the Arabic translator understood his text in this way, we cannot know.

Significantly, the Fez MS also displays a textual difference with regard to the linguistic context of **(B)**, more precisely, with regard to the sentence immediately following **(N)**. Compared with the Greek manuscript tradition, there appears to be a lacuna in the text, so that instead of

(N) Hence, (1) if to act, being noble, is up to us, also to not act, being shameful, will be up to us, and (2) if to not act, being noble, is up to us, also to act, being shameful, <will be> up to us. (*EN* 1113b8-11)

⁶⁰ The bracketed “t” is explained below.

⁶¹ Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 206. (It seems that all of (2) could be taken as subordinate to “it is up to us” from (1).)

the Fez MS has (the Arabic equivalent of)

(X) And, if the doing of the noble is up to us, [assumed lacuna] then also the doing of the shameful is up to us.⁶²

The difference between the Fez MS and Bywater's text is most easily explained by a combination of two factors: first, an omission in the Fez manuscript that is the result of one of the scribes in the history of its transmission inadvertently missing a line, somehow confounding the second clause of (N1) with the very similar second clause of (N2). Once this lacuna was part of the MS tradition, any reader and later scribe will have had difficulties in seeing the point of (B2), since (B) originally served as a preparation for the structurally parallel (N) (see Section 5 above). This structural parallel would have been eliminated with the lacuna, and this elimination may have triggered or contributed to a reading with a verb of saying.⁶³

Second, the Arabic word used as negation particle (*laa*, لا) has a different range of application than the Greek μή. It can be used both to express 'no' and to express 'not'. It would have been the word to be used for a literal translation of the μή in (B2), if this was correctly understood as an abbreviated second half of a vice-versa translation. But it can also be understood as 'no' in parallel to ναί understood as 'yes'. This fact would have facilitated a reading as 'no' rather than 'not' in (U2).

The editors of the 2005 edition of the Fez MS expressly caution readers that despite its early age, it is most unlikely that, where the Arabic text differs from the surviving Greek

⁶² The Arabic is:

وإن كان فعل الجميل إلينا ففعل القبيح أيضاً إلينا

(Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 207. 2-3).

⁶³ The lack of parallel from (N) in (X) may have led Dunlop in his translation (W) to *reverse* the order of 'saying yes' and 'saying no', thus introducing a parallel between acting and saying yes and not acting and saying no. The saying-no translations lack such a parallel, although we would expect it (see above Section 4).

manuscripts, the Fez MS represents what Aristotle wrote.⁶⁴ Generally by far the likeliest explanation of textual discrepancies is the repeated change of language and script: from Greek to Syriac, Syriac to Arabic, and finally from Oriental Arabic script into Maghribī Script.⁶⁵

The Arabic translation had a discernible direct impact only in the Arabic speaking world. **Ibn Sina** (c.980-1037) probably knew it. **Ibn Rushd** (1126-98) and **Moses Maimonides** (1135-1204) definitely were familiar with it and used it for their works.⁶⁶ Its impact on the West seems have to been mostly indirect. This brings us to the Arabic commentaries on the *EN*.

10.2 Arabic commentaries: The *Summa Alexandrinorum* and Ibn Rushd's middle commentary of the *EN*

Al-Farabi (872-950/1) is likely to have produced a commentary on the *EN*, but it is lost.⁶⁷ Probably after 1177, Ibn Rushd wrote a commentary on the *EN*. It survives in Latin and Hebrew translations only.⁶⁸ Whether Ibn Rushd had direct access to Porphyry's lost commentary is unclear. Another potentially relevant text surviving only via the Arabic is the summary or paraphrase of the *EN* known as the *Summa Alexandrinorum*. The Arabic presumably goes back to the late 10th century Baghdad translator Ibn Zur'ah. The Greek original may have been authored in the early first century by the Peripatetic Nicolaus of Damascus.⁶⁹ Both Ibn Rushd's middle commentary and the *Summa Alexandrinorum* were translated into Latin by Hermannus Alemannus in Toledo, the former in 1240, the latter completed in 1243/44. In the *Summa* the whole of *EN* 1113b6-14 is summarized in the following two sentences.

⁶⁴ Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 103-4.

⁶⁵ Cf. Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 94-5.

⁶⁶ Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 31-55.

⁶⁷ Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 18, 41-2, 45.

⁶⁸ Aristotle/Averroes, *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* [*2nd Juntine*], vol. III (Venice, 1562), (repr. Frankfurt a. M., 1963). Berman, L (ed.), *Ibn Rushd, Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics in the Hebrew Version of Samuel ben Judah* (Jerusalem, 1999).

⁶⁹ Akasoy and Fidora [*Arabic NE*], at 62-79. Translation possibly via a Syriac intermediate (ibid).

(Y) *Et res quas agere in nobis est, non agere eas in nobis est. Si igitur agere actiones pulcras in nobis est, etiam res turpes agere in nobis est.*⁷⁰

There is no verb of saying nor any trace of the saying-no translation. This is in line with the aforementioned possibility that the Greek original goes back to the 1st century CE.

But Ibn Rushd's commentary turns out to be important for us. It is a so-called middle commentary. In his middle commentaries, Ibn Rushd intersperses sentences from the Aristotelian text with portions of paraphrastic commentary. (The beginning of a comment after a text portion may be indicated by an *intendo* or the like, but there is otherwise no explicit distinction between the portions of text and the portions of commentary, in particular there is rarely the ancient equivalent of quotation marks, i.e. a 'he says' before a quote from Aristotle's text.) If we disregard Ibn Rushd's comments, the text corresponding to *EN* 1113b6-14 that he quotes and comments upon is:⁷¹

(Z) (1) *Et hoc quoniam res, quas facere in nobis est: et non facere eas in nobis est: ...*
(2) *et in quibus rebus dicimus sic, in his quoque possumus dicere non.* (3) *et si fuerit in nobis facere res pulchras, ergo et facere res turpes in nobis est.* (4) *Cumque fuerit in nobis facere res pulchras, et res turpes, et fuerit in nobis facere eas et non facere.*

There can be no doubt that Ibn Rushd is here commenting on the Arabic text of the *EN* which we (also) have as the Fez MS.⁷² First, as in the Arabic (U2 above), we have a verb of saying before the Latin *sic* and *non* in (Z2) – which would correspond to the Greek τὸ ναί and τὸ μή. Second we have, as subsequent sentence (Z3), almost exactly the sentence that results from the lacuna in the Fez MS (above, (X)).

⁷⁰ Text from the 1904 Marchesi edition, C. Marchesi (ed.), *L'etica nicomachea nella tradizione latina medievale, Documenti ed Appunti* (Messina, 1904), at LII-LIII <http://www.24grammata.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Nicomachea-Marchesi-24grammata.com.pdf>, accessed 1/27/2013.

⁷¹ Aristotle/Averroes [2nd *Juntine*], at 19.18-26. The ellipsis stands for Ibn Rushd's comment *intendoque rerum, quarum in nobis est potentia faciendi eas, in nobis quoque est potentia non faciendi eas.*

⁷² This is in line with the general view that the copy of the *EN* that Ibn Rushd commented on was the Arabic version that also survived in the Fez MS.

Note, though, two subtle changes. The Arabic manuscript has in (U2) 'saying no' before 'saying yes'. This is in line with Aristotle's original text (B2), which has μή first, ναί second. Moreover (U2) contains no explicit modal expression. IbnRushd has reversed the order of the positive and negative expressions and added a modal verb (*possumus*) to the corresponding clause (Z2). This is but the next expected step for someone whose source for the *EN* has the lacuna. Since the parallel in the Greek between (B) and (N) (above, Section 5) is lost, some other purpose would need to be found for the second clause of (U). The reversal of *non* and *sic* introduces a parallel between acting and saying yes and not acting and saying no.⁷³ This opens up the possibility for the readings of (B) discussed in Part I, Sections 1-3. The introduction of the modal expression prevents an apparent inconsistency: 'and where we say yes, we also say no' without the *possumus* could be understood as a confession of a penchant for paraconsistency. Unlike Dunlop in his translation (W), Ibn Rushd in his commentary adds only one modal expression. In similarity to (W), there is no direct parallel between *in nobis est* (Z1) and *possumus* (Z2), though the Greek (B) would suggest two understood occurrences of *in nobis est* in (Z2).

Hermannus' translation of Ibn Rushd's *EN* commentary is dated to 1240. Hermannus also translated the *EN* from Arabic into Latin. Some fragments of this translation survived.⁷⁴ Given that the Arabic translation and Ibn Rushd's commentary are our earliest (and before the 14th or 15th centuries, it seems, only) source of something akin to the saying-no reading of *EN* 1113b7-8, their transmission in the Western world is of major importance. We skip the details of the sparse evidence for transmission in the 13th to mid-15th century and move directly to the Renaissance.

11. Modern Reception of *EN* 1113b7-8

The invention of the printing press in the mid 15th century soon leads to a wide spread in Europe of both Aristotle's works and Ibn Rushd's commentaries. Between 1494 and

⁷³ As it did in Dunlop's translation of the Fez MS (see above).

⁷⁴ Cf. A. A. Akasoy and A. Fidora, 'Hermannus Alemannus und die alia translatio der Nikomachischen Ethik', *Bulletin de philosophie medievale*, 44 (2002), 79-93.

1498, the Aldine *editio princeps* of Aristotle's works is printed in Venice. In 1497, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1450-1536) publishes his edition of the *EN*.⁷⁵

11.1 Latin translations

In the same year 1497, a volume with three different translations of the *EN* is published:⁷⁶ one the so-called *antiqua traductio*, which – very nearly – corresponds to Grosseteste's,⁷⁷ one by Leonardo Bruni (c. 1370 –1444) and one by John Argyropoulos (1415 – 1487). Bruni's 1416-17 translation has

(AA) ... *nam in quibus utrum agamus uci non agamus in nobis est: et in nostra sunt potestate.*⁷⁸

Here, instead of (B2) we have simply 'they, too, are in our power'. Whether this is Bruni's way of concealing a lack of understanding of the Greek is unclear. Argyropoulos' 1450s rendering is closer to our Greek text.

(BB) *Quibus enim in rebus nostra in potestate situm est agere in iis et non agere. Et in quibus non agere: in iis est et agere.*⁷⁹

In agreement with Albertus Magnus' and Aquinas' commentaries, this is an explicit vice-versa translation and thus without verbs of saying. So, none of the three translations in the volume has a verb of saying.

⁷⁵ J. Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Decem librorum Moraliu Aristotelis tres conuersiones* (Paris, 1497).

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Decem librorum Moraliu Aristotelis tres conuersiones: Prima Argyropili Byzantij/ secunda Leonardi Aretini/ tertia uero Antiqua per Capita et numeros conciliate: communi/ familiariq[ue] commentario [Jacobi Stapulensis] ad Argyropilum adiecto, [tres conuersiones]*, (Paris, 1497). Permalink (Persistent URL): <http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/155-3-quod-2f-1/start.htm> accessed 1/27/2013.

⁷⁷ *In quibus enim in nobis operari et non operari: et in quibus non et etiam.* (i.e. with 'in nobis' instead of 'nobis', like Burgundio) <http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/155-3-quod-2f-1/start.htm?image=00271> = [*tres conuersiones*], pdf at 271.

⁷⁸ <http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/155-3-quod-2f-1/start.htm?image=00365> = [*tres conuersiones*], pdf at 365. The next sentence corresponds to (N).

⁷⁹ <http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/155-3-quod-2f-1/start.htm?image=00053> = [*tres conuersiones*], pdf at 53.

Bruni's and Argyropoulos' translations are the basis for many of the vast number of 15th and 16th century commentaries.⁸⁰ The 16th century sees a number of new Latin translations of the *EN*. Two influential 16th century works also have vice-versa translations. In 1540/42, in Paris, Ioachim Perion translates:

(CC) *Quas enim res in nobis situm est, ut agamus, eas etiam in nobis situm est, ut ne agamus. Quas'que res in nobis situm est ut non agamus, easdem ut agamus in nostra est potestate.*⁸¹

And in 1558, the French philologist Denys Lambin's widely used Latin translation of the *EN* was published in Venice, and shortly after in Paris. Lambin, too, provides a full-fledged vice-versa translation of 1113b7-8:

(DD) *Quas enim res agere in nobis situm est, easdem non agere possumus: et quas non agere in nobis situm est, earundem quoque agendarum potestas nostra est.*⁸²

A comparison of Argyropoulos', Perion's and Lambin's translations with the medieval ones reveals that the word-by-word method has been superseded by exegetical translations. In 1566, the Swiss humanist scholar Theodor Zwinger chooses Lambin's translation to be printed aside his Greek edition.⁸³ In 1716, William Wilkinson of The Queen's College, Oxford, does the same in his *Aristotelis Ethicorum Nicomacheorum Libri Decem* – except for some small modifications of the translation, but none in the sentence at issue.⁸⁴ Wilkinson's book is reprinted in 1803, 1809 and 1818 and remains for over a hundred years the text with which the *EN* is taught at Oxford. In 1828, the work is replaced by Edward Cardwell's Greek-only textbook.

⁸⁰ Cf. e.g. I. P. Bejczy (ed.), *Virtue Ethics in the Middle Ages: Commentaries on Aristotle's Nicomachean 1200-1500* (Leiden, 2008). Bejczy's introduction gives a useful overview.

⁸¹ I. Perion (tr.), *Aristoteles, De Moribus qu[a]e Ethica nominantur, ad Nicomachu[m] filium, Libri decem*, (Paris, 1540), (Basel 1542).

⁸² D. Lambin (tr.), *Aristoteles, In libros De moribus ad Nicomachum annotationes* (Venice, 1558).

⁸³ T. Zwinger (ed.), D. Lambin (tr.), *Aristoteles, Ethicorum Nicomachiorum Libri decem* (Basel, 1566). Our sentence is at 144.

⁸⁴ W. Wilkinson (ed.), D. Lambin (tr.), *Aristoteles, Ethicorum Nicomacheorum Libri Decem* (Oxford, 1716). Our sentence is at 99.

11.2 Latin commentaries and paraphrases

During the 16th and 17th centuries, thousands of commentaries on Aristotle's works are written and published, including many on the *EN*.⁸⁵ In order to find an explanation for the origin of saying-no translations (of the Aldine and later the Bekker text, i.e. of the western manuscript tradition) we need to follow the path of Ibn Rushd's *EN* commentary in the west and in print. Ibn Rushd was held in high esteem in the Renaissance, and the influence of his works is multiply attested.⁸⁶

It appears that the first printed Latin version of Ibn Rushd's *EN* commentary stems from a 1483 volume that also contains a Latin translation of the *EN* printed before the commentary. The translation is identical to the Grosseteste/Moerbeke standard translation (above (R)).⁸⁷ Since in Latin the word for 'not' (*non*) also means 'no' and the relevant word for 'too/doch' (*etiam*) also means 'yes', the Grosseteste/Moerbeke translation is theoretically compatible with a saying-no reading, with a verb of saying understood. Accordingly, in principle, the *EN* text and commentary on 1113b7-8 in this 1483 volume would be compatible.

Things are different in a later printing of Ibn Rushd's commentary, the Venice 1562 second Juntine edition of Aristotle, vol.III.⁸⁸ The title page proclaims that the volume to contain all of Aristotle's ethical works together with Ibn Rushd's *EN* commentary and *Republic* paraphrase. In this book, the commentary is not appended to the translation as a whole. Rather, the relevant bits are added after each chapter. The translation is not the

⁸⁵ See e.g. D. F. Lines, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca 1300-1650)* (Leiden, 2002).

⁸⁶ See e.g. A. A. Akasoy and G. Giglioni (eds.), *Renaissance Averroism and Its Aftermath: Arabic Philosophy in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 2013).

⁸⁷ N. Vernia (ed.), *Aristoteles, Opera latina cum commentariis Averrois* (Venice, 1483): *In quibus enim nobis operari et non operari et in quibus non et etiam* (Book III, chapter eight, third sentence). The text continues: *qua re si operari bonum existens in nobis est: et non operari in nobis erit malum existens. et si non operari bonum existens in nobis*. This is the end of the page. The text lacks the consequent of (N2), probably a printer error. In any case it is not a translation of the Arabic version that Ibn Rushd used.

⁸⁸ Aristotle/Averroes, 2nd Juntine. The text of the relevant passages in the first edition from 1550-1552 is identical.

antiqua, but a recent new translation by the Humanist and translator Johannes Bernardus Felicianus. He renders 1113b7-8 as

(EE) *In quibus enim in nostra potestate situm est agere, situm est et non agere. et in quibus non agere, simili modo et agere.*

This is an explicit vice-versa translation, as appears to be standard in the 16th century. Three pages later, following the end of *EN* III 5, the Latin of Ibn Rushd's commentary on the same passage, containing citation from the Arabic translation within his commentary, is added (text above (Z)). In this edition we thus have the – ill-fitting – combination of a vice-versa translation with a commentary which provides a reverse saying-no paraphrastic rendering. This is most significant: a critical reader who compares text and commentary is bound to be somewhat puzzled. A reader who wishes to retain the authority of both Aristotle's text and Ibn Rushd's commentary is bound to take some action to make the two match. It can only have been a matter of time until some such reader materialized.

It is not my intent, nor within my expertise, to provide a comprehensive study of how *EN* 1113b7-8 was handled in the vast number of Latin translations, paraphrases, summaries of and commentaries on the *EN* produced between the end of the fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries. Rather, I have picked out some texts that appear paradigmatic for what happened, which is the following. The Greek text of the Western tradition becomes the standard text, via the Aldine edition. At the same time, Ibn Rushd is recognized as an authority on Aristotle and the Latin translation of his commentary on the *EN* (including fragments of text from the Arabic *EN* translation he used, and in particular the lacunose 1113b8-11) becomes a standard commentary. The Western Greek text and Ibn Rushd's commentary are repeatedly printed together in one volume, first separately, later with parts of the latter inserted after chapters of the former. Latin summaries, explications, paraphrases and commentaries rely on Ibn Rushd's commentary (without their authors necessarily looking at the Greek text for comparison).

By 1578, it seems, someone has compared Ibn Rushd's commentary with the Aldine, and someone has attempted to make the two match. The evidence is an *explicatio accuratissima* published that year, which offers a hybrid paraphrase-translation of 1113b7-8, combining the vice-versa translation of the Aldine with the Arabic-origin Latin translation in a new, specific way. The author of the summary-paraphrase with textual notes of the *EN* is the German classical scholar Joachim Camerarius (1500–1574). The text was posthumously published in Frankfurt.⁸⁹ It gained a wide readership and was still used in the 19th century.⁹⁰ There are no textual notes on 1113b7-8, but the following paraphrase is offered:

(FF) *Ubi enim penes nos est ut aliquid agamus, ibi est etiam ut non agamus. Et ubi affirmandi potestas est, ibi et negandi est.*

This sentence was not proposed as a translation of the Greek (Aldine) text. Nor is it a saying-no translation. Rather, it manifests the parallel of 'being able to do' and 'saying yes' with 'being able not to do' and 'saying no' as we find it in IbnRushd (the reverse saying-no reading). What is noteworthy is that we have a structural parallel of (B1) and (B2) (*ubi, ibi*) and particles that correspond to the Greek of the Aldine (*enim* in (B1), *et* in (B2)), combined with Latin verbs for 'saying yes' and 'saying no' and an explicit mention of a *potestas* in (B2), which parallels the *penes* of (B1).

One can see how it may be only a matter of time before, first, based on hybrid *explications* like these, a hybrid *translation*, based on two different texts, may see the light of day; and before, second, this hybrid translation is offered as an actual translation of the Greek Aldine (or, later, Bekker) edition. Such a hybrid translation is the saying-no translation. It seems that for actual instances of the saying-no translation of (B) we have to move into 19th century Germany and Britain and translations into modern languages.

⁸⁹ I. Camerarius, *Ethicorum Aristotelis Nicomachiorum explicatio accuratissima* (Frankfurt, 1578).

⁹⁰ Yale has the copy of the American 19th century scholar Thomas Day Seymour. In Oxford, St.John's, Keble and Trinity have copies.

12. Commentaries and modern-language translations in the 19th and early 20th Centuries

The earliest translation of the *EN* into English, by John Gillies in 1789,⁹¹ conveniently just leaves out the entire sentence 1113b7-8 – or perhaps we should say paraphrases over it. The relevant passage reads (at p.304):

(GG) Ends are then the objects of volition; and the means of attaining them are the objects of deliberation and preference; which, being conversant only about such things as are in our power, the virtues immediately proceeding from them must also be in our own power, and voluntary, as well as the contrary vices.

The *Spectator* bemoaned the lack of literalness of this translation (1870, vol.43, 179). The earliest German translation, by Christian Garve (1742-1798) at the end of the 18th century,⁹² is more literal and provides a traditional vice-versa translation of *EN* 1113b7-8

(HH) Denn allenthalben, wo das Handeln in unsrer Gewalt ist, da ist auch das Nichthandeln in unsrer Gewalt: und wenn das Unterlassen von uns abhaengt, so haengt auch das Thun von uns ab.

And come the 19th century, *EN* 1113b7-8 is always translated. The 19th century also sees a further milestone in Aristotle scholarship: the publication of the Bekker edition (1831-70),⁹³ which soon becomes the standard edition used by scholars worldwide (including Oxford). The first Bekker edition of the *EN* appears in 1831. The passage 1113b7-8 is identical with (B). There are no comments on the sentence.⁹⁴

⁹¹ J. Gillies (tr.), *Aristotle's Ethics and Politics, Comprising his Practical Philosophy* (London, 1789).

⁹² V. C. Garve (tr.), *Die Ethik des Aristoteles*, tr. and comm., 2 vols. (Breslau, 1798-1801) (partly posthumous edition).

⁹³ I. Bekker (ed.), *Aristotelis Opera* (Berlin, 1831).

⁹⁴ K. L. Michelet's *Ethicorum Nicomacheorum libri decem. Ad codicum manuscriptorum et veterum editionum fidem recensuit commentariis illustravit in usum scholarum suarum*, 2 vols. (Berlin 1829, 1835²), also has (B). In the preface (vol. 1, at VI) Michelet acknowledges that he used Ibn Rushd's commentary. But it left no trace with respect to 1113b7-8 (vol. 1 at 50, vol. 2 at 156).

12.1. Vice-versa translations

Between 1818 and 1925, I have counted at least eight English translations that provide variations of the *vice-versa* reading.⁹⁵ Starting 1818 with Thomas Taylor,⁹⁶ followed 1828 by an Anonymous,⁹⁷ followed by the frequently reprinted 1861 Chase translation,⁹⁸ the first, it seems, who actually used the phrase 'vice versa':

- (II) Wherever it is in our power to do, it is also in our power to forbear doing, and vice versa.

Then in 1879 comes Walter Hatch, who pairs the following vice-versa translation

- (JJ) Where the power of action depends upon our own selves, in such cases there is also the power of forbearing; and where there is a power of forbearing, there is also a power of acting.

with an explanatory saying-no comment on the same page

- (KK) But if the doing of good be within our own power, the refraining from good will be within our power, since where there is 'nay' there is also 'yea.'⁹⁹

This seems right in the tradition of the Latin 1562 Juntine edition (see above, Section 11.2), a vestige of, or late witness to, the juxtaposition of a vice-versa translation on the one hand with a reference to 'yes' and 'no' as we have it in Ibn Rushd's commentary on

⁹⁵ There are also more Latin vice-versa translations, e.g. in Karl Zell's Graeco-Latin edition of the *EN*, K. Zell (tr.), *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea* (Heidelberg 1820).

⁹⁶ T. Taylor, *The Rhetoric, Poetic, and Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, 2 vols. (London, 1818), vol. 2 at 90: 'for in those things in which to act is in our power, not to act is also in our power; and in those things in which we have the power not to act, we have likewise the power to act.'

⁹⁷ ['Vincent'], *A New Translation of the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1826²), at 82 'for whenever we have the power to do, we have also the power not to do; and where we have the power not to do, we have also the power to do.'

⁹⁸ D. P. Chase, *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle: A New Translation, Mainly from the Text of Bekker* (Oxford, 1861). There were at least 21 editions published between 1911 and 2010 in the Everyman's Library, London / New York.

⁹⁹ W. M., Hatch, *The Moral Philosophy of Aristotle* (London, 1879), at 144.

the other. In fact, the commentary printed along with Hatch's translation of which **(KK)** is a part is nothing but an English translation of the anonymous *EN* paraphrase (see above, Section 8), here attributed to Andronicus of Rhodes. Curiously, the Greek relating to *EN* 1113b7-8 (above **(P)**) is mistranslated in **(KK)** in a manner that partially parallels the misrendering of **(B)** in **(A)** – notwithstanding the vice-versa translation **(JJ)**.

There follow with vice-versa translations R.W. Browne in 1889,¹⁰⁰ J.E.C. Welldon in 1892,¹⁰¹ Edward Moore in 1902,¹⁰² and finally, in 1925, Ross with the translation which (in the revised Ackrill/Urmson version) is still one of the most used today:¹⁰³

(LL) For where it is in our power to act it is also in our power not to act, and vice versa.

12.2. 19th century commentaries on the *EN*

These translations are complemented by at least three of the standard 19th century Latin or English commentaries which judge **(B2)** to be unremarkable and do not comment on it at all: Ramsauer/Susemihl, Grant and Stewart. On 1113b7/8 Ramsauer and Susemihl are silent; Grant notes 'elsewhere (*Met.* VIII ii 2) Aristotle states in more philosophical form this first step in the doctrine of free-will, namely that every psychical δύναμις is a capacity of contraries'; and Stewart writes: 'Grant refers to *Met.* Θ 2 where αἱ μετὰ λόγου δυνάμεις are said to be τῶν ἐναντίων. Cf. *Met.* Θ 5 where ὄρεξις or προαίρεσις is said to be τὸ κύριον, and to determine which of the two possible ἐναντία shall be selected.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ R. W. Browne, *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1889), at 66 'for wherever we have the power to do, we have also the power not to do; and wherever we have the power not to do, we have also the power to do'.

¹⁰¹ J. E. C. Welldon, *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1892), at 73 'for where it is in our power to act, it is also in our power to refrain from acting, and where it is in our power to refrain from acting, it is also in our power to act.' By 1912, there are five reprints.

¹⁰² E. Moore, *An Introduction to Aristotle's Ethics* (New York, 1902) (chapters 1-4, parts of ch. 10); at 138 'If it is in our own power to act, it must also be in our own power not to act (else our action was not really in our power but was compulsory), and vice versa.'

¹⁰³ D. Ross, *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 1925). Reprinted in J. Barnes (ed.), *Aristotle, The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Oxford 1984), vol. 2, at 1758.

¹⁰⁴ G. Ramsauer, and F. Susemihl, *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea* (Leipzig, 1878), at 165 and 733; A. Grant, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London 1866), vol. 2, at 26; J. A. Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford 1892), at 274.

12.3. Faux-literal translations

In the 19th century there seems also to originate a different translation, and the earliest (apparently), which translates the μή – incorrectly – with a word like ‘no’ rather than ‘not’. The first perpetrators seem to be German. Rieckher, in 1856, translates (B2) as

(MM) ‘Denn wo das Thun in unserer Gewalt ist, da ist es auch das Unterlassen, und wo das Nein, da ist es auch das Ja’¹⁰⁵

The influential 1911 translation by Rolfes is almost identical (!), but even shorter:

(NN) ‘Denn wo das Tun in unserer Gewalt ist, da ist es auch das Unterlassen, und wo das Nein, da auch das Ja.’¹⁰⁶

Both versions keep the parallel of the article ‘to’ for (B1) and (B2). I call this family of translations *faux-literal*, since they appear to be word-by-word, but translate μή with ‘no’.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that faux-literal translations first appear in German works. Conceivably, it was the result of the above-mentioned ambiguity in the Latin (Section 11.2). In the mid 19th century a Latin version of the *EN* was likely used as a guide in translating the Greek. Now, as stated above, in Latin, the word for ‘not’ (*non*) also means ‘no’; and in Latin, (as in Greek) the relevant word for ‘too/doch’ (*etiam*) also means ‘yes’.¹⁰⁷ Thus the Grosseteste/Moerbeke literal Latin for (B2), ‘*et in quibus non, et eciam,*’ (above, (R)) can be understood in at least two ways, either of which treats the ‘*non*’ and the ‘*etiam*’ as grammatically parallel expressions. There is on the one hand the pair ‘nicht (zu handeln)’ and ‘doch (zu handeln)’ and on the other the pair ‘das Nein’ and

¹⁰⁵ J. Rieckher (tr.), *Nikomachische Ethik* (Stuttgart, 1856), at 77: ‘For where the doing is in our power, there the refraining is, too (i.e. in our power), and where the No, there the Yes is too (i.e. in our power)’.

¹⁰⁶ E. Rolfes (tr.), G. Bien (ed.) *Aristoteles, Nicomachische Ethik* (Hamburg, 1985), at 55: ‘For where the doing is in our power, there the refraining is, too (i.e. in our power) and where the No, there the Yes, too’.

¹⁰⁷ See above, Section 4, for the Greek and the German.

‘das Ja’. In German and English (unlike in Romance languages)¹⁰⁸ there is no straightforward way of covering both readings in one translation. The translator has to make a choice and may need some help in making this choice. At this point, commentaries and anything else that aids the understanding of a Greek passage – such as textual parallels – may become important. Linguistic context and argument structure were rarely among the aids in early Victorian times. Thus if a commentary based on IbnRushd’s was consulted on the lines, this may well have been decisive and have pushed a translator towards the second (faux-literal) option.

Another observation that may have aided translators towards a faux-literal translation could have been a perceived similarity of *EN* 1113b7/8 to two passages in the New Testament, which each contrasts τὸ ναί and τὸ οὐ. These are *Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians* 1:17 (ἵνα ἢ παρ’ ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ;) and *Epistle of James* 5:12 (ἤτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσιν πέσητε.).¹⁰⁹ Each time the context suggests reference to a spoken ‘yes’ and ‘no’, indicated by the neuter definite article τό. Christian scholars would have been familiar with these passages and would thus have had a precedent (if with τὸ οὐ rather than τὸ μὴ), or at least a conceptual template, for the reading of ‘no’ and ‘yes’ in *EN* 1113b7/8, understood as something that is said.¹¹⁰

Be this as it may. Quite generally, if someone is faced with a faux-literal translation, the easiest maneuver for them to fill it with sense is by assuming an implicit verb of saying. The saying-no translation simply makes this explicit; and Ibn Rushd’s commentary, or a derivative commentary, would have sanctioned it.

12.4. Saying-no translations and paraphrases (by date)

¹⁰⁸ Some renderings into Romance language simply retain the ambiguity.

¹⁰⁹ In the New King James Version ‘that with me there should be yea yea, and naynay?’ and ‘But let your yea be yea; and your nay nay; lest you fall into judgment.’

¹¹⁰ The two biblical passages are referenced in Patristic and Byzantine Greek texts alone for over a hundred times (as a TLG search will confirm).

Finally, to the saying-no translations themselves. The first I found (and there may well be earlier ones) is a translation into German from 1863 by the German writer, literary historian and philologist Adolf Stahr:

(OO) (1) Denn in allen Bereichen, wo das handeln bei uns steht, steht auch das nicht handeln bei uns, (2) und wo wir Nein sagen koennen, koennen wir auch Ja sagen.¹¹¹

Note that the contrast between 'bei uns steht' in (1) and 'koennen' in (2) corresponds almost literally to Ibn Rushd's *in nobis* in the clause corresponding to (1) and *possumus* in the clause corresponding to (2). This is probably not a coincidence. The next saying-no translation is from 1869, by Robert Williams:¹¹²

(PP) (1) For, where it is in our power to do a thing, it is equally in our power to abstain from doing it; (2) where refusal is in our power, assent is equally so.

This text was widely spread and had at least four editions. It was praised in the *Spectator*.¹¹³ In 1881 follows the much-lauded translation by Peters,¹¹⁴ who translates

(QQ) '(1) For where it lies with us to do, it lies with us not to do. (2) Where we can say no, we can say yes.'

¹¹¹ '(1) For in all areas where the acting is with us, the not acting also is with us, (2) and where we can say No, we can also say Yes.', A. Stahr (tr. and comm.), *Aristoteles' nikomachische Ethik* (Stuttgart, 1863), at 86. This German translation seems to be part of the first complete set of translations of Aristotle into German. There are no comments on *EN* 1113b7/8, and throughout, there are frequent references to the translation by Garve, who, as we saw above, provided a vice-versa translation, and very few references to other works.

¹¹² R. Williams (tr.), *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle [NE]* (London, 1869, 1876², 1879³), at 62. There are no comments or references other than to Bekker 1861.

¹¹³ Review of Williams, *NE* in *The Spectator*, 43 (1870), 178-80, at 178-9.

¹¹⁴ F.H. Peters (tr.), *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1881), at 74. (There are no notes or comments on this sentence; only general acknowledgement of prior translations and commentators, without any names, as well as of use of Bekker, and in the fifth edition (1893) of Bywater).

Again, we have the telling contrast between 'lies with us' in (1) and 'can' in (2) that evokes Ibn Rushd. This translation sees its fifth edition in 1893. In 1897, George Stock publishes a book in which he rewrites the *EN* as a dialogue, to make it palatable to the English readership. Here is a paraphrase of our passage (roughly 1113b6-14) where Stock has Aristotle speak:

(RR) But when I speak of the voluntariness of virtue or vice, you must understand me to mean that the virtuous or vicious man is a free agent, that there is no force acting upon him except what comes from his own nature, except, in fact, himself. If he knows the right and the wrong, it is as open to him to choose the one as the other. Where he can do, he can refrain from doing, and where he can say 'no', he can say 'yes'.¹¹⁵

In 1900, Burnet, in his famous commentary, comments on our lines: 'This is because our capacities are μετά λόγου, and every λόγος implies both 'yes' and 'no'.'¹¹⁶ Thus Burnet reads μή as 'no', rather than 'not'. He adds 'Cf. above 1103a20sq'. But 1103a20ff does not provide any useful information in support of his statement that 'every λόγος implies both 'yes' and 'no''. Nor does the *Metaphysics* passage 1046a36ff (i.e. Arist. *Met.*Θ 2, which Grant and Stewart had referred to as evidence for Aristotle's theory of free will), which Burnet adduces in support for his saying-no reading.

In 1920, Samuel Sidney McClure summarizes the passage from *EN* III.5 thus:¹¹⁷

(SS) Choice is not the same thing as a voluntary act; nor is it desire, or emotion, or exactly 'wish,' since we may wish for, but cannot make choice of, the unattainable. Nor is it deliberation--rather, it is the act of decision following deliberation. If man has the power to say yes, he has equally the power to say no, and is master of his own action.

¹¹⁵ S. G. Stock, *Lectures in the Lyceum, or: Aristotle's Ethics for English Readers* (London, 1897), at 179.

¹¹⁶ J. Burnet (comm.), *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1900), at 134.

¹¹⁷ S. S. McClure, *The world's greatest books*, vol. 13, *Philosophy and Religion* (New York, 1920). This is identical to vol. I of J. A. Hammerton (ed.) *Outline of Great Books* (New York, 1936).

The 'yes' and 'no' in the last sentence can only be in reference to 1113b7-8. As in Ibn Rushd's and Camerarius' commentaries, though, the order of the negative and the positive are the reverse from that in 1113b8. Next in line seems to be Rackham's widely used and much-quoted 1926 translation,¹¹⁸ which is, nothing but our sentence (A), the sentence that has become the Aristotle-meme:

(1) For where we are free to act we are also free to refrain from acting, (2) and where we are able to say No we are also able to say Yes.

In this translation, too, there is a contrast between being free in (1) and being able to in (2), which matches Ibn Rushd's *in nobis* and *possumus*. None of the four *translations*, nor any of the paraphrases, nor Burnet's commentary mentions earlier translations or commentaries which adopt the saying-no reading.

What are we to make of this situation in the reception of such a critical text? A couple of things come to mind. First and foremost, the hybrid *translation* which, above in Section 11, we anticipated as a natural development of Camerarius' hybrid *explanation* of the seeming incompatibility of the Greek text of the Western tradition with Ibn Rushd's commentary has come into being in multiple forms.

Second, it was standard in the 19th century translations, summaries, paraphrases, analyses, etc. to provide book III chapter 5 of the *EN* with titles such as 'the freedom of man', 'freedom of the will', and to assume that it contained Aristotle's theory of free will. (Rackham still translates ἐφ' ἡμῶν with 'free'.) And there is throughout in Victorian times a Christian background to the translator's comments. This Christian background assumes that human beings have free, undetermined choice: the ability to choose between good and bad. This idea goes back at least to the second century CE in early Christian texts.¹¹⁹ And in the 19th century Aristotle was read with this conception of a free will and a *choice*

¹¹⁸ H. Rackham (tr.), *Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, 1926).

¹¹⁹ Cf. Bobzien, 'Free Will', 172-4.

between good and bad in mind. Thus 19th century translators would have had little difficulty in slightly twisting the text to fit this idea – not in order to make a point of Aristotle exegesis, but simply because they believed anyhow that Aristotle advocated freedom of choice in III 5. Aristotle's argument would have been assumed to work from acting and not acting being up to us, via choosing not to act and choosing to act being up to us, to our acting or not acting nobly or shamefully being up to us; free choice would have provided the point where the goodness or badness of the person latches onto their actions.

Third, it is also worth remembering that in Victorian times the strictures on translations were much more relaxed. The belief that the translator was to present what the author meant, if there are difficulties in translating the text as it stands, was widely accepted (although towards the end of the 19th century requirements became stricter). In addition, translators were not in the habit of considering the linguistic context and the logical structure of the argument as means for making sense of a piece of text. So they would have been unlikely to have considered sentence (N) for making sense of (B).¹²⁰

Thus, we can understand how the misrendering (A) made its way into translations of the Victorian era. It is the result of the confounding of the Greek text of the Western tradition with the Latin translation of IbnRushd's middle commentary, which itself is, most probably, the result of a lacuna, and subsequent reinterpretation of (B2). This reinterpretation is in line with the late ancient and Christian tradition of reading Aristotle as advocating a free will and free choice between good and evil.

13. Contemporary reception in ancient philosophy

To conclude, a brief overview over contemporary reception, as which I count, somewhat arbitrarily, the period from 1950 onwards. I have looked at a good part of the countless contemporary English translations, commentaries, introductions and companions of or to the *EN*.

¹²⁰ See Section 5 above for details.

We find still several renowned commentaries that do not comment on 1113b7-8 at all – presumably because the commentators think their reading of the text to be straightforward and unproblematic. Examples are Joachim in 1951, Dirlmeier in 1956, Gauthier/Jolif in 1970.¹²¹ There are vice-versa translations e.g. Gauthier/Jolif, Wardman in 1963 and in Apostle/Gerson in 1983,¹²² as well as in some scholarly books and articles,¹²³ (in all cases without comment on the choice of translation). Regarding the faux-literal translations, we can observe an increase in these, including Dirlmeier, Gigon, Kenny Irwin, and Sauve Meyer.¹²⁴ In recent English language translations, saying-no renderings appear to outnumber their alternatives. We find them for example in the translations of Martin Oswald in 1962 ('For where it is in our power to act, it is also in our power not to act, and where we can say 'no,' we can also say 'yes.>'); Roger Crisp in 2000 ('Where it is in our power to act, it is also in our power not to act, and where saying 'No' is in our power, so is saying 'Yes'.') Christopher Rowe in 2002 ('For when acting depends on us, not acting does so too, and when saying no does so, saying yes does too;') and Christopher Taylor in 2006 ('where acting is up to us, not acting is up to us, too, and

¹²¹ H. H. Joachim and D. A. Rees, *Aristotle, the Nicomachean Ethics: A Commentary* (Oxford 1951); F. Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles, die Nikomachische Ethik [NE1]* (Berlin, 1956) and *[NE2]* (Stuttgart, 2003); R. A. Gauthier and J. Y. Jolif (tr. and comm.), *L'Ethique à Nicomaque [Ethique]* (Louvain, 1970²).

¹²² Gauthier and Jolif, *Ethique*, vol. I, 68: 'en effet, la ou il est en notre pouvoir d'agir, il est aussi en notre pouvoir de ne pas agir (et reciproquement, la ou le *non* est en notre pouvoir, le *oui* l'est aussi)' (in French 'non'+adj translates 'not'; cf. also 'sinon' for 'if not'; hence 'le non' for 'the not' is possible. A. E. Wardman in A. E. Wardman and R. Bambrough, *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (New York/London, 1963), at 359: 'The point is that where we can act, we can also refrain, and vice versa.' H. G. Apostle and L. P. Gerson (ed. and tr.), *Aristotle, Selected Works* (Grinnell, 1983), at 459: 'For where it is in our power to *act*, it is also in our power not to *act*, and where it is in our power not to *act*, it is also in our power to *act*;'

¹²³ Like W. F. R. Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory* (Oxford, 1968, 1980²), at 178: 'where it is in our power to act it is also in our power not to act, and *vice versa*' (1113b7-8; cf. 1115a2-3).'

¹²⁴ Dirlmeier, *NE2* at 66: 'denn überall wo es in unserer Macht steht zu handeln, da sieht es auch in unserer Macht, nicht zu handeln, und wo das Nein, da auch das Ja'; O. Gigon, *Die Nikomachische Ethik* (Zürich, 1967); A. Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics* (Oxford 1978), at 7-8: 'we are told that where it is in our power to do something, it also in our power not to do it, and when the 'no' is in our power, the 'yes' is also (1113b7-8)'; T. Irwin, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis, 1985), at 66: 'for when acting is up to us, so is not acting, and when No is up to us, so is Yes.'; S. Meyer, *Aristotle on Moral Responsibility* (Oxford, 1993), at 130 and 'Aristotle on the Voluntary' in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 2006), at 152: 'For in those cases in which it is up to us to do something it is also up to us not to do it, and in cases in which no is up to us, so is yes.'

where one can say No, one can also say Yes').¹²⁵ They are also present in many scholarly commentaries, books and articles such as Everson 1990, Broadie 1991 and 2002, Sparshott 1994, Rapp 1995, Pakaluk 2005, Taylor 2006, and Destree 2011.¹²⁶ None of these scholars and philosophers mentions that the Greek does not include a verb of saying; or that the Greek includes no equivalent to 'no'. In fact, none of the translations and commentaries I have been able to consult, regardless of the rendering of *EN* 1113b7-8 offered or used, mentions that the Greek could be translated differently.

14. Conclusion

In Part I, I provided a textual analysis of *EN* 1113b7-8. The result was that there is only one type of correct translation of the sentence: as an abbreviated version of what I have called vice-versa translations; moreover, that saying-no translations are not accurate renderings of the text we have. In Part II, Sections 6 and 7, I offered a glimpse of the meme-like proliferation of saying-no translations of *EN* 1113b7-8 in present-day popular culture and popular philosophy. In Sections 8 to 12, I offered an explanation of how, in the 19th century, saying-no translations came about as the result, if you want, of a historical accident: the confluence of the Western textual tradition of the *EN* with a defective Arabic translation, via the Latin translation of an Arabic commentary; and combined with this, a ubiquitous belief in the authority of previous generations of scholars, centuries-old persistent misinterpretation of Aristotle's theory of freedom, often

¹²⁵ M. Ostwald (tr.), *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis, 1962), at 65; R. Crisp (tr.), *Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, 2000), at 45; Christopher Rowe in S. Broadie and C. Rowe (trs.), *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics [NE]* (Oxford, 2002), at 130; Taylor, *NE*, at 24.

¹²⁶ S. Everson, 'Aristotle's Compatibilism in the Nicomachean Ethics', *Ancient Philosophy*, 10.1 (1990), 81-103, at 90 (repr. in L.P. Gerson (ed.), *Aristotle: Psychology and Ethics*, 252-76); S. Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle [Ethics]* (Oxford, 1991), at 153-4, 156, 159 w. note 31 and S. Broadie, 'Philosophical Introduction', in Broadie and Rowe, *NE*, 9-91, at 40; Sparshott, *Life*, at 130, 134 with footnote 82; Rapp, 'Freiwilligkeit', at 131; M. Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2005), at 145: 'In cases in which it's up to us to carry out an action, it's also up to us to refrain from carrying it out; and in cases in which saying 'no' is up to us, saying 'yes' is also up to us'; Taylor, *NE*, 164; Destree, 'Character', at 289. Cf. also the advertising and blurb for Bernard Williams's short (posthumously forthcoming) book *A History of Freedom*: 'One of the things that distinguishes human beings from animals is the sense of ourselves as free, autonomous individuals. In the words of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle: 'Where we are free to act, we are also free not to act, and where we are able to say 'No', we are also able to say 'Yes'.' B. Williams, *A History of Freedom*; ISBN-10: 0297817043, ISBN-13: 9780297817048, Orion publishing.

based on Christian teachings of free will, lack of consideration of linguistic context and the course of Aristotle's argument, and the prevalence of interpretative over literal translation in Victorian times. As to contemporary reception, it is still developing.

All Souls College, Oxford

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akasoy, A. A., and Fidora, A., 'Hermannus Alemannus und die alia translatio der Nikomachischen Ethik', *Bulletin de philosophie medieval*, 44 (2002), 79-93.

Akasoy, A. A., and Fidora, A. (eds.), *The Arabic Version of the Nicomachean Ethics [Arabic NE]* with intr. and tr. by Dunlop, D. M. (Leiden, 2005).

Akasoy, A. A., and Giglioni, G. (eds.), *Renaissance Averroism and Its Aftermath: Arabic Philosophy in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 2013).

Apostle, H. G., and Gerson, L. P. (ed. and tr.), *Aristotle, Selected Works* (Grinnell, 1983).

Aquinas, T., *Sententia libri ethicorum*, in Gauthier, R. A. (ed.), *Opera omnia*, vol. 47.1 (Rome, 1969).

Aristotle/Averroes, *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis*, vol. III [2nd Juntine] (Venice, 1562), (repr. Frankfurt a. M., 1963).

Aristotle, *Decem librorum Moraliu Aristotelis tres conuersiones: Prima Argyropili Byzantij/ secunda Leonardi Aretini/ tertia vero Antiqua per Capita et numeros conciliate: communi/ familiariq[ue] commentario [Jacobi Stapulensis] ad Argyropilum adiecto, [tres conuersiones]*, (Paris, 1497). Permalink (**Persistent URL**): <http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/155-3-quod-2f-1/start.htm> accessed 1/12/2013.

Barber, C., and Jenkins, D., *Medieval Greek commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Leiden, 2009).

Barnes, J. (ed.), *Aristotle, The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Oxford 1984).

Bejczy, I.P. (ed.), *Virtue Ethics in the Middle Ages: Commentaries on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 1200-1500* (Leiden, 2008).

Bekker, I. (ed.), *Aristotelis Opera* (Berlin, 1831).

Berman, L. (ed.), *Ibn Rushd, Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics in the Hebrew Version of Samuel ben Judah* (Jerusalem, 1999).

Bobzien, S., 'Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1113b7-8 and Free Choice', in Destrée, P., Salles, R., and Zingano, M. (eds.), *What is up to us? Studies on Causality and Responsibility in Ancient Philosophy*, (Sankt Augustin, 2013), forthcoming.

Bobzien, S., 'The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem' ['Free Will'], *Phronesis*, 43 (1998), 133-75.

S. Bobzien, 'Choice and Moral Responsibility in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* iii 1-5', in R. Polansky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Nicomachean Ethics*, (Cambridge, 2013).

A. Borgnet (ed.), *Albertus Magnus, Opera omnia* (Paris, 1891), vol.7 (*Ethica*).

Broadie, S., *Ethics with Aristotle [Ethics]* (Oxford, 1991).

Broadie, S., and Rowe, C. (trs.), *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics [NE]* (Oxford, 2002).

Browne, R. W., *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1889).

Buchanan, D. R., *An ethic for health promotion: rethinking the sources of human well-being* (Oxford, 2000).

Burgundius Pisanus translator Aristotelis – Ethica Nicomachea: translatio antiquissima librorum II et III siue 'Ethica uetus' Clavis: 26.1.1 (M), liber: 3, cap.: 6.

Buridan, J., *Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum* (Paris, 1513). Repr. as *Super decem libros Ethicorum* (Frankfurt a. M., 1968).

Burley, Walter, *Expositio librorum Ethicorum*, (Venice, 1481, 1500²).

Burnet, J. (comm.), *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1900).

Bywater, J. *Aristotle's Ethica Nicomachea* (Oxford, 1894).

Camerarius, I., *Ethicorum Aristotelis Nicomachiorum explicatio accuratissima* (Frankfurt, 1578).

Chase, D. P., *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle: A New Translation, Mainly from the Text of Bekker* (Oxford, 1861).

Crisp, R. (tr.), *Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, 2000).

Demetrakopoulos, A. (ed.), *Eustratius of Nicaea, Orationes*. Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1866) (repr. Hildesheim, 1965).

Destrée, P., 'Aristotle on Responsibility for one's Character' ['Character'], in Pakaluk, M. & Pearson, G. (eds.), *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle* (Oxford, 2003).

Dirlmeier F., *Aristoteles, die Nikomachische Ethik [NE1]* (Berlin, 1956).

Dirlmeier F., *Aristoteles, die Nikomachische Ethik [NE2]* (Stuttgart, 2003).

Everson, S., 'Aristotle's Compatibilism in the Nicomachean Ethics', *Ancient Philosophy*, 10.1 (1990), 81-103 (repr. in Gerson, L.P. (ed.), *Aristotle: Psychology and Ethics*, 252-76).

Kiros, T., *Self-construction and the formation of human values*, (Westport CT, 1998).

Garve, V. C. (tr.), *Die Ethik des Aristoteles*, tr. and comm., 2 vols. (Breslau, 1798-1801).

- Gauthier, R. A., and Jolif, J. Y. (tr. and comm.), *L'Ethique à Nicomaque [Ethique]* (Louvain, 1970²).
- Gigon, O., *Die Nikomachische Ethik* (Zürich, 1967).
- Gillies, J. (tr.), *Aristotle's Ethics and Politics, Comprising his Practical Philosophy* (London, 1789).
- Grant, A., *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London 1866).
- Grosseteste, R. (tr.), *Ethica Nicomachea: libri I - III; VIII.1-5 (6) ('recensio pura' – Burgundii translationis recensio) Clavis: 26.2.1 (M), liber: 3, cap.: 7.*
- Hamburger, M., *Morals and law: the growth of Aristotle's legal theory* (New Haven, 1951).
- Hammerton, J. A. (ed.) *Outline of Great Books*, vol. 1 (New York, 1936).
- Hardie, W. F. R., *Aristotle's Ethical Theory* (Oxford, 1968, 1980²).
- Hatch, W. M., *The Moral Philosophy of Aristotle* (London, 1879).
- Heylbut, G. (ed.), [*Anonymus*], in *Aristotelis ethica Nicomachea ii-v commentaria*, in *Eustratii et Michaelis et anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea commentaria, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 20 (Berlin, 1892), 122-255.
- Heylbut, G. (ed.), *Aspasius, In Ethica Nicomachea quae supersunt commentaria. Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, vol. 19.1* (Berlin, 1889), at 76.8-16.
- Heylbut, G. (ed.), *Eustratios of Nicaea, Eustratii et Michaelis et anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea commentaria, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 20 (Berlin, 1892).
- Heylbut, G. (ed.), [*Heliodorus of Prusa*], in *Ethica Nicomachea paraphrasis, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 19.2 (Berlin, 1889).
- M. Hayduck (ed.), *Michael of Ephesus, Michaelis Ephesii in librum quantum Ethicorum Nicomacheorum commentarium, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 22.3 (Berlin, 1901).
- Hilgard, A. (ed.), *Georgius Choeroboscus, Prolegomena et scholia in Theodosii Alexandrini canones isagogicos de flexione verborum*, (GG. Pars IV, vol. 2), (Leipzig, 1894).
- Irwin, T., *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis, 1985).
- Joachim, H. H., and Rees, D. A., *Aristotle, the Nicomachean Ethics: A Commentary* (Oxford 1951).
- Kenny, A., *The Aristotelian Ethics* (Oxford 1978).
- Lambin, D. (tr.), *Aristoteles, In libros De moribus ad Nicomachum annotationes* (Venice, 1558).
- Lefèvre d'Étaples, J., *Decem librorum Moralium Aristotelis tres conuersiones* (Paris, 1497).
- Lines, D. F., *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca 1300-1650)* (Leiden, 2002).
- Marchesi, C. (ed.), *L'etica nicomachea nella tradizione latina medievale, Documenti ed Appunti* (Messina, 1904), at LII-LIII.

- Marcovich, M. (ed.), *Diogenes Laertius: Vitae Philosophorum*, vol. I (Berlin, 1999).
- McClure, S. S., *The world's greatest books*, vol. 13, *Philosophy and Religion* (New York, 1920).
- McTavish, I., *A Prisoner's Wisdom: Transcending the Ego* (Bloomington, 2012).
- Mercken, H. P. F., 'The Greek Commentators on Aristotle's *Ethics*,' in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed* (London, 1990), 407-410.
- Meyer, S., *Aristotle on Moral Responsibility* (Oxford, 1993).
- Meyer, S., 'Aristotle on the Voluntary' in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 2006).
- Michelet, K. L., *Ethicorum Nicomacheorum libri decem. Ad codicum manuscriptorum et veterum editionum fidem recensuit commentariis illustravit in usum scholarum suarum*, 2 vols. (Berlin 1829, 1835²).
- Migne, J. P. (ed.), *Joannes XI Beccus, Four Books to Constantine Meliteniotes, Patrologia Graeca* vol. 141 (Paris 1865) 337-396.
- Migne, J. P. (ed.), *Manuel II Palaeologus, Dialogi cum mahometano*, dialogue 17, in *Piissimi et sapientissimi imperatoris Manuelis Palaeologi opera omnia, theologica, polemica, panegyrica, paedagogica. Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 156 (Paris 1866).
- Moore, E., *An Introduction to Aristotle's Ethics* (New York, 1902).
- Moerbeke, William of (tr.), *Aristotelis secundum Exemplar Parisiacum, Ethica Nicomachea* ('recensio recognita' – Roberti Grosseteste translationis recensio) Clavis: 26.3, liber: 3, cap.: 7.
- Naydler, J., *The Future of the Ancient World: Essays on the History of Consciousness* (Rochester, 2009).
- O'Brien, J. A., *Truths Men Live By* (New York, 1946).
- Oikonomakos, K. (ed.), *Georgios Pachymeres, Philosophia 11, Ethica Nicomachea, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi, Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina*, vol. 3 (Athens 2005).
- Ostwald, M. (tr.), *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis, 1962).
- Pakaluk, M., *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2005).
- Perion, I., (tr.), *Aristoteles, De Moribus qu[ae] Ethica nominantur, ad Nicomachu[m] filium, Libri decem*, (Paris, 1540), (Basel 1542).
- Peters, F.H., (tr.), *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1881).
- Rackham, H. (tr.), *Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, 1926).
- Ramsauer, G., and Susemihl, F., *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea* (Leipzig, 1878).
- Rapp, C., 'Freiwilligkeit, Entscheidung und Verantwortlichkeit (III 1-7)' in Höffe, O., (ed.), *Aristoteles: Die Nikomachische Ethik [Freiwilligkeit]* (Berlin, 1995), 109-133.

- Rieckher, J. (tr.), *Nikomachische Ethik* (Stuttgart, 1856).
- Rolfes, E. (tr.), Bien, G. (ed.), *Aristoteles, Nicomachische Ethik* (Hamburg, 1985).
- Ross, D., *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 1925).
- Smyth, H. W., *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge MA, 1920).
- Sparshott, F., *Taking Life Seriously: A Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics [Life]* (Toronto, 1994).
- The Spectator*, 43 (1870), 178-80.
- Sorabji, R., *Necessity, Cause and Blame. Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory. [Necessity]* (London, 1980).
- Stack, G. J., 'Aristotle and Kierkegaard's Existential Ethics', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 12 (1974), 1-19.
- Stahr, A. (tr. and comm.), *Aristoteles' nikomachische Ethik* (Stuttgart, 1863).
- Stewart, J. A., *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford 1892).
- Stock, S. G., *Lectures in the Lyceum, or: Aristotle's Ethics for English Readers* (London, 1897).
- Taylor, C. C. W. (tr. and comm.), *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics: Books II – IV [NE]*, (Oxford, 2006).
- Taylor, T., *The Rhetoric, Poetic, and Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, 2 vols. (London, 1818).
- Trizio, M., 'On the Byzantine Fortune of Eustratios of Nicaea's Commentary on Books I and VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*', in Ierodiakonou, K., and Bydén, B. (eds.), *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy* (Athens, 2012), 199-224.
- Vernia, N. (ed.), *Aristoteles, Opera latina cum commentariis Averrois* (Venice, 1483).
- ['Vincent'], *A New Translation of the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1826²).
- Wardman, A. E., and Bambrough, R., *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (New York/London, 1963).
- Welldon, J. E. C., *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1982).
- Whitaker, C. W. A., *Aristotle's De Interpretatione: Contradiction and Dialectic* (Oxford, 1996).
- Williams, B., *A History of Freedom*; ISBN-10: 0297817043, ISBN-13: 9780297817048, Orion publishing, forthcoming.
- Williams, R. (tr.), *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle [NE]* (London, 1869, 1876², 1879³).
- Wilkinson, W. (ed.), Lambin, D. (tr.), *Aristoteles, Ethicorum Nicomacheorum Libri Decem* (Oxford, 1716).
- Zell (tr.), K., *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea* (Heidelberg 1820).
- Zwinger, T. (ed.), Lambin, D. (tr.), *Aristoteles, Ethicorum Nicomachiorum Libri decem* (Basel, 1566).