



Acting virtuously as an end in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics

Sukaina Hirji

To cite this article: Sukaina Hirji (2018): Acting virtuously as an end in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, British Journal for the History of Philosophy, DOI: [10.1080/09608788.2018.1454296](https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2018.1454296)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2018.1454296>



Published online: 10 May 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 35



View related articles [↗](#)




View Crossmark data [↗](#)

ARTICLE



Acting virtuously as an end in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

Sukaina Hirji 

Department of Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA



ABSTRACT

Sometimes, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE), Aristotle describes virtuous actions as the sorts of actions that are ends; it is important for Aristotle to do so if he wants to maintain, as he seems to at least until NE 10.7–8, that virtuous actions are a constituent of *eudaimonia*. At other times, he claims that virtuous actions are the sorts of actions that are for the sake of ends beyond themselves; after all, no one would choose to go into battle or give away a significant portion of their wealth if it did not realize some good end. In this paper, I review the familiar problem raised by Aristotle's discussion of the nature of virtuous actions, propose a solution to this problem by appealing to a distinction between virtuous actions and 'acting virtuously', and sketch the significance of this solution for understanding the relationship between virtue and human happiness.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 11 June 2017; Revised 16 October 2017, 23 December 2017 and 4 March 2018; Accepted 15 March 2018

KEYWORDS Aristotle; ethics; virtue; *eudaimonia*; virtuous actions

Consider a familiar puzzle about the nature of virtuous actions. Sometimes, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE), Aristotle appears to describe virtuous actions as the sorts of actions that are ends; it is important for Aristotle to do so if he wants to maintain, as he seems to at least until NE 10.7–8, that virtuous actions are a constituent of *eudaimonia*. At other times, he seems to be committed to the claim that virtuous actions are the sorts of actions that are for the sake of ends beyond themselves; after all, no one would choose to go into battle or give away a significant portion of their wealth if it did not realize some good end. Whether Aristotle is in fact inconsistent on this point is no trivial matter. Understanding how, for Aristotle, virtuous actions are supposed to be related to their ends bears on the central question of the NE, the nature of human happiness. In this paper, I review the familiar problem raised by Aristotle's discussion of the nature of virtuous actions,

CONTACT Sukaina Hirji  shirji@vt.edu  Department of Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Virginia Tech, 239 Major Williams Hall, 220 Stanger Street, Blacksburg, VA 24061, USA

propose a solution to this problem by appealing to a distinction between virtuous actions and what I call 'acting virtuously', and sketch the significance of this solution for understanding the relationship between virtue and human happiness.¹

In §1, I introduce the puzzle, building on an influential discussion in Whiting ('*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing'). Aristotle seems committed to the idea that virtuous actions are ends in themselves, the sorts of actions that are constitutive of an agent's own happiness, and also to the idea that virtuous actions are not ends, but rather are choice-worthy for the sake of the good results or consequences they aim to realize, independent of the agent's own happiness. It is difficult to see how Aristotle can coherently maintain both of these commitments.² In §2, I consider passages where Aristotle appears to draw a distinction between the virtuous actions an agent performs, and what I call 'acting virtuously': performing a virtuous action as an exercise of one's virtuous character. In §3, I suggest how we can employ this distinction to refine Whiting's solution, better explaining how virtuous actions can be both ends and for the sake of ends beyond themselves. I argue that, while virtuous actions are for the sake of ends beyond themselves, 'acting virtuously' is an end. And, although we can distinguish in thought between the two, 'acting virtuously' depends for its realization on virtuous actions. Aristotle's claims about virtuous actions are not in fact inconsistent but rather reflect the peculiar nature of ethical virtue as essentially practical. I conclude by sketching the significance of this solution for rethinking the apparent egoism of Aristotle's ethical theory. On my interpretation of the way in which the exercise of virtue is constitutive of *eudaimonia*, we need not interpret Aristotle's ethical theory as egoistic either in its explanation of the value of virtuous actions, or in its description of a virtuous agent's motivations when she performs these actions.

¹For a similar distinction between virtuous actions and acting virtuously, see Jimenez, 'Aristotle on Becoming Virtuous', esp. 4, 15–18, 21–22. See also Meyer, 'Aristotle on Moral Motivation', for a similar distinction between virtuous actions and what she calls 'virtuous agency': performing a virtuous action in the way characteristic of a virtuous agent.

²For some important discussion of the relationship between virtuous actions and their ends see Ackrill, 'Aristotle on Action'; Charles (*Aristotle's Philosophy of Action*, esp. 65–66), Heinaman, 'Activity and Praxis in Aristotle'; Lear, *Happy Lives and the Highest Good* and 'Happiness and the Structure of Ends'; and Whiting, '*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing'. A great deal has been written about whether Aristotle's claims in NE 10.7–8 are consistent with what has come before. I am not here directly concerned with this controversy, though I think it is a desideratum of a successful account of the relationship between virtuous actions and their ends that it render Aristotle's discussions in 10.7–8 consistent with the rest of the NE. For commentators who have maintained that Aristotle's discussions are inconsistent see, for example, Ackrill, 'Aristotle on *Eudaimonia*'; Adkins, 'Theoria versus Praxis in the Nicomachean Ethics'; Cooper, *Reason and the Human Good in Aristotle*, 156–164; Hardie, 'The Final Good in Aristotle's Ethics'; Jaeger, *Aristotle*, 439–40; Ross, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 233–4; and White, 'Goodness and Human Aims', 242–3. For attempts to render 10.7–8 consistent with the rest of the NE see, for example, Cooper, 'Contemplation and Happiness'; Devereux, 'Aristotle on the Essence of Happiness'; Keyt, 'Intellectualism in Aristotle'; and Whiting, 'Human Nature and Intellectualism in Aristotle'.

1.

1.1.

Consider first some textual evidence for thinking that, for Aristotle, virtuous actions are ends. In NE 10.6, Aristotle resumes the discussion of human happiness that he began in NE 1.7. As in NE 1.7, Aristotle argues that happiness must be an activity and, moreover, he argues that it must be the sort of activity that is choice-worthy for its own sake, rather than for something beyond itself.³ Aristotle goes on in what immediately follows to claim that virtuous actions appear to have the character of actions that are choice-worthy for their own sake:

Now those activities are choice-worthy for their own sake from which nothing beyond the activities is sought (*aph' hōn mēden epizēteitai para tēn energeian*). And activities on the basis of virtue (*hai kat' aretēn praxeis*) seem to be of such a sort; for to do good and noble actions (*ta gar kala kai spoudaia prattein*) is choice-worthy for its own sake.⁴

(NE 10.6 1176b6–9)

Aristotle doesn't here explicitly endorse the claim that virtuous actions are choice-worthy for their own sake; he qualifies his statement with *dokousin*. But, in what follows, he contrasts activities on the basis of virtue with pleasant amusements, offering a series of arguments for why virtuous activities are constituents of *eudaimonia* while pleasant amusements are not (NE 10.6, 1176b24–27). He concludes the discussion by affirming that happiness is not found in pleasant amusements but rather in virtuous activities (NE 10.6, 1777a9–11). And, by virtuous activities, Aristotle means to include ethically virtuous actions (see, for example, 1176b8, 1176b18). This comes as no surprise given what has come before in the NE. In his substantive account of *eudaimonia* in NE 1.7, Aristotle locates *eudaimonia* in virtuous activity and, in the subsequent books, focuses his attention on ethical virtue. It is natural to think, up until this point in the NE, that by 'virtuous activity' in the *ergon* argument, Aristotle means to include ethically virtuous activity. And again, if ethically virtuous activity is to be a constituent of *eudaimonia*, it must be the sort of activity that is itself an end, choice-worthy for its own sake, rather than the sort of activity that is for the sake of something beyond itself.

Further evidence for thinking virtuous actions are ends is found in Book 6. In NE 6.4, Aristotle distinguishes between the sort of action that is a *poiēsis*, or 'production', and the sort of action that is a *praxis* or 'action', and appears to draw the distinction at least in part on the basis of their respective

³NE 10.6 1176a35–1176b6. I move freely between talking about actions and activities; were it not for the awkwardness of the translation, I would prefer to use 'action' throughout in translating both *energeia* and *praxis*, as well as the related terms.

⁴Translations are my own, modified from Irwin's 2nd ed. (*Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics*).

ends (NE 6.4, 1140a26). Likewise, in NE 6.5, Aristotle claims that whereas a *poiēsis* is for the sake of a product, there is no end of a *praxis* beyond simply acting well. Given that this passage is in the context of Aristotle defining *phronesis*, it seems likely that virtuous actions are meant to be instances of *praxeis* (NE 6.5, 1140b4–7).

1.2.

Although the above passages seem to provide evidence for thinking of virtuous actions as themselves ends, there are also passages where Aristotle appears to claim that virtuous actions are for the sake of ends beyond themselves. This is one of the puzzles that Whiting (*Eudaimonia, External Results and Choosing*, 273–281) identifies: we need to reconcile the requirement that virtuous agents choose virtuous actions for themselves with the fact that virtuous actions typically aim at ends beyond themselves. For example, in 10.7, in comparing the life of contemplation with the life of political action, Aristotle explains:

And this activity alone would seem to be loved for its own sake, for nothing arises from it apart from contemplating, but from practical action (*tōn praktikōn*) we secure more or less beyond the action (*para tēn praxin*).

(NE 10.7 1177b1–4)

As an argument for the superiority of a life of contemplation to a life of political action, Aristotle claims that contemplation is loved for its own sake, and that it gives rise to nothing beyond itself, whereas virtuous actions, to a greater or lesser extent, bring into being something beyond the action itself.

Similarly, in concluding the discussion, he insists that political and military actions, although preeminently fine and great amongst virtuous actions, *do* aim, to greater or lesser degrees, at ends beyond themselves and are not choice-worthy for their own sake (NE 10.7, 1177b16–20). By contrast, contemplation is itself an end, choice-worthy for its own sake. As we saw in the 10.6, *eudaimonia* is something that is itself an end, choice-worthy for its own sake. It looks like, for Aristotle, the constituents of *eudaimonia* must themselves be ends. It follows that, if virtuous actions are not ends, they are not constituents of *eudaimonia*. Many commentators, inspired largely by Aristotle's discussion in NE 10.7 and 10.8, have embraced an 'intellectualist' reading of the NE according to which, strictly speaking, *eudaimonia* consists in contemplation alone.⁵

As Whiting has extensively argued, we find further evidence that Aristotle means to characterize virtuous actions in part in terms of the external results at which they aim in Books 3–5. So, for example, the generous agent that

⁵Commentators who have embraced an 'intellectualist' reading of Aristotle include Ackrill, 'Aristotle on *Eudaimonia*', 15–6, 31–2; Devereux, 'Aristotle on the Essence of Happiness', 260; Heinaman, 'Eudaimonia and Self-Sufficiency in the Nicomachean Ethics', 45; Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics*, 209; Lear, 'Happiness and the Structure of Ends'; White, 'Goodness and Human Aims', 225–45. I won't weigh in directly on this.

Aristotle describes in NE 4.1 is one who gives in the right amounts to the right people at the right times, and does not give to the wrong people, or for the wrong reasons, or at the wrong times. And what sets the standard of correctness for paradigmatically generous actions – what makes the generous agent’s use of wealth appropriate in a particular circumstance – seems to be the way in which the generous agent’s spending benefits others (see, for example, NE 4.1, 1120a23, 1120b1–3). Paradigmatically generous actions seem to be those that involve the use of wealth to benefit others.

Whiting suggests that something similar holds in the case of other paradigmatic virtues. The courageous agent is one who experiences the appropriate amount of fear with respect to the right things, with the right aim, in the right way and at the right time. And the greatest demonstrations of courage are in battle, where the courageous agent is willing to face the prospect of death in order to secure the safety and security of the *polis*. So also in the case of justice, Aristotle claims that paradigmatically just actions are those that aim a proportionate distribution of benefits and harms necessary to ensure the stability of the *polis* (see Whiting, ‘*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing’, 278, and NE 1132b31–1133a2). In the case of each of these virtues, Aristotle’s characterization of the paradigmatically virtuous actions is, in part, in terms of the kinds of externals ends at which they aim.

1.3.

So far we have seen passages where Aristotle seems committed to the idea that virtuous actions are ends and passages where he seems committed to the claim that virtuous actions are not ends but rather aim at ends beyond themselves. It is important to appreciate however that the problem for Aristotle goes beyond merely an apparent textual inconsistency. After all, it is possible to read the above passages as simply picking out two different ways in which virtuous actions are valuable. That is, it is possible to suppose that, for Aristotle, virtuous actions are *both* ends and for the sake of ends beyond themselves, and that in different passages, he is simply interested in focusing on one or the other way in which virtuous actions are valuable. Indeed, there is precedent for such a view when we recall Socrates’ three-fold division of good in the *Republic* (357a–358a); the very best goods, according to Socrates, are ones we welcome for themselves and for the good things that result from them. Likewise, Whiting suggests, following Irwin, that we can allow that a virtuous action be chosen both for its own sake and for the sake of something else; it is both a *praxis*, in virtue of some of its properties, and a *poësis* in virtue of other of its properties.⁶

⁶See Whiting, ‘*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing’, 272, note 5. See also Irwin (‘Aristotelian Actions’, 73–4). Whiting and Irwin are, I think, right here. I suggest a principled way of accommodating

The problem for Aristotle is that his seeming indecision about whether virtuous actions are ends or for the sake of ends beyond themselves reflects what looks like a deeper tension in his ethical theory itself. On the one hand, Aristotle appears to want to maintain, at least until 10.7 and 10.8, that ethically virtuous activity is one of the components of *eudaimonia*. And, for this to be the case, ethically virtuous activity must be something that is itself an end. If a virtuous agent's acting justly or generously is supposed to be a constituent of her own happiness, it must be the sort of thing that is valuable or choice-worthy for her in its own right rather than as a means to other ends. On the other hand, however, Aristotle appears to be committed to the idea that virtuous actions are characterized in terms of the good results or ends at which they aim. That is, Aristotle seems committed to the idea that what makes virtuous actions good or worth performing is the way in which they tend to make a positive difference to the world, including in ways that do not directly benefit the agent herself; indeed, in 10.7, Aristotle is expressing the intuitive idea that many ethically good actions are at some cost to the agent performing them – no one would willingly go into battle, for example, unless doing so was demanded by the circumstances.

If a virtuous action is choice-worthy because of the good ends at which it aims, in what way is a virtuous action an end in itself, constitutive of the agent's own happiness? If, on the other hand, a virtuous action is choice-worthy *because* it is the way for a virtuous agent to engage in the ethically virtuous activity constitutive of her own happiness, the resulting ethical picture looks objectionably egoistic. As Whiting ('*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing', 272) argues, it looks as though what makes the generous action choice-worthy is, ultimately, the way in which it allows the agent to engage in the sort of activity in which her own *eudaimonia* consists, and not the way in which the action realizes some beneficial end independent of her own happiness. Not only is this a philosophically unattractive view, it seems to be at odds with the way Aristotle characterizes virtuous actions in terms of their intended good consequences in NE 3–5 and NE 10.7.

If Aristotle wants to maintain that virtuous actions are both ends and for the sake of ends beyond themselves, we need a principled explanation for how this can be the case. More strongly, we need an explanation that holds in virtue of the nature of virtuous actions. If virtuous actions are indeed constitutive of human happiness, we should expect that this is non-contingently true. That is, we should expect there is some explanation of the tight connection between being virtuous and being happy. Likewise, if just and courageous actions aim at good ends beyond themselves, this should not turn out to be merely an accidental feature of these actions. Rather, we should

this proposal through the distinction between virtuous actions and acting virtuously, and the idea that acting virtuously depends on performing virtuous actions.

expect that these good external ends are part of what makes these actions what they are.

2.

On the solution I will defend, there is a qualified way in which virtuous actions are *both* ends and for the sake of ends beyond themselves. Specifically, my solution will depend on distinguishing between virtuous actions and what I call ‘acting virtuously’, which is to say, performing a virtuous action as an exercise of one’s virtuous character. In §2.1, I appeal to a much-discussed passage in NE 2.4 to defend the distinction between virtuous actions and acting virtuously, drawing on discussions by Jimenez (‘Aristotle on Becoming Virtuous’) and Vasiliou (‘Virtue and Argument in Aristotle’s Ethics’), and I suggest the relevance of this distinction for our present discussion. In §2.2, I consider and reject an alternative ‘deflationary’ interpretation according to which just or temperate actions performed by a non-virtuous agent only count as virtuous in a loose or extended sense. In §3, I apply this distinction to help resolve the puzzle about how virtuous actions are related to their ends.

2.1.

Turn to Aristotle’s discussion in NE 2.4.⁷ Aristotle begins NE 2.4 by considering a potential worry raised by his account of habituation. On the view of moral education he has just described, we are meant to acquire a virtuous character by performing virtuous actions. But, so the worry goes, surely an individual who can successfully perform a just or a temperate action *already* counts as being just or temperate, in the same way that someone who successfully produces a grammatical sentence counts as having grammatical knowledge: ‘if men do just and temperate actions (*ta dikaia kai sōphrona*), they are already just and temperate (*dikaioi kai sōphrones*), exactly as, if they do what is grammatical and musical, they are proficient in grammar and music’ (NE 2.4, 1105a22–25). If a person who successfully produces a virtuous action already counts as virtuous, how does it make sense to insist that we can only *become* virtuous by performing virtuous actions?

Aristotle’s response to this worry comes in two parts. First, he considers an analogy with virtue and *technē*, then he draws a disanalogy. In the first part, Aristotle suggests that the imagined interlocutor is mistaken about the case

⁷For helpful discussions of this passage see Jimenez, ‘Aristotle on Becoming Virtuous’, esp. 12–24 and Vasiliou, ‘Aristotle, Agents, and Actions’, esp. 173–183. Jimenez defends something like the distinction I argue for here between a virtuous action and acting virtuously, although it is important for her view of habituation that a non-virtuous agent can perform a virtuous action with much of the same motivation as a virtuous agent. Vasiliou ultimately defends a version of the ‘deflationary account’ according to which a virtuous action performed by a non-virtuous agent does not count as *fully* virtuous.

of crafts and as such is drawing a false inference about the case of virtue (NE 2.4, 1105a21–26). Even in the case of crafts, it is not true that an individual counts as having a certain skill or ability – as *being* grammatical or musical – just so long as she can produce a certain kind of result. Someone without grammatical knowledge can produce intelligible sentences, but does not, by doing so, display a corresponding excellence; after all, she might successfully produce a grammatical sentence by chance, or by following someone else’s instructions. In these cases, what she produces is not representative of any excellence she herself possesses. Rather, Aristotle insists, someone only counts as being a grammarian (*grammatikos*) – as herself possessing the grammatical *technē* – when she can both produce a grammatical result (*grammatikon*), and do so ‘grammatically’ (*grammatikōs*), which is to say, to produce a grammatical result as an expression of grammatical knowledge she in fact possesses (*kata tēn en hautō grammatikēn*). Aristotle’s thought here seems to be that what makes a certain result count as grammatical is determined by features of the result itself just as, presumably, what makes a particular piece of wood a table, or a particular combination of leather and lace a shoe, are the features of the product itself. What makes something count as a grammatical sentence, or a table, or a shoe, is determined by the properties of the product itself rather than by features of the agent responsible for the production.

On a natural reading of this analogy, Aristotle is suggesting that the same holds in the case of virtue: someone can perform a virtuous action without having a virtuous character. However, she only acts ‘virtuously’ when she performs the action as an expression of a character she in fact possesses. As in the case of crafts, the implication is that what makes a particular action virtuous are features of the action itself; whether an action is virtuous is not determined by the character of the agent who is responsible for the action. Both in the case of grammatical knowledge and in the case of virtue, the suggestion is, something has to be true about the agent herself, not just what she does, in order for her action to be an expression of the relevant excellence. If this reading is correct, the first part of Aristotle’s response to the worry is simply to deny that, if someone produces a just or temperate action, she thereby counts as being just or temperate.

It will be helpful to say more about each side of this distinction as I am understanding it since, I will suggest, being sensitive to the distinction will help make sense of Aristotle’s apparently inconsistent claims about the relationship between virtuous actions and their ends. One consequence of this interpretation of the NE 2.4 passage is that whether an action is virtuous is determined by features of the action itself, and not by the character of the agent performing the action. What are these features? I think a plausible answer is, as I suggested in §1.3, the ends that the action aims to realize. As we have seen in Whiting (*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing), in

Books 3–5, when Aristotle considers in detail the particular virtues of character, he appears to characterize virtuous actions in terms of the particular sorts of goods they aim to realize. The suggestion then is that we can give a characterization of what makes a particular action virtuous independent of reference to the character of the agent performing the action; specifically, we can do so in terms of the external results at which the action aims. I deliberately use here the locution of an *action* aiming at a particular end, rather than an *agent* aiming at a particular end. The idea here is that, plausibly, the end of an action is not wholly determined by the goal the agent has when she performs an action. Rather, we can distinguish between the metaphysical end of an action – the end that makes it the kind of action that it is – and the deliberative goal of the agent when she performs it; see Lear (*Happy Lives and the Highest Good*; ‘Happiness and the Structure of Ends’) for an extensive discussion of the metaphysical ends of actions. This distinction leaves open the possibility that an action can count as just, generous or temperate even if the agent performing the action does not have fully just, generous or temperate motives; I return to this idea in §2.2.

Turn now to ‘acting virtuously’. Aristotle goes on in NE 2.4 to claim that ‘acting virtuously’ requires performing a virtuous action with three further conditions being met: the agent acts with knowledge, chooses the action for its own sake, and acts from a firm and unchanging state. Elsewhere in the NE, we learn more about the way or manner in which a virtuous agent performs virtuous actions. Roughly speaking, Aristotle characterizes the virtuous agent in terms of two kinds of excellence: an excellence in her non-rational desiderative states, and an excellence in her practical reason. On the non-rational side, the virtuous agent exhibits the emotions appropriate to particular circumstances; her emotions hit the mean with respect to excess and deficiency. She also takes pleasure in performing virtuous actions and is pained by vicious actions. This part of the soul, though not itself capable of reason, is rational in a way insofar as it is obedient to reason. On the rational side, the virtuous agent exhibits an excellence in deliberation, which involves an ability to determine the best means of accomplishing a given end, as well as excellence in decision, which involves a grasp of the correct reasons for performing a given action. Significantly, Aristotle characterizes *phronesis* as a state not just to grasp truths in the ethical domain, but to act: he defines *phronesis* as ‘a state grasping the truth involving reason concerning action with respect to human goods’. Likewise, in NE 6.2 he insists that the function of the thinking part of the soul concerned with action is truth agreeing with correct desire (NE 6.2, 1139a29–31). The rough thought seems to be that *phronesis* is not performing its proper function unless it is issuing in desire and decision in line with the judgements of reason.

Though Aristotle treats virtue of character and *phronesis* separately, it becomes clear by Book 6 that both are exercised, and moreover work in

concert, when a virtuous agent performs a virtuous action. Aristotle makes clear that these two states, in their fully realized form, cannot exist without each other (see NE 6.13 1144b30–1145a2 and 6.2 1139a33–35). I will proceed on the assumption that these two virtues are in some sense unified in the fully good person, and directed towards a common goal.⁸ Setting aside the many controversial details, the overall picture we get is one according to which the virtuous agent is characterized by an ability to correctly identify and be moved to perform the appropriate action in a particular circumstance with a full appreciation of the reasons for doing so, and with desires that align with the judgement of her reason. Virtue of character and *phronesis*, taken together, equip an agent to appropriately respond to value in the world, in the domain of what is achievable in action.

2.2.

On the interpretation of the NE 2.4 passage I have considered, Aristotle draws a meaningful distinction between a virtuous action and what I have been calling ‘acting virtuously’, according to which it is possible for a non-virtuous agent to perform a genuinely virtuous action, but not possible for a non-virtuous agent to ‘act virtuously’. In fact, as Jimenez argues, many commentators have opted for a different, more deflationary reading of this passage that collapses this distinction.⁹ Because this distinction is crucial for the argument in §3, it will be helpful first to say something about this alternative reading and why I think the reasons in support of it are not ultimately compelling. On the alternative, more deflationary reading of this passage that Jimenez details, Aristotle is speaking loosely in describing the actions a non-virtuous agent performs as just or temperate: the actions a non-virtuous agent performs are not ‘strictly virtuous’ (Hardie, *Aristotle’s Ethical Theory*, 104–5), but rather are virtuous ‘in an equivocal sense’ (Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics*, 183) or ‘in a minimal sense’ (Vasiliou, ‘Virtue and Argument in Aristotle’s Ethics’, 51), not ‘in the same full sense as those which we do when our *hexis* is fully formed’ (Joachim, *Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics*, 79).

Part of the motivation for this more deflationary reading is to explain what Aristotle goes on to say in this passage. After drawing the above analogy with the case of *technē*, Aristotle considers a disanalogy:

Moreover, however, the case of crafts is not like the case of virtues; for the products of crafts have their goodness in themselves so it is enough that they have a certain character when they are produced (*pōs echonta genesthai*); but the

⁸I mean to remain neutral, or as neutral as possible, on the question of how virtue of character and *phronesis* are related. For some recent discussion of this question see Lorenz, ‘Virtue of Character’; Taylor, *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics*, 106.

⁹Jimenez, ‘Aristotle on Becoming Virtuous’, esp. 18–24. I agree with Jimenez that the deflationary view is mistaken, although Jimenez puts this distinction to a rather different purpose.

things that come to be on the basis of the virtues (*ta de kata tas aretas ginomena*) are done justly or temperately (*dikaiōs ē sōphronōs prattetai*) not if they have the right qualities (*pōs echōn Prattē*) but if the agent also is in a certain state when he does them: first he must act knowingly, next he must choose the acts and choose them for their own sake and third he must act from a firm and unchanging state.

(NE 2.4 1105a26–1105a34)

It is tempting to understand Aristotle as identifying further conditions that must be met for an *action* to count as virtuous, namely that it be done with knowledge, for its own sake, and from a firm and unchanging character.¹⁰ On this reading, the action a non-virtuous agent performs does not, strictly speaking, count as just or temperate because the requisite further conditions are not met; rather, the character of the agent performing the action is built into the account of what it is for an action to be fully virtuous. On this interpretation, when Aristotle, later in NE 2.4, claims that ‘actions are called just when they are the sort that a just or temperate person would do’ at 1105b7–9, Aristotle means to define a virtuous agent in part in terms of virtue of character. If this is right, it cannot be the case that a non-virtuous agent can perform a genuinely virtuous action.

There are a number of reasons why, I think, we should resist this reading of this passage. First, it squares badly with what has come before. If the purpose of the disanalogy is to identify the further conditions that must hold for an action to count as genuinely virtuous, it is hard to see what the purpose of the prior analogy was. Why bother drawing a distinction between a just action and acting justly if Aristotle goes on in what immediately follows to collapse the distinction? It makes better sense of the passage overall to read Aristotle as assuming this distinction between a virtuous action and ‘acting virtuously’ in this second part of his response. On this reading, Aristotle is not identifying further conditions that need to be met for an action to count as a fully just or temperate action. Rather, as Jimenez (‘Aristotle on Becoming Virtuous’, 21) also argues, Aristotle is identifying further conditions that need to be met for a just or temperate action to count as having been done justly or temperately. The point of the contrast then is to show that what we care about in the case of crafts – what the point is of having a technical skill in the first place – is the quality of the product that results; a *technē* is for the sake of its product, and the value of its exercise derives from the value of the product it results in. By contrast, there is more to what we care about – more to the point of having a virtuous character – than merely reliably producing a certain kind of action. There is value to the *acting* itself that is not reducible to the value of the action: specifically, there is value to performing the

¹⁰See, for example, Taylor, *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics*, 86.

action in the way or manner of the virtuous agent. I'll make a suggestion in §3.1 about what this value consists in.

We should likewise be sceptical of the reading of 1105b7–9 as providing a definition of virtuous actions in terms of virtue of character. After all, in what immediately follows, Aristotle qualifies his initial claim, reminding us that we should characterize the virtuous agent in part in terms of the way in which she performs virtuous actions: 'But the just and temperate person is not one who [merely] does these actions, but the one who does them in the way in which just or temperate people would do them' (NE 2.4, 1105b9–10). This suggests a view opposite to the deflationary reading: we define what it is for a character to be virtuous in part in terms of what it is for an action to be virtuous. A virtuous agent is one who performs a virtuous action *in a particular way*, namely, with the three conditions above being met. I suggest that, instead, we read Aristotle's remarks at 1105b7–9 as a kind of epistemological claim.¹¹ Aristotle is not asserting that virtuous actions are constituted as such by the relationship they bear to a virtuous character. Rather, he is suggesting that the best way to *identify* which actions are virtuous is by relying on the judgement of the virtuous agent.

A second reason to be sceptical of the deflationary reading of NE 2.4 is, as Jimenez notes, that we find the distinction between a virtuous action and what I have been calling 'acting virtuously' elsewhere in the NE. This puts some pressure on us to think Aristotle is not simply speaking loosely in NE 2.4 in the context of discussing moral education. In 6.12, Aristotle considers a worry that practical wisdom is ineffectual since it doesn't make someone with a good character any more able to perform virtuous actions. His response is to again appeal to a distinction between a just action, and performing a just action *as an expression of* an excellence one in fact possesses (NE 6.12, 1144a11–1144a20). As in NE 2.4, Aristotle distinguishes between a just action (*ta dikaia*) and performing a just action in the state of a virtuous person (*to pōs echonta prattein*). Though he doesn't use the same adverbial phrases like *dikaiōs* and *sōphronōs* here, the distinction appears to be the same one we saw in NE 2.4 between performing a just action, and performing it justly. And, the implication is, practical wisdom is not necessary for being able to do the former, but it is necessary for being able to do the latter.¹²

We might worry at this point that the reading I endorse invites an implausible consequence: if what makes an action virtuous are the features of the action itself independent of the agent's motives when she performs the action, it looks as though even a thoroughly vicious agent could perform a genuinely virtuous action. Let me consider two possible responses available

¹¹See Morison's criticisms of Taylor's view on the question of definitional priority, as well as a version of this suggestion, in his book review ('Aristotle, Almost Entirely', 243–45).

¹²As Jimenez argues, Aristotle offers a parallel distinction between performing unjust actions and being unjust in NE 5.6, 1134a17–23 (Jimenez, 'Aristotle on Becoming Virtuous', 12, note 10).

on my view, one more conciliatory than the other. First, I have been speaking up until this point as though what makes an action virtuous is *wholly* determined by features of the action itself, independent of the agent's motive. Perhaps however what makes the action count as virtuous are the features it has, as well as some minimal appreciation of the goodness of the action on the part of the agent. Again, what is important for the view I will defend is just that 'acting virtuously' involves a *full* appreciation of the goodness of the action, and the corresponding desires and pleasures, whereas performing a virtuous action does not; a non-virtuous agent can perform a virtuous action, and even have some of the right motives, but does not thereby engage in an instance of acting virtuously.

A second possible response, one I am inclined to endorse, is that a vicious agent can indeed perform a genuinely virtuous action in certain circumstances. After all, I have been arguing that there is a robust distinction between virtuous actions and 'acting virtuously', such that a non-virtuous agent can perform a genuinely virtuous action. If this is right – and if what characterizes a virtuous action are the features of the action itself independent of the motivation of the agent – then nothing prevents us from thinking that a vicious agent could perform a virtuous action, though he would not perform it virtuously. We can imagine an unjust individual performing a just action – distributing resources according to what is owed – but doing so in order to curry favour with those in political power. He performs the same action that a virtuous agent would perform under the circumstances, the action that is demanded by justice, but he fails to thereby act justly because he lacks the correct motivations and the understanding of the virtuous agent. Once we appreciate the distinction between virtuous actions and acting virtuously, this does not seem to me to be an implausible consequence of Aristotle's ethical theory.

To sum up, there are compelling reasons not to embrace the deflationary reading of NE 2.4. Rather, we should accept the natural reading according to which Aristotle is drawing a distinction between a virtuous action on the one hand, and 'acting virtuously' on the other. What makes an action virtuous is determined chiefly by features of the action itself such that even a non-virtuous agent can perform a virtuous action. By contrast, what it is for an agent to 'act virtuously' is for her to perform a genuinely virtuous action as an expression of her virtuous character, with knowledge, for its own sake, and from a firm and unchanging state.

3.

Return now to the question we started with. We wanted to know how Aristotle can coherently maintain both that virtuous actions are ends and that virtuous actions are for the sake of ends beyond themselves. In what follows, I apply

the distinction between virtuous actions and acting virtuously to resolve this apparent inconsistency. While virtuous actions are for the sake of ends beyond themselves, 'acting virtuously' is itself an end. And although we can distinguish in thought between the two, 'acting virtuously' depends for its realization on virtuous actions.

3.1.

Consider first the passages we saw earlier, in 10.7, when Aristotle seems to claim that virtuous actions are not ends but rather are for the sake of actions beyond themselves. My suggestion here is that, in these passages, he is referring to the particular political or military actions (*hai politikai kai polemika*), analogous to the just or temperate actions (*ta dikaia kai sōphrona*) in NE 2.4 and NE 6.12, that can be performed even by a non-virtuous agent and that count as virtuous because of certain features of actions themselves. Specifically, as Whiting ('*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing') has argued, these actions count as virtuous because of the good ends they aim to realize: this is the sense in which they are choice-worthy for the sake of ends beyond themselves. Again, in these passages, Aristotle is expressing the intuitive idea that what makes an action appropriate or called for in a given circumstance is something about the goodness of the end it aims to achieve.

Compare this with the 10.6 (1176b6–9) passage where Aristotle seems to claim that virtuous actions are ends. Here, again, Aristotle argues that the actions on the basis of virtue (*hai kat' aretēn praxeis*) appear to be the sorts of things from which nothing beyond the activity is sought, explaining that doing fine and good actions (*ta kala kai spoudaia prattein*) is choice-worthy for its own sake. Even on a purely linguistic level, both of these formulations – the *kata* followed by accusative, and the infinitive phrase – are plausibly picking out the *acting* rather than the action, which is to say that the activity that is the exercise of virtue, rather than the particular fine or good action that is successfully realized.¹³ Likewise, in the NE 6.5 (1140b4–7) passage where Aristotle contrasts a *praxis* with a *poiēsis*, his explanation for why a *praxis* has no further end beyond itself is that *eupraxia* is an end. Here again, plausibly, Aristotle has in mind by *eupraxia* the acting rather than the action; we can read *eupraxia* as equivalent to the other adverbial phrases that pick out acting virtuously, rather than a virtuous action. The suggestion here is that when an agent 'acts well', he performs a virtuous action, and moreover performs it virtuously.

¹³My suggestion here is that the phrase *hai kat' aretēn praxeis* picks out not just actions that conform to what virtue demands, but actions that are the exercise of one's virtuous character; if this is right, then these actions are instances of 'acting virtuously'. See Irwin, 'The Structure of Aristotelian Happiness', 390–1 for a discussion of different readings of the *kata* plus accusative phrase in Aristotle.

What does it mean for ‘acting virtuously’ to be an end? Though there is no consensus amongst commentators on this point, one plausible answer is that ‘acting virtuously’ is an end because it is an excellent accomplishment of the human *ergon*. In NE 1.7, Aristotle locates the good for human beings in their characteristic work or function, identifies the human function with activity of the rational part of the soul, and concludes that the highest good for human beings is this activity on the basis of virtue. And, setting aside the details, on one standard interpretation, Aristotle’s locating the good for a thing in the excellence accomplishment of its *ergon* falls out of his natural teleology. Aristotle holds that, in the case of living organisms, there is something deeply valuable about developing and exercising the natural capacities that are distinctive or characteristic of a being’s essential nature. And, for human beings, unlike for beasts and gods, this involves realizing our capacity for practical rationality. ‘Acting virtuously’ is one way of fully realizing one’s nature *qua* rational.

Although Aristotle does not explicitly refer to ethically virtuous activity in the *ergon* argument, we have already seen evidence elsewhere for thinking that ‘acting virtuously’ is an excellent accomplishment of the human *ergon* alongside contemplation. Again, in 10.6, Aristotle seems to be affirming that ethically virtuous activity is choice-worthy for its own sake, and therefore the right sort of activity to be constitutive of *eudaimonia*. Moreover, as we have seen, there is no clear reason up until 10.7 for doubting that ethically virtuous activity, the focus of the NE, is constitutive of *eudaimonia*. Finally, there are good philosophical reasons for supposing, at least *prima facie*, that ethically virtuous activity is a form of the excellent rational activity constitutive of *eudaimonia*. We saw earlier that the virtuous agent is characterized by *phronesis*, the excellence of her capacity for practical rationality, and character virtue, the excellence of the part of her soul which, though not itself capable of reason, counts as rational in an extended sense in virtue of being obedient to reason. The activity I have been referring to as ‘acting virtuously’ is the exercise of these two states, working in harmony with each other: it is an activity that is in part rational. Indeed, more strongly, it seems to be the activity that is the fullest expression of our capacity for practical reason. As we saw in §2.1, Aristotle’s claims about *phronesis* in 6.2 and 6.5 suggest that the full expression of *phronesis* – what *phronesis* is ultimately *for* – is *acting* in relation to human goods.

3.2.

So far, I have offered a suggestion for how to read Aristotle’s varying descriptions of the relationship between virtuous actions and their ends as consistent. Virtuous actions are for the sake of ends beyond themselves because what makes them good or choice-worthy, what makes them the kinds of

actions they are, is the external ends they aim to realize. 'Acting virtuously' is an end because it is an excellent accomplishment of the human *ergon*: it is the full expression of practical wisdom and character virtue working in harmony. In some passages, Aristotle is focusing on the value of the particular actions themselves, and in other passages he is focusing on the value of the *acting*.

This is not yet a satisfying account of the distinction. As I suggested in §1.3, what we want from Aristotle is an explanation for why, when a virtuous agent performs virtuous actions that are good because of the external results at which they aim, she is also achieving something that is good for herself. Otherwise put, we want an explanation of the tight connection between virtuous actions and 'acting virtuously'.

What is crucial for the view I have been sketching is one further claim, namely, that 'acting virtuously' depends on performing virtuous actions. I have suggested that the right way to think about *phronesis* and character virtue, taken together, is as the developed state of a capacity for a certain kind of agency: virtue equips us to respond appropriately to human goods in the domain of things that can be achieved in action. The thought here is that virtue of character is essentially practical: it is a capacity not merely to identify or understand value in the world, but to actually act so as to realize that value. The upshot is that the *only* way to fully realize one's capacity for practical agency is to actually perform discrete virtuous actions that are good because of the good ends they aim to realize, and moreover, to do so as an expression of one's own virtuous nature.

Compare this with the view defended by Whiting ('*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing'), partly in response to the same puzzle about the way virtuous actions are related to their ends. She suggests we think of the virtuous agent choosing the virtuous action for its own sake along the lines of the way one loves a friend for herself: choosing a virtuous action for its own sake involves choosing it on account of the features that make it the kind of action that it is, which includes the intended good consequences of the action. Further, she makes use of the idea that, for Aristotle, one way in which X can be chosen for the sake of Y is by X being a component of Y. So she suggests choosing a virtuous action for its own sake is, in turn, a way of choosing it for the sake of *eudaimonia* (Whiting, '*Eudaimonia*, External Results and Choosing', 283–4).

I take my account to be largely compatible with Whiting's view, and indeed I take on board much of what she suggests. But appealing to the distinction between virtuous actions and acting virtuously helps to refine and develop Whiting's proposal in a number of ways. First, it provides textual evidence for thinking there is a meaningful difference, marked by Aristotle's word choice, between the way in which performing a virtuous action is an end for the virtuous agent, and the way in which a virtuous action is for the sake of ends beyond itself. Second, it offers a fleshed out explanation for

how acting virtuously is a component of *eudaimonia* even while it depends for its realization on virtuous actions with distinct ends. When a virtuous agent performs a virtuous action with the motives that Whiting describes – with a full appreciation of the goodness of the ends it aims to achieve – she is at once fully realizing her capacity for practical rationality, and thereby engaging in an activity that is itself an end. And, although her activity only counts as an end if she has the right goals, what *makes* her activity an end is not reducible to the goals she has. There is a deeper explanation for what makes acting virtuously an end, namely, that it is an excellent accomplishment of the human *ergon*. Third, by allowing us to distinguish between the deliberative goals of the agent when she acts, and the way in which her acting is an end and a component of *eudaimonia*, we are in a better position to resolve a worry that Whiting raises for her account: that the virtuous agent seems to have ‘one thought too many’ if she chooses to perform a virtuous action in part because she hopes to actualize her capacity for virtue and so achieve her own *eudaimonia*. As I discuss further in §3.3, the virtuous agent only engages in an instance of acting virtuously when she performs the virtuous action with a full appreciation of why it is good independent of its contribution to her own happiness. If she treats the virtuous action as instrumental to her own happiness, she is failing to ‘get things right about the world’, and so also failing to engage in the excellent practically rational activity constitutive of her own *eudaimonia*.

Consider an example of a generous action: a virtuous agent builds a house for someone in need. What makes this *action* good, a species of virtuous action, is that it aims to achieve a good end in the political community. And what motivates the virtuous agent is precisely this end: in performing this generous action, the virtuous agent is responding to the fact that someone deserving in the *polis* can be benefitted. But, when she performs the action, she does so with a full rational appreciation of why this end is good, and with desires in accordance with her rational judgement. Moreover, she effectively deliberates about the best way to achieve this end. The proposal then is that when a virtuous agent performs a *virtuous action*, she is at once engaging in an instance of *acting virtuously*, and this ‘acting virtuously’ is a form of the excellent rational activity constitutive of happiness.

To get clear on how, on my view, virtue is essentially practical, consider how the exercise of virtue in ‘acting virtuously’ turns out to be both like and unlike contemplation. When an agent who possesses theoretical knowledge exercises it in actively grasping intelligible objects in the theoretical domain, she is fully realizing the end of her nature *qua* theoretically rational; she is fully *being* a knower. This is what makes her activity of contemplation an end. Something similar holds in the case of ethical virtue. The capacity for practical agency constituted by virtue of character and *phronesis*, taken together, is fully realized in a certain activity, namely ‘acting virtuously’.

When an agent who possesses virtue of character and *phronesis* is correctly responding to goods and bads in the ethical domain, she is fully realizing her potential for virtue; she is fully *being* virtuous. This is what makes her acting virtuously an end: it is the full expression of her nature *qua* practically rational.

However, contemplation and ‘acting virtuously’ turn out to be disanalogous in what they depend on for their realization. In order to engage in the activity of contemplation, all that is needed is for an agent to actually possess theoretical knowledge, and for the exercise of this knowledge not to be interfered with; so long as an individual is able to grasp the nature of eternal and unchanging objects in the intelligible domain she has accomplished the function of theoretical reason. By contrast, *phronesis* and virtue of character are essentially practical; they are directed at truths about value in the ethical domain. What this means, I have suggested, is that in order to act virtuously a virtuous agent needs to actually perform discrete virtuous actions which are for the sake of the ends or results beyond themselves. The comparison that Aristotle is drawing in 10.7 1177b1–4 and b16–20, when he compares the way in which contemplation and virtuous actions are related to their ends, is a comparison between what theoretical excellence and practical virtue require for their realization in action, rather than as a comparison of the respective value of contemplation and ‘acting virtuously’ once realized.¹⁴

3.3.

If something like the proposal I have sketched is correct, consider some consequences. First, we have a principled way of explaining how what the agent does is both good for the good ends it realizes and good in itself. Virtuous actions are good because of the good ends they aim to achieve, and ‘acting virtuously’ is good because it is a way for a human being to engage in the excellent rational activity constitutive of *eudaimonia*. Although ‘acting virtuously’ depends for its realization on virtuous actions, its value is not reducible to the value of the virtuous actions on which it depends.

A second, related, feature of this solution is that it helps address the charge that Aristotle’s theory is objectionably egoistic. Again, the worry for Aristotle is that, if what explains the goodness of virtuous actions is that they are constituents of an agent’s own happiness, Aristotle’s ethical theory looks egoistic both in its explanation of the goodness of virtuous actions and in its description of a virtuous agent’s motives when she performs a virtuous action. On the view I have defended the virtuous agent is *not* always motivated to perform virtuous

¹⁴This is not to deny that, for Aristotle, contemplation is more valuable than ‘acting virtuously’ in its own right. It is just to say that this is not what Aristotle means to establish in this argument.

actions chiefly out of a concern for her own *eudaimonia*. In fact, more strongly, the virtuous agent, if she is to engage in the right sort of activity to count as *eudaimonia*, cannot always be motivated chiefly by a concern for her own *eudaimonia*. Part of what it is for an agent to successfully engage in activity on the basis of ethical virtue is for her to choose good actions with a full rational appreciation of their goodness. This is not to say a virtuous agent cannot be motivated in part by her own self-interest to perform actions that are for the sake of ends that are good independent of her own good. She may well recognize that by performing a virtuous action on the basis of her ethical virtue, she will be engaging in the sort of activity constitutive of *eudaimonia*. Moreover, this thought may well be a part of her motivation for performing the action. But the view does not reduce the goodness of the virtuous agent's action to the way it ultimately promotes her own *eudaimonia*. To be engaging in an instance of 'acting virtuously', an agent needs to be 'getting things right about the world' and she is only doing this when she grasps, and is moved by, the value that the virtuous action has independent of the way it might contribute to her own happiness.

To be clear, the view does not require that every virtuous action a virtuous agent performs is for the sake of ends that are good independent of her own good. For example, when a virtuous agent exercises her temperance in choosing a salad over a donut, her goal is to preserve the health of her body. In performing this action with the correct reasons and desires, she engages in the sort of activity constitutive of *eudaimonia*. Notice however that even in this example the way in which the action of eating a salad, considered as a virtuous action, is good for the virtuous agent is different from the way in which her exercise of virtue in 'acting virtuously' is good for her. The action of eating a salad benefits the virtuous agent because it promotes the health of her body; the activity that is the exercise of her temperance – an activity that depends on performing this action but is not identical to it – benefits the virtuous agent by being an excellent accomplishment of the human *ergon*, the sort of excellent rational activity constitutive of *eudaimonia*.

A third consequence is that, although a non-virtuous agent can successfully perform a virtuous action, she cannot thereby engage in the practically rational activity constitutive of her own happiness. Her acting involves an exercise of her practical reason, but it does not count as an instance of her *fully realizing* her capacity for practical rationality. This is because she hasn't yet fully developed that capacity, in the form of virtue of character and practical wisdom, and as such the resulting exercise is not the capacity's full expression. Although the non-virtuous agent performs the correct action, and plausibly has some grasp of the correct reasons for performing the action, it isn't until she fully develops her virtue of character and practical wisdom that she is able to engage in the full expression of her practical rationality constitutive of *eudaimonia*.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for feedback from Julia Annas, Victor Caston, Dhananjay Jagannathan, Rachana Kamtekar, Melissa Lane, Yena Lee, Hendrik Lorenz, Benjamin Morison, Jessica Moss, Sam Preston, Jennifer Whiting, Daniel Wodak and audiences at Princeton, UNC, University of Arizona, and at the 2015 MCI workshop and feedback from two anonymous reviewers.

ORCID

Sukaina Hirji  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0440-2149>

Bibliography

- Ackrill, J. L. 'Aristotle on Action'. *Mind* 87 (1978): 595–601.
- Ackrill, J. L. 'Aristotle on *Eudaimonia*'. In *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, edited by A. Rorty, 15–33. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Adkins, A. W. 'Theoria versus Praxis in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Republic'. *Classical Philology* 73, no. 4 (1978): 297–313.
- Charles, D. *Aristotle's Philosophy of Action*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Cooper, J. M. *Reason and the Human Good in Aristotle*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Cooper, J. M. 'Contemplation and Happiness: A Reconsideration'. *Synthese* 72, no. 2 (1987): 187–216.
- Devereux, D. T. 'Aristotle on the Essence of Happiness'. In *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, vol. 9, edited by D. J. O'Meara, 247–60. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981.
- Hardie, W. F. R. 'The Final Good in Aristotle's Ethics'. In *Aristotle*, edited by Moravcsik, 297–322. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967. [Originally published in *Philosophy* 40, 277–95].
- Hardie, W. F. R. *Aristotle's Ethical Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Heinaman, R. 'Eudaimonia and Self-Sufficiency in the Nicomachean Ethics'. *Phronesis* 33, no. 1 (1988): 31–53.
- Heinaman, R. 'Activity and Praxis in Aristotle'. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium of Ancient Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (1996): 71–111.
- Irwin, T. 'Aristotelian Actions'. Review: Aristotle's Philosophy of Action by David Charles. *Phronesis* 31, no. 1 (1986): 68–89.
- Irwin, T. 'The Structure of Aristotelian Happiness'. *Ethics* 101 (1991): 382–91.
- Irwin, T. *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics*. 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999.
- Jaeger, W. *Aristotle: Fundamentals in the History of His Development*. Translated by Richard Robinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948.
- Jimenez, M. 'Aristotle on Becoming Virtuous by Doing Virtuous Actions'. *Phronesis* 61, no. 1 (2016): 3–32.
- Joachim, H. H. *Aristotle, the Nicomachean Ethics: A Commentary*. Edited by D. A. Rees. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951.
- Kenny, A. J. P. *The Aristotelian Ethics: A Study of the Relations between the 'Eudemian' and the 'Nicomachean' Ethics of Aristotle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Keyt, D. 'Intellectualism in Aristotle'. In *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, edited by J. P. Anton, and A. Preus, 364–87. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1983.

- Lear, G. R. *Happy Lives and the Highest Good*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Lear, G. R. 'Happiness and the Structure of Ends'. In *A Companion to Aristotle*, 385–403. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Lorenz, H. 'Virtue of Character in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*'. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 37 (2009): 177–212.
- Meyer, S. S. 'Aristotle on Moral Motivation'. In *Moral Motivation: A History*, edited by I. Vasiliou, 44. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Morison, Ben. 'Aristotle, Almost Entirely'. *Book Notes for Phronesis* 52 (2007): 239–49.
- Ross, W. D. *Ethica Nicomachea* (NE). *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*. Vol. 9. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915.
- Stewart, J. A. *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892.
- Taylor, C.C.W. *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics*. Books II–IV. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- White, N. P. 'Goodness and Human Aims in Aristotle's Ethics'. In *Studies in Aristotle*, edited by D. J. O'Meara, 225–46. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981.
- Whiting, J. 'Human Nature and Intellectualism in Aristotle'. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 68 (1986): 70–95.
- Whiting, J. 'Eudaimonia, External Results and Choosing Virtuous Actions for Themselves'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65, no. 2 (2002): 270–90.
- Vasiliou, I. 'Virtue and Argument in Aristotle's Ethics'. In *Moral Psychology (Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities)*, edited by Sergio Tenebaum, Vol. 94, 37–78. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.
- Vasiliou, I. 'Aristotle, Agents, and Actions'. In *Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics': A Critical Guide*, edited by Jon Miller, 170–90. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.