

# Dynamis and Energeia in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Hikmet Unlu 

Department of Philosophy, Middle East  
Technical University, Cankaya/Ankara, Turkey

## Correspondence

Hikmet Unlu, Department of Philosophy,  
Middle East Technical University,  
Universiteler Mahallesi, Dumlupinar Bulvari  
No:1, 06800 Cankaya/Ankara, Turkey.  
Email: hunlu@metu.edu.tr

## Abstract

This paper offers an interpretation of Aristotle's concepts of *dynamis* and *energeia* (commonly translated as potentiality and actuality) and of the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX. I first raise the question of where motion fits in Aristotle's categories and argue that the *locus* of motion in the system of categories are the categories of doing and suffering, in which case *dynamis* and *energeia* in respect of motion can also be understood as the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering. Next, I argue that the analogy that Aristotle draws in IX.6 is an analogy between the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering and the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance. Finally, I try to show that it is this analogy between the kinetic and nonkinetic variants of *dynamis* and *energeia*—and not the distinction between end-inclusive and end-exclusive activities—that provides the key to understanding the structure of *Metaphysics* IX.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle states several times that being is said in many ways. According to Aristotle, being has four general senses, one of which subdivides into eight (or however many categories there are).<sup>1</sup> The four general senses of being are (i) accidental being, (ii) being as said of the categories, (iii) being as *dynamis* and *energeia* (often translated as potentiality and actuality), and (iv) being as truth. This paper explores one of the ways in which (ii) and (iii) are related: I argue that Aristotle draws an analogy between the *dynamis* and *energeia* pertaining to the categories of doing and suffering and the *dynamis* and *energeia* pertaining to the category of substance. Because their interpretation is precisely what is at stake, I will leave the terms *dynamis* and *energeia* untranslated for the most part of this paper.

Aristotle begins *Metaphysics* IX with a discussion of *dynamis* and *energeia* “in respect of motion” (*kata kinēsin*), adding immediately that there is more to *dynamis* and *energeia* than this “kinetic” sense, that “*dynamis* and *energeia* extend further (*epi pleon*) than the mere sphere of motion” (IX.1, 1046a1–2).<sup>2</sup> The text therefore implies a fourfold distinction between (i) *dynamis* in respect of motion (*dynamis kata kinēsin*), (ii) *energeia* in respect of motion (*energeia kata kinēsin*), (iii) *dynamis* that extends further (*dynamis epi pleon*), and (iv) *energeia* that extends further (*energeia epi pleon*). Later in the text (IX.6, 1048a36–1048b4), Aristotle offers the following analogy: what (i) is to (ii) is what (iii) is

to (iv). This much is agreed by most commentators. What I would like to add to this is that both the *kata kinēsin-epi pleon* distinction in IX.1 and the analogy in IX.6 have a *categorial* basis.

I argue for this interpretation by discussing passages where motion is treated as a category of its own—namely, as a joint name for the categories of doing and suffering—and I suggest that this would explain why Aristotle refers to *dynamis* in respect of motion subsequently as the *dynamis* of doing and suffering. Next, I examine passages in IX.3 and XII.4–5 where the role of the categories is explicit, which passages therefore provide further support for the interpretation according to which, as Makin puts it, *dynamis* and *energeia* “apply *analogously* in different categories” (Makin, 2006, p. 129; emphasis in the original). Building on these insights, I try to emphasize the role of the categories in understanding the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX, in which book, I argue, Aristotle begins with the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering and proceeds to the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance. I argue finally that despite what has been maintained by several scholars, Aristotle’s division of activities into those that are end-inclusive and those that are end-exclusive does not pertain directly to the *kata kinēsin-epi pleon* distinction in IX.1 and the analogy in IX.6.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 | MOTION AS DOING AND SUFFERING

In the central books of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle examines the different senses of being. Since one of the four senses of being is being as *dynamis* and *energeia*, Aristotle devotes much of *Metaphysics* IX to its analysis. The book begins with a discussion of *dynamis* and *energeia* “in respect of motion” (*kata kinēsin*), but the text does not offer a clarification of this phrase. What Aristotle does tell us here is that there is more to *dynamis* and *energeia* than this “kinetic” sense, that “*dynamis* and *energeia* extend further than the mere sphere of motion” (IX.1, 1046a1–2).<sup>4</sup> Aristotle states moreover that this kinetic type of *dynamis* and *energeia* is not the most useful, in the sense that it is not what is truly being sought (IX.1, 1045b36–1046a1). Later in the text, Aristotle offers an analogy (IX.6, 1048a36–1048b4), which shall be examined in Section 5 of the paper. Because the *kata kinēsin-epi pleon* distinction in IX.1 and the analogy in IX.6 involve a contrast between the kinetic and nonkinetic variants of *dynamis* and *energeia*, however, we must address the question of what it means for *dynamis* and *energeia* to be kinetic.

In the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle provides a definition of motion<sup>5</sup>—the *entelecheia* of the *dynaton* as such (commonly translated as “the actuality of what is potential as such”)—which is a definition that applies equally to the four motions (generation/corruption, alteration, growth/diminution, and locomotion).<sup>6</sup> For example, building is a motion that can be understood as the *entelecheia* of the buildable *qua* buildable (*Physics* III.1, 201a16–18). Likewise, the *entelecheia* of the healable as such is healing. This definition of motion has been much debated in the literature, but I will not discuss it here for the following reasons. First and foremost, the *definiens* consists of the very terms that I am trying to understand in the present study, so to examine the definition of motion would be, for my purposes, to put the cart before the horse.<sup>7</sup> Second, the precise interpretation of Aristotle’s definition of motion is orthogonal to the question of where motion fits in Aristotle’s categories, and it is this question that the present study aims to focus on. Note, for example, that commentators sometimes debate whether Aristotle’s definition of motion should be understood as the actuality of what is potential as such or as the actualization of what is potential as such, but I would like to stress that whatever the case may be, one may still raise the question concerning the *locus* of this actuality or actualization in the system of categories. Brentano’s discussion of motion is a case in point. In his doctoral dissertation, he provides a lengthy discussion of the different ways in which one can interpret Aristotle’s definition of motion (Brentano, 1975, pp. 34–48), but his later claim that motion is factually identical to the categories of doing and suffering (Brentano, 1975, p. 87) is extraneous to the aforementioned interpretations.

Where does motion fit in the system of categories? For example, a horse is a substance, a size is a quantity, and a color is a quality,<sup>8</sup> but what about motion? On the face of it, this does not seem to be a difficult question because there are a few passages that suggest that motion is a category of its own. Granted, motion is not included in the canonical list of categories, not even in the *Categories* (1b26–7) and the *Topics* (103b22–4) where we find the most complete list of the categories. Nonetheless, there are several passages that include motion among the categories. Before proceeding further, let us take a closer look at these passages.

In *Metaphysics* VII.4, Aristotle writes: “But since there are compounds of substance with the other categories (for there is a substrate for each category, e.g., for quality, quantity, time, place, and motion), we must inquire whether there is a formula of the essence of each of them” (1029b22–25). Here the inclusion of motion among the categories may seem surprising, but more surprising still is another passage where Aristotle offers a bifurcation of motion into *kinein* (moving) and *kineisthai* (being moved): “For being, as we have divided it in other works, signifies now what a thing is, now quality, now quantity, now time, and again some of it consists in *kineisthai* and *kinein*” (*Eudemian Ethics* I.8, 1217b27–29).<sup>9</sup> According to Menn, in these and several other passages, motion is the name of a category. As he puts it:

We can best interpret Aristotle's analogy between κίνησις and οὐσία [in IX.6] if we recognize that κίνησις, like οὐσία, is the name of a category: although it is not on the canonical list of categories in the *Categories*, Aristotle clearly refers to a category of κίνησις in *Metaphysics* 1029b22–25, 1054a4–6, 1069a21–22, and 1071a1–2: this is what is elsewhere divided into the categories of ποιεῖν and πάσχειν. (Menn, 1994, p. 107)

In his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Aquinas likewise argues for the identity of *kinēsis* to doing and suffering: “For there is some subject of each of them, namely, of quality, quantity, when, where, and also of motion, in which are included both action and being acted upon” (Aquinas, 1995a). Elsewhere he writes, “For it is clear that both action and passion are motion; for each is the same as motion” (Aquinas, 1995b). Mention has already been made of Brentano, who maintains similarly that motion is “factually identical” to the categories of doing and suffering (Brentano, 1975, p. 87). Now, the fact (i) that there are a number of passages that count *kinēsis* as one of the categories, (ii) that there are others that count *kinein* and *kineisthai*, and (iii) that in none of these passages, *kinēsis*, *kinein*, or *kineisthai* coexist with the categories of doing and suffering lend support to the line of commentary according to which *kinēsis* is used as a joint name for these two categories. It is important to note, moreover, that this interpretation is consistent with Aristotle's own remark that there is no motion of the *poioun* (doer) or the *paschon* (sufferer) because there is no motion of motion. As he puts it:

If the categories are classified as substance, quality, place, *poiein* or *paschein*, relation, quantity, there must be three kinds of movement—of quality, of quantity, of place. There is no movement in respect...of *poioun* and *paschon*, nor of mover and moved, because there is no movement of movement nor generation of generation, nor, in general, change of change.<sup>10</sup> (*Met.* XI.12, 1068a8–16)

In what follows, I will try to show that the question concerning the *locus* of motion in Aristotle's categories is important for understanding the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX. More precisely, I will argue that the *dynamis* and *energeia* in respect of motion can also be understood as the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering—or, in Aristotle's own words, *dynamis tou poiein kai paschein* (IX.1, 1046a19–20). First, though, I would like to interject by providing a brief exposition of the terminology traditionally adopted in discussions concerning Aristotle's concepts of *dynamis*, *energeia*, and *entelecheia*.<sup>11</sup>

### 3 | THE TRADITIONAL TERMINOLOGY

When Aristotle provides his own definition of the soul at the beginning of *De Anima* II.1, he draws a distinction between what appear to be different kinds of *entelecheia*: namely, *entelecheia* as the mere possession of knowledge and *entelecheia* as the exercise of knowledge (*De Anima* II.1, 412a10–11). Later in the text, Aristotle employs this distinction when providing his definition of the soul:

Now there are two kinds of *entelecheia* corresponding to knowledge and to the act of contemplating [i.e., the exercise of knowledge]. It is obvious that the soul is an *entelecheia* like knowledge; for both

sleeping and waking presuppose the existence of soul, and of these waking corresponds to the act of contemplating, sleeping to knowledge possessed but not employed...That is why the soul is an *entelecheia* of the first kind of a natural body having life potentially in it. (*De Anima* II.1, 412a22–28)

The closing sentence of this passage features the phrase *entelecheia hē prōtē*, the likes of which are traditionally referred to as “first actuality.” For example, Aquinas writes that “in Book II of *The Soul* [Aristotle] says that a soul is the *first actuality* of a natural organic body having life potentially” (Aquinas, 1995a). Elsewhere, Aquinas elaborates that “the body, complete with its soul, is potentially animate in the sense that, though it has its first actuality, it may lack the second” (Aquinas, 1994).

Those who adopt this terminology say, for example, that knowledge is the first actuality and the act of contemplating is the second or that the (sensitive) soul is the first actuality and perceiving is the second. The idea here is that first actuality is itself a potentiality for a further actuality, as a result of which first actuality may also be called second potentiality.<sup>12</sup> For example, knowledge is an actuality, but it is at the same time a potentiality for the *exercise* of knowledge, the latter of which must be understood as second actuality. The person who has mastered the French language has the first actuality but does not necessarily have the second actuality, that is, unless she is uttering French sentences right now. Similarly, virtues are the first actuality, the lifelong exercise of which is happiness. Therefore, without going into the details of Aristotle's ethical theory (the question of external goods and so on), we may say that virtue is the first actuality and happiness is the second.

In other words, what is at issue is not a simple twofold division between potentiality and actuality but rather a threefold distinction between (i) first potentiality, (ii) first actuality or second potentiality, and (iii) second actuality. I think that this way of understanding the text is correct, yet there is a sense in which confining ourselves to this terminology alone may result in turning a blind eye to the *categorical foundations* of the *kata kinēsin-epi pleon* distinction in IX.1 and the analogy in IX.6. One of the objectives of my interpretation, therefore, is to complement the traditional terminology, and this I try to do by emphasizing the role of the categories in the composition of *Metaphysics* IX.<sup>13</sup>

## 4 | CAPACITY AND ACTIVITY

Mention has been made that Aristotle begins *Metaphysics* IX with the fourfold distinction between (i) *dynamis* in respect of motion (*dynamis kata kinēsin*), (ii) *energeia* in respect of motion (*energeia kata kinēsin*), (iii) *dynamis* that extends further (*dynamis epi pleon*), and (iv) *energeia* that extends further (*energeia epi pleon*). Aristotle defines the first of these as “the principle of change in another thing or in the thing itself as other” (IX.1, 1046a11).<sup>14</sup> While there are other senses of *dynamis kata kinēsin*, Aristotle states that it is the sense just mentioned that serves as the focal meaning. One of the other senses that depend on the focal meaning is the corresponding *dynamis* of the patient. The *dynamis* to move something else (or *as* something else) or be moved by something else (or *as* something else) is sometimes called a “power,”<sup>15</sup> in which case Aristotle's discussion at the beginning of *Metaphysics* IX concerns agent and passive powers.<sup>16</sup>

In *Metaphysics* IX, Aristotle's first examples of agent and passive powers are the *dynamis* for being burned and being crushed, which are passive powers, and the *dynamis* for heating and building, which are agent powers. Aristotle refers to these eventually as *dynamis tou poiēsai ē tou pathein* (1046a16–17), *dynamis tou poiein kai paschein* (1046a19–20), and *hē tou poiēsai ē pathein dynamis* (1046b25–26), that is, the *dynamis* of doing and suffering.<sup>17</sup> It is worth mentioning here that in the *Categories*, the examples Aristotle provides for the category of *poiein* are cutting and burning, and likewise the examples he gives for the category of *paschein* are being cut and being burned (*Categories* 4, 2a4). In *Metaphysics* IX, therefore, when Aristotle mentions the burnable (*kauston*) as something that has a passive capacity (IX.1, 1046a25), he is exploiting the familiar examples of burning (*kaiein*) and being burnt (*kaiesthai*).

A point that needs to be stressed here is that there are four categories (substance, quality, quantity, and place) that are closely related to the four motions: (i) generation and corruption, (ii) alteration, (iii) growth and diminution, and (iv) locomotion (*Physics* III.1, 201a11–15).<sup>18</sup> As Aristotle puts it in the *Physics*, “It is always with respect to (*kata*) substance or to quantity or to quality or to place that what changes changes” (*Physics* III.1, 200b33–34). Note that the categories just mentioned are those *in respect of which* the change occurs, and that they are therefore the categories where the *effect* of the motion is observed—which effect is produced by the joint activity of agent and passive powers. Let me try to demonstrate this with a couple of examples.

As has just been mentioned, cutting and being cut are the examples Aristotle gives in the *Categories* for *poiein* and *paschein*. Assume, for example, that I am cutting some paper (doing) and that the paper is being cut (suffering). As a result of this doing and suffering, the paper will eventually end up acquiring a new size and therefore a new quantity. In other words, after this process has been completed, the paper will have acquired a new form in the category of quantity. This kind of motion would be referred to by Aristotle as diminution (*phthisis*). Likewise, assume that I am painting my wall (doing) and that it is being painted by me (suffering). As a result of the joint activity of the capacities of the agent and the patient, the wall will end up acquiring a new color and therefore a new quality. This kind of motion would be referred to by Aristotle as alteration (*alloiōsis*). Many similar examples can be given, and what they show is that when we are dealing with motions such as building, teaching, cutting, painting, and so on, the doing and suffering take place with respect to (*kata*) the categories of substance, quality, quantity, or place, in which categories, moreover, the doing and suffering produce a lasting effect. But the fact that these motions take place with respect to the categories of substance, quality, quantity, or place should give us no reason to confuse motion with the categories with respect to which it takes place. It is worth noting in this context that at the end of his discussion of motion in *Physics* III.1–3, Aristotle describes motion as “the *entelecheia* of what can act and what can be acted on, as such” (*Physics* III.3, 202b26–27). The *entelecheia* of what can act as such is an action (doing), just as the *entelecheia* of what can be acted on as such is a passion (suffering), and it is important that we distinguish this doing and suffering from the four categories with respect to which they take place.

Let us now turn to perception. Perception is an example that Aristotle uses in two chapters (IX.3 and IX.5), both of which lie within the scope of text that by Aristotle's own admission treats *dynamis* in respect of motion. Why is perception treated in this part of *Metaphysics* IX? I argue in what follows that this is because perception, too, must be understood as the joint activity of two correlated capacities: the *dynamis* of the agent (the sensible object) and that of the patient (the sensing subject). If this is right, it would only be natural for Aristotle to treat perception analogously to the way in which he treats other agent and passive powers, such as cutting and being cut.

In the *Physics*, Aristotle writes that perception is a motion wherein the sense is *affected* in some respect (VII.2, 244b11–12). In the *De Anima* (II.12, 424a17–19), he explains perception as the *reception* of the sensible forms without the matter (*to dektikon tōn aisthetōn eidōn aneu tēs hylēs*). It is precisely this “receiving” that Aristotle characterizes as a suffering when, in *DA* II.7–11, he provides an account of how each of the five senses relate to their particular objects. Near the end of this account (II.11, 424a1), Aristotle states in no uncertain terms that perception is a kind of suffering (*to gar aisthanesthai paschein ti estin*). He adds in the next chapter that plants cannot perceive precisely because they are unable to partake in *this* kind of suffering, namely, without the matter; plants are only capable of, as Aristotle puts it, *paschein meta tēs hylēs* (II.12, 424b2).

The characterization of perception as a kind of suffering is prevalent in commentaries on Aristotle's philosophy of mind. In his commentary on the *De Anima* (Aquinas, 1994), Aquinas maintains that perception is a kind of undergoing (*sentire est pati quoddam*). In the same way, Averroes states in his long commentary on the *De Anima* that “sensation is one of the passive powers” and even more unambiguously that “affection is the genus of sensation” (Averroes, 2009, p. 162). Likewise, Brentano writes, “We sense by being moved by the sensed object, hence by being affected” (Brentano, 1977, p. 54). Lennox points out in a similar fashion that “perception is a *passive* capacity, a *being affected* by an object of perception” (Lennox, 2001, p. 183; emphasis in the original). This view is held also by Kosman, according to whom the “perceptual capacities, and the faculties of reason and thought as well, are

potentialities of the sensitive and intelligent subject to be *affected* in certain ways, to be acted upon by the sensible and intelligible forms of objects in the world” (Kosman, 2014, p. 66; emphasis in the original).

Perception is characterized specifically as an affection because it is what we do; that is to say, we (the perceiving subjects) receive the sensible forms of the objects. In the terminology of the *De Anima* (I.1, 402b15–16), the object (*to anti-keimenon*) of perception is that which is sensible (*to aisthēton*). Without going into the details of Aristotle’s account of perception—for example, the role of the medium, the difference between the primary sense organ and the peripheral sense organs, the literalist vs. the spiritualist readings of Aristotle—the basic picture is that it is the sensible object that serves as the agent, which therefore has a capacity to act, just as the perceiving subject has a corresponding capacity to suffer.

In sum, once we raise the question of where motion fits in Aristotle’s categories and answer that the *locus* of motion in the system of categories are the categories of doing and suffering, it becomes possible to understand why Aristotle’s treatment of *dynamis* in respect of motion involves instances of *dynamis tou poiein* (e.g., building) and *dynamis tou paschein* (e.g., perceiving). But there is another issue that needs to be discussed in this context: namely, there is a sense in which each suffering (perceiving, being cut, etc.) coincides with a doing. If the wall is being painted, somebody or something is painting it. If the bricks and boards are being arranged into a house, somebody or something is arranging them so. In fact, to take Aristotle’s own example in the *Physics*, the teaching performed by the teacher or the learning experienced by the student can be thought of as two different explanations of the same process from opposite poles. As Aristotle puts it:

Hence there is a single actuality of both [i.e., of that which can move and that which can be moved] alike, just as one to two and two to one are the same interval, and the steep ascent and the steep descent are one—for these are one and the same, although their definitions are not one...This view has a dialectical difficulty. Perhaps it is necessary that there should be [a separate] actuality of the agent and of the patient. The one is agency and the other patency; and the outcome and end of the one is an action, that of the other a passion....[But] it is not absurd that the actualization of one thing should be in another. Teaching is the activity of a person who can teach, yet the operation is performed in something....There is nothing to prevent two things [e.g., the capacity to teach and the capacity to be taught] having one and the same actualization .... (*Physics* III.3, 202a18–202b9)

In his commentary on the *Physics*, Aquinas writes that “it is clear that action and passion are not two motions but one and the same motion” (Aquinas, 1995b), despite the fact that the two have different definitions. Ford claims likewise that “action and passion are two aspects of a single material reality, a transaction between the agent and patient” (Ford, 2014, p. 15). Gill makes a similar point: “Action and passion are one in the way that the road from Athens to Thebes and the road from Thebes to Athens are one” (Gill, 1989, p. 205).

The idea here is that to each *dynamis* of suffering corresponds a *dynamis* of doing, and even though the former *dynamis* is distinct from the latter, their *energeia* is one and the same.<sup>19</sup> The ability to teach is not identical to the ability to be taught; what is identical, rather, is the *energeia* of these agent and passive powers. Similarly, the *dynamis* to perceive and the *dynamis* to be perceived are distinct, but their *energeia* is one and the same. In a word, *dynamis* in respect of motion can also be understood as the *dynamis* of doing and suffering, in which case *energeia* in respect of motion can be understood as the exercise of *this* kind of *dynamis*. In what follows, I will call *dynamis* in respect of motion “capacity” and *energeia* in respect of motion “activity.” More precisely, I will call *dynamis* of doing or suffering “capacity” and *energeia* of doing or suffering “activity.”<sup>20</sup> In the next section, I will argue that capacity and activity serve as two of the analogues in the analogy in IX.6.

## 5 | THE ANALOGY IN METAPHYSICS IX.6

Aristotle begins *Metaphysics* IX with an analysis of the kinetic versions of *dynamis* and *energeia* (i.e., capacity and activity), and these, as we shall see, serve as two of the analogues in the analogy that Aristotle introduces

in IX.6. In other words, capacity and activity serve as the A and B in the analogy according to which what A is to B is what C is to D. Note also, however, that Aristotle begins with agent and passive capacities because it is this kind of *dynamis* that he inherits from Plato. What is at issue here are on the one hand the capacity to do and on the other hand the capacity to suffer, which correspond, as the Stranger in the *Sophist* puts it, to the *dynamis eis to poiein* and the *dynamis eis to pathēin* (247d–e). Similarly, in the *Theaetetus* (156a), Plato explains that there are two kinds of motion (*tēs de kinēseōs dyo eidē*), the one having the capacity to do, the other to suffer (*dynamis de to men poiein echon, to de paschein*). Hence, there is enough common ground between Plato and Aristotle on this issue that one can see why Aristotle would begin his discussion of *dynamis* with the sense of the term that he inherits from his teacher.<sup>21</sup>

I propose that we understand the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX in the following way. Namely, Aristotle employs our understanding of agent and passive capacities, concepts that can already be found in Plato's philosophy, as a stepping stone toward an understanding of the *dynamis* that extends further. Of course, to each kind of *dynamis* corresponds a different kind of *energeia*. Therefore, we have, on the one hand, agent and passive capacities and their joint exercise and, on the other hand, the *dynamis* that extends further and its corresponding *energeia*. Aristotle begins IX.6 with the following words:

Since we have treated of the kind of *dynamis* which is related to *kinēsis*, let us discuss *energeia*, what and what sort of thing it is. In the course of our analysis it will also become clear, with regard to the *dynaton*, that we not only ascribe *dynaton* to that whose nature it is to move (*kinein*) something else or be moved (*kineisthai*) by something else, either without qualification or in some particular way, *but also use the word in another sense*, in the pursuit of which we have discussed these previous senses. (IX.6, 1048a25–30)

It has been argued throughout this paper that the *locus* of motion in the system of categories are the categories of doing and suffering, which would explain why Aristotle refers to *dynamis* in respect of motion subsequently as *dynameis tou poiēsai ē tou pathēin* (1046a16–17), *dynamis tou poiein kai paschein* (1046a19–20), and *hē tou poiēsai ē pathēin dynamis* (1046b25–26). But the passage under discussion says more: we are told that the *dynamis* of doing and suffering is not the only *dynamis*; in fact, it is not the kind of *dynamis* that is the most useful for our purposes. What is more important for our purposes is the *dynamis* that extends further, but Aristotle does not provide a definition for this particular *dynamis* or for its corresponding *energeia*; instead, he explicitly asks us not to demand a definition of everything but be content to grasp the analogy. As he puts it:

[W]e must not seek a definition of everything but be content to grasp the analogy,—that as (i) that which is building is to that which is capable of building, so is (ii) the waking to the sleeping, and (iii) that which is seeing to that which has its eyes shut but has sight, and (iv) that which is shaped out of the matter to the matter, and (v) that which has been wrought to the unwrought. (IX.6, 1048a36–1048b4)

How should we parse out this analogy? In the light of our previous discussion, (i), (ii), and (iii) must belong together as instances of the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering. In *Metaphysics* V.12, the building art (*hē oikodomikē dynamis*) is characterized as a principle of motion (*archē kinēseōs*) in another (1019a15–16), so it is an agent capacity. More precisely, the capacity to build is a capacity to make (*dynamis tou poiein*), and it belongs to builder, just as the capacity to be built belongs to the material from which the house is made. It has already been argued, moreover, that the capacity to see—and likewise the capacity to hear, smell, taste, and touch—must be understood as a passive capacity (*dynamis tou paschein*) and that the agent capacity in this case belongs to the visible (or, more generally, the sensible) object. That leaves us with (ii). At the beginning of the *De Somno*, Aristotle writes that “waking and sleep appertain to the same part of an animal, inasmuch as they are opposites, and sleep is evidently a privation of waking”

(453b25–26) and adds that waking “consists in nothing else than the exercise of sense-perception” (454a4–5). A few passages later, Aristotle says that “sleep is, in a certain way, or, as it were, a motionlessness bond, imposed on sense-perception, while its loosening or remission constitutes the being awake” (454b25–27). In other words, waking must be understood as a releasement (*lysis*) into activity of the capacity for perception, which means that the relation between sleep and waking corresponds to the relation between the capacity for perception, which remains unenacted as long as the animal remains asleep, and the exercise of this capacity.

In sum, my point is that the *dynamis* to build or to perceive are instances of what is referred to in IX.1 as *dynamis tou poiein kai paschein* (IX.1, 1046a19–20), which in turn corresponds to the agent and passive capacities that we find in Plato's dialogues the *Theaetetus* (156a) and the *Sophist* (247d–e). If this is right, (i)–(iii) together comprise one side of the analogy, in which case, the other side of the analogy must consist of (iv)–(v). For similar reasons, Menn (1994, p. 106ff.) also divides the analogy into (i)–(iii) and (iv)–(v). Likewise, Makin argues that what is at issue here are “three pairs of cases framed in terms of the change-capacity relation which was the focus of  $\Theta 1-5$ ” and “two pairs...which concern the substance-matter relation” and adds that (i)–(iii) “illustrate the change-capacity relation,” while (iv)–(v) illustrate “the substance-matter relation” (Makin, 2006, p. 137). Beere, who offers a detailed analysis of the analogy (Beere, 2009, pp. 169–219), also understands the passage under discussion to draw a distinction between what he calls “the activity-like cases of *energeia* and the actuality-like cases of *energeia*” (Beere, 2009, p. 200). Elsewhere, he writes that this analogy is meant “to unify cases of doing (both changes and nonchange activities) and cases that are static” (Beere, 2018, p. 878).

I agree with much of what is said here, but I believe that more emphasis needs be placed on the *categorial basis* of the division of the analogy into (i)–(iii) and (iv)–(v). Again, (i)–(iii) are instances of the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering, whereas (iv)–(v) are instances of the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance. Some things, Aristotle concludes, “are as *kinēsis* to *dynamis*, and the others as substance to some sort of matter” (IX.6, 1048b8–9). Thus, Aristotle's remarks involve a contrast between the *dynamis* and *energeia* of motion and the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance.<sup>22</sup> As we shall see, another virtue of this interpretation is that it is consistent with passages in IX.3 and XII.4–5 where Aristotle talks about how the concepts of *dynamis* and *energeia* apply analogously in different categories.

## 6 | AN INTERPRETATION OF *EPI PLEON*

In the earlier sections of the paper, I tried to advance an interpretation of *Metaphysics* IX that places emphasis on the role of the categories. Additional support for this interpretation comes from a passage in IX.3:

Therefore it is possible that a thing may be capable of being and not be, and capable of not being and yet be, and similarly with the other kinds of predicate (*epi tōn allōn katēgoriōn*); it may be capable of walking and yet not walk, or capable of not walking and yet walk. (1047a20–24)

In this passage, Aristotle begins with the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance—“a thing may be capable of being and not be”—but extends it to the other categories, and the example he gives is walking, which belongs to the category of doing.<sup>23</sup> Here, the phrase *epi tōn allōn katēgoriōn* (in the case of *other* categories) appears to be parallel to the *epi pleon* mentioned in IX.1, in which case “extending further” can be understood to have a categorial basis. The analogy in IX.6 begins with the categories of doing and suffering (i.e., the category of motion), so the other category is substance. The IX.3 passage, in contrast, begins with substance, so the other category is doing. What is important to realize is that similar examples are given in the aforementioned passages in IX.3 and IX.6. In the former, Aristotle begins with substance, so the explicitly mentioned *allai katēgoriai* include categories such as doing (e.g., walking); in the latter, Aristotle begins with the categories of doing and suffering and then proceeds to substance. If this is right,

in IX.6, Aristotle proceeds from the *dynamis* and *energeia* of motion to the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance, whereas in IX.3, he proceeds from the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance to the *dynamis* and *energeia* of motion.

Another advantage of this interpretation is that it agrees with various passages in *Metaphysics* XII.4–5, which also discuss, as Makin puts it, how *dynamis* and *energeia* “apply analogously in the different categories” (Makin, 2006, p. 129; emphasis in the original). In one of these passages Aristotle writes the following:

The causes and the principles of different things are in a sense different, but in a sense, if one speaks universally and *analogically*, they are the same for all. For we might raise the question whether the principles and elements are different or the same for substances and for relatives, and similarly in *the case of each of the categories*. (XII.4, 1070a31–35)

In this passage, Aristotle mentions neither *dynamis* nor *energeia*, but in the next chapter, he adds that “analogically identical things are principles, that is, *energeia* and *dynamis*” (XII.5, 1071a4–5). I agree with Makin that, taken together, these passages suggest that *dynamis* and *energeia* apply analogously in different categories. What can we conclude from these? If we understand the distinction between the kinetic and nonkinetic variants of *dynamis* and *energeia* in IX.1 in categorial terms, and if we likewise grant that the analogy in IX.6 has a categorial basis, our interpretation would be in line with passages in IX.3 and XII.4–5, in which passages, Aristotle explicitly mentions the categories when talking about the (analogical) extension of *dynamis* and *energeia*.<sup>24</sup>

This leaves us with one more point to be discussed, which is the distinction that Aristotle draws in *Metaphysics* IX.6 and *Nicomachean Ethics* X.4 between end-inclusive and end-exclusive activities. My goal will be to show that this distinction is not pertinent to the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX.

## 7 | THE ENERGEIA-KINĒSIS DISTINCTION

In this last section, I will critically examine the claim that Aristotle's division of activities into those that are end-inclusive and those that are end-exclusive pertains directly to the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX. I will have to say three things about this position. First, I will argue that it is incompatible with the categorial interpretation of the analogy in IX.6, an interpretation for which we have strong evidence. Next, I will point out that because the manuscript evidence for the IX.6 passage containing the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction is weak, it would be wrong to rely too much on this passage in interpreting *Metaphysics* IX. Finally, I will try to draw insights from Aristotle's discussion of perception and argue that perception is an end-inclusive activity that would not have been treated in IX.1–5 if these chapters were confined to a discussion of end-exclusive activities.

Let us first try to understand what is meant by the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in a passage where he tries to determine the ontological status of pleasure, Aristotle writes the following:

For every motion (e.g., that of building) takes time and is for the sake of an end, and is complete when it has made what it aims at. It is complete, therefore, only in the whole time or at the final moment. In their parts and during the time they occupy, all motions are incomplete...So, too, in the case walking and all other motions. (*Nicomachean Ethics* X.4, 1174a29)

These remarks suggest that as long as somebody is walking, the *telos* has not been reached yet, which is another way of saying that each and every part of walking is necessarily *atelēs*.<sup>25</sup> What is important about these activities is that they have their ends outside themselves. For example, being in Athens is the end of walking toward Athens, but the two cannot co-exist: I cannot be walking toward Athens if I am already in it, just as it cannot be the case that I am in Athens as long as I am walking toward the city. The goal of walking toward Athens, in fact, is to *no longer be walking towards Athens*, which is why all such activities have what Kosman calls a “self-destructive character”

(Kosman, 1969, p. 58). In *Metaphysics* IX.6, Aristotle distinguishes these activities from activities that are at each moment complete:

E.g. at the same time we are seeing and have seen, are understanding and have understood, are thinking and have thought; but it is not true that at the same time we are learning and have learnt, or are being cured and have been cured...Of these, then, we must call the one set *kinēseis*, and the other *energeiai*. (1048b23–28)

Commenting on the relation of *energeia* to *kinēsis*, Ross draws attention to terminological inconsistencies in Aristotle; according to Ross, Aristotle uses the same name for the genus (characterized alternatively as *kinēsis* or *energeia*) and the two species of the genus.<sup>26</sup> Menn argues, rather, that *energeia* is the genus, while complete and incomplete *energeia* are its two species: “κίνησις is a subclass of ἐνέργεια...and so is not properly contradistinguished from ἐνέργεια...Aristotle is not here denying (what elsewhere he plainly affirms) that κινήσεις are ἐνέργειαι, any more than I deny that men are animals when I say ‘this kind of thing I call an animal, that a man’” (Menn, 1994, p. 106, n. 43).<sup>27</sup> In Menn's example, animal is the genus, while rational and irrational animal are its species, and in the above passage, the two species of the genus *energeia* are complete and incomplete *energeia*. Sometimes, we distinguish man from animal, in which case, we are not denying that man is, properly speaking, a distinct kind of animal; what we mean to say is that man is different from other animals, namely, from those that are irrational. Despite their differences, Ross, Menn, and Beere share the view that what is at issue here are (i) a genus and (ii) different species of the genus. Despite terminological inconsistencies in Aristotle, then, these commentators agree that there is a certain genus, whose species can be distinguished from one another by some differentia.

The basic idea behind the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction is that some activities have their ends within (e.g., seeing, understanding, thinking, living well, being happy), while others do not (e.g., making thin, learning, being cured, walking, building). And there is a way to tell the one kind of activities from the other. The question Aristotle wants us to consider is whether the present tense of these verbs implies the perfect tense. For example, does somebody who is seeing imply a person who has seen? Does somebody who is learning imply a person who has learned? In the former case, yes, in the latter, no.

On one common interpretation of the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction, the present does not imply the perfect in cases where what is at issue is an activity the completion of which requires time.<sup>28</sup> As Halper puts it, end-inclusive activities “are timeless in the sense that their definitions need not include time” (Halper, 1989, p. 209). In other words, unlike walking from Thebes to Athens, which takes time to complete (and when the journey is complete, the walking will have ceased), seeing red is at each moment complete. According to Kosman, it is because an end-inclusive activity “does not need to await any further development to perfect or complete its being that it is complete and perfect at each and every present moment of its duration” (Kosman, 2013). If I am seeing red, this entails, in Aristotle's view, that I *have seen* red; that is, nobody can claim that I have not seen red if I am seeing it right now. In other words, seeing red has at each moment its *telos* within; it is at each moment *enteleēs*.

There have been commentators who maintain, for various reasons, that the division of activities into those that are end-inclusive and those that are end-exclusive pertains directly to the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX.<sup>29</sup> Other commentators disagree with this view, and I believe they are right. Let us remember Aristotle's analogy in IX.6:

[A]s (i) that which is building is to that which is capable of building, so is (ii) the waking to the sleeping, and (iii) that which is seeing to that which has its eyes shut but has sight, and (iv) that which is shaped out of the matter to the matter, and (v) that which has been wrought to the unwrought. (IX.6, 1048a37–1048b4)

If this analogy were structured in terms of the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction, we should not expect (i)–(iii) to belong together, for (i) exemplifies an end-exclusive activity (because to build does not entail to have built), whereas (ii) and (iii)—or at least (iii), which is unambiguous—exemplify end-inclusive activities (because to perceive entails to have perceived). This would

explain why commentators have maintained that (i)–(iii) do not belong together (Halper, 1989, p. 209) or that (i)–(iii) do not initially seem to belong together (Gill, 1989, p. 215).<sup>30</sup> This way of understanding the text, according to which the unity of (i)–(iii) is either denied or believed to be a complex issue, is therefore incompatible with the categorial interpretation of the analogy, for on this interpretation there are no grounds to doubt the unity of (i)–(iii) because they all concern the same categories, namely, the categories of doing and suffering. In Section 5 of the paper, I explained that (i)–(iii) must belong together because building, waking, and seeing all fall under the categories of doing and suffering, the *dynamis* and *energeia* of which Aristotle means to compare with the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance.

The categorial interpretation of the analogy that I advanced in this paper is in line with the view held not only by commentators according to whom the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction does not belong in the text of IX.6 (more on this shortly) but also by commentators according to whom the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction is a *finer* distinction that is not directly pertinent to the analogy. According to Makin, for example, what is at issue in (i)–(iii) is an “undifferentiated notion of change” (Makin, 2006, p. 134). Makin adds in the next lines that Aristotle’s “conclusions [in IX.1–5] concerning capacities and their exercise will not be sensitive to the more fine-grained distinction” between end-inclusive and end-exclusive activities (Makin, 2006, p. 135), and he concludes eventually that “the 1048b18–35 distinction between change and actuality is not crucial to *Met. Θ*” (Makin, 2006, p. 154). For similar reasons, Witt argues that “one makes the distinction between motions and activities crucial [here]...then it is very difficult to interpret [Aristotle’s] examples, which include both motions like building and activities like seeing” (Witt, 2003, p. 134, n. 20). In the same vein, Menn maintains that the “distinction between those activities that may be called κινήσεις and those activities that should only be called ἐνέργειαι is a relatively fine point” (Menn, 1994, p. 106), and Beere points out likewise that he “does not accept [the] interpretation” that “the distinction between change and *energeia* is important in Theta 6” (Beere, 2009, p. 228). In sum, I agree with the conclusions reached by these commentators (who appeal to Aristotle’s examples as evidence that the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction is a finer distinction that is not directly pertinent to the analogy in IX.6) because, once again, the interpretation of the analogy that has been advanced in this paper is one that distinguishes sharply between (i)–(iii) and (iv)–(v), which distinction has a *categorial* basis.

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the manuscript evidence for the IX.6 passage containing the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction is weak.<sup>31</sup> This is not to suggest that Aristotle never draws such a distinction; mention has been made that Aristotle draws a similar distinction in *Nicomachean Ethics* X.4. Note, however, that one may believe that the distinction between end-inclusive and end-exclusive activities is an Aristotelian distinction and still question its inclusion in IX.6. For example, Halper, according to whom the distinction is significant for the composition of *Metaphysics* IX, concedes nevertheless that the passage in question is one that is “absent from the best manuscripts” (Halper, 1989, p. 209). Likewise, Kosman concedes the “high probability that the passage is an interloper” but adds that this “raises little difficulty” for his position (Kosman, 2013). Granted, even if the passage has been inserted by an editor, this would not show that the distinction is not an Aristotelian distinction or even that it is an insignificant distinction, but such a concession would take away from the original appeal of attempts to treat the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction as the key to understanding the structure of *Metaphysics* IX. In sum, the manuscript status of the passage containing the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction cannot be taken as conclusive evidence for a particular way of reading the text, but it should at least caution us against relying too much on this passage in our interpretations of *Metaphysics* IX.

Finally, and I think most importantly, those who hold the view that Aristotle’s division of activities into those that are end-inclusive and those that are end-exclusive is significant for the composition of *Metaphysics* IX will have a difficult time explaining why perception, which is an end-inclusive activity that happens to be one of the analogues in the analogy, is mentioned twice in IX.1–5. In IX.3, for example, whether the capacity for perception exists when it is not being enacted and likewise whether sensible qualities exist when they are not being perceived are some of the central questions in Aristotle’s confrontation with the Megarian philosophers. Perception is also mentioned at the very beginning of IX.5, which is generally believed to serve as a summary of the earlier chapters. The point that I wish to make here is the following: insofar as IX.1–5 does not include a discussion of the *epi pleon* variant of *dynamis*, the capacity to perceive must be kinetic. But if the kinetic variant of *dynamis* were to be interpreted as the *dynamis*

pertaining to end-exclusive activities, which some believe is the correct interpretation, perception too would have to count as an end-exclusive activity. Quite the contrary, however, it is clear that Aristotle considers perception to be an end-inclusive activity (*De Sensu* 6, 446b2–3; *Metaphysics* IX.6, 1048b23; IX.6, 1048b33–34). There is a problem here, then, and the problem has to do with the interpretation of the kinetic version of *dynamis* as the *dynamis* pertaining to end-exclusive activities. The categorial interpretation of *dynamis kata kinēsin* is not plagued by this problem because it would not be surprising for Aristotle to include a discussion of perception here if the kind of *dynamis* treated in IX.1–5 is the *dynamis* of doing and suffering and if perception is a suffering, as I have argued is the case.

On a final note, most commentators agree that there are terminological inconsistencies on the part of Aristotle, and I think that this is because Aristotle uses two terms to refer to three concepts. To distinguish clearly between these concepts, I call the genus “activity” (a concept which I described as the joint exercise of correlative agent and passive capacities), while I call its species “end-inclusive activity” and “end-exclusive activity.” Among these, the term *energeia* refers sometimes to activity in general and sometimes to end-inclusive activity.<sup>32</sup> The term *kinēsis* refers to end-exclusive activity, but if the arguments in this paper have been successful, it also refers to activity in general, which is in line with the terminology adopted by Makin, who talks about an “undifferentiated notion of change” (Makin, 2006, p. 134) that includes building and seeing, and likewise with the terminology adopted by Witt, who divides motion into “incomplete and complete motions” (Witt, 2003, p. 50). If *kinēsis* were confined to end-exclusive activity, we would not be able to explain why *kinēsis* is sometimes listed as a category (because not everything belonging under this category is end-exclusive) and why the capacity for perception, which is an instance of end-inclusive activity, is treated among the kinetic variants of *dynamis*. I am therefore in complete agreement with Ross, who writes that “κίνησις and ἐνέργεια are species of something wider for which Aristotle has no name, and for which he uses now the name of one species, now that of the other” (Ross (1924, Vol. 2, p. 251).<sup>33</sup> What I would add to this is that the more specific difference between the two species of the genus (i.e., the difference between the end-inclusive and end-exclusive species) is not pertinent to the composition of *Metaphysics* IX.

To facilitate further discussion of these issues, let me restate the conclusions of this paper as clearly as possible: (i) the *locus* of motion in Aristotle's categories are the categories of doing and suffering, (ii) *dynamis* and *energeia* in respect of motion can also be understood as the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering, (iii) *Metaphysics* IX begins with a discussion of the *dynamis* and *energeia* of doing and suffering and proceeds to a discussion of the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance, and (iv) Aristotle's distinction between end-inclusive and end-exclusive activities does not pertain directly to the thematic progression of *Metaphysics* IX.

## ORCID

Hikmet Unlu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1391-8059>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The clearest formulation of the fourfold division is in VI.2, 1026a33–1026b2, of the eightfold division in V.7, 1017a25–7. Note that while the latter is the most comprehensive list of the categories in the *Metaphysics*, the passages in *Categories* 4, 1b26–7 and *Topics* I.9, 103b22–4 also include *keisthai* and *echein*, in which case we end up with 10 categories instead of eight.
- <sup>2</sup> For translations of Aristotle I follow Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, sometimes with slight modifications.
- <sup>3</sup> I owe this terminology (end-inclusive vs. end-exclusive) to Charles (2018), who in turn cites Alexander Mourelatos.
- <sup>4</sup> Aristotle points out in *Metaphysics* IX.1, 1045b35–1046a1 that he will first treat the kind of *dynamis* that is less useful for our present purposes and in IX.6, 1048a25–26 that the foregoing discussion has treated *dynamis* in respect of motion. While these remarks give the impression that IX.1–5 is confined to a discussion of *dynamis* and that later chapters will focus on *energeia* (I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out), this way of understanding the composition of *Metaphysics* IX has more drawbacks than advantages, for it then becomes very difficult to explain the text of IX.3 and IX.7. In his commentary on *Metaphysics* IX.1–3, Heidegger states that in IX.3 “the theme is ἐνέργεια” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 148), and while this is not entirely clear, it would be very difficult to maintain that this chapter treats *energeia* only to

clarify the concept of *dynamis* because at the end of the chapter *dynamis* is not even a part of the discussion (IX.3, 1047a30–1047b2), which discussion rather examines the origins of the concept of *energeia* and, moreover, the relationship between *energeia* and *entelecheia*. Makin maintains likewise that the second part of the chapter comments on *energeia* (Makin, 2006, p. 60), which would not be surprising because in earlier passages in the chapter Aristotle has argued (against the Megarian philosophers) that *dynamis* in respect of motion and *energeia* in respect of motion are two separate concepts that should not be conflated. Furthermore, the discussion of *dynamis* cannot be confined to IX.1–5, for *dynamis* becomes the theme also in IX.7. As Beere puts it, “In Theta 7, Aristotle shifts the focus of his discussion from being-in-*energeia* to being-in-capacity” (Beere, 2009, p. 231), and Witt writes likewise that IX.7 is concerned with the “question about potentiality, which is how to determine when one thing is another potentially” (Witt, 2003, p. 133, n. 14). There are reasons to believe, therefore, that IX.1–5 includes a discussion of *energeia*, just as later chapters include a discussion of *dynamis*.

- <sup>5</sup> Various formulations of the definition can be found in *Physics* III.1–3 and in *Metaphysics* XI.9.
- <sup>6</sup> See especially *Physics* III.1, 201a11–15. If motion is from contrary to contrary, however, there can only be three motions (see fn. 14 below for further discussion).
- <sup>7</sup> See also Kosman (2013, pp. 70–71).
- <sup>8</sup> See *Categories* 4 for the examples Aristotle gives to each category.
- <sup>9</sup> Note that the bifurcation of *kinēsis* into *kinein* (moving) and *kineisthai* (being moved) also occurs in *Metaphysics* IX.6, where Aristotle mentions *kinēsis* in 1048a25 and *kinein* and *kineisthai* in 1048a28–29.
- <sup>10</sup> Commenting on this passage, Aquinas argues that there cannot be a motion of doing or suffering because doing and suffering are already motion (*agere et pati sunt motus*) and there cannot be a motion of motion (Aquinas, 1995a).
- <sup>11</sup> The relation between the terms *energeia* and *entelecheia* is too large a topic to explore here, so the reader is referred to Menn’s seminal paper “The Origins of Aristotle’s Concept of ‘Ενέργεια’”, which I think gets much right. Menn’s interpretation has been challenged by Blair (1995) and Graham (1995). See Olszewsky (1997, pp. 1–4) for an overview of different interpretations.
- <sup>12</sup> As Edward Halper puts it, “The first actuality...is a potentiality that can be actualized further, such as knowledge that is not in use. A first actuality is potentially a second actuality, and is thus both potential and actual” (Halper, 1989, p. 164). Likewise, Kosman writes that “a first actuality is a potentiality toward a second actuality” (Kosman, 1969, p. 51). Cf. Ross (1936, p. 88).
- <sup>13</sup> Commentators who adopt the traditional terminology agree minimally that Aristotle intends to distinguish between first potentiality, first actuality (or second potentiality), and second actuality. An interpretation of *Metaphysics* IX that emphasizes the role of the categories is not incompatible with this minimal agreement. See also fn. 20 below.
- <sup>14</sup> For the most part Aristotle uses the terms change and motion interchangeably, but there is a well-known exception in *Physics* V.1, where Aristotle draws a distinction between the two terms, arguing that since motion (*kinēsis*) is from contrary to contrary, there are four changes (*metabolai*) but only three motions (225b8–9, see also *Metaphysics* XI.12, 1068a9–10), in which case neither generation nor corruption would count as an instance of motion. In most other passages, however, the terms *kinēsis* and *metabolē* and the phrases *archē kinēseōs* and *archē metabolēs* alternate without any sign of a distinction in meaning.
- <sup>15</sup> See also Beere (2009, pp. 33–67) on his use of the term “power.” Cf. Halper (1989, pp. 286–287, n. 2) and Graham (1995, p. 558ff.).
- <sup>16</sup> Witt writes that she prefers to “use the terminology agent and passive powers, instead of active and passive powers, in order to avoid confusing this distinction with the other important contrast Aristotle draws between inactive and active powers” (Witt, 2003, p. 132, n. 9). I adopt Witt’s terminology because I share the same concerns.
- <sup>17</sup> In two of these passages, Aristotle also talks about doing and suffering *well*, which are simply more specific kinds of doing and suffering.
- <sup>18</sup> See also *Categories* 14, 15a13–14, *De Anima* I.3, 406a12–13, and *Metaphysics* XII.2, 1069b9–10. In the last passage, the connection between the four categories (substance, quality, quantity, place) and the four motions (generation/corruption, alteration, growth/diminution, locomotion) is made explicit.
- <sup>19</sup> Here one may raise the following question: why are doing and suffering treated as two different categories if, in fact, they are simply two ways of explaining the same activity from different perspectives? While this question is too complex to discuss adequately here, an excellent discussion of the subject can be found in Brentano (1975, pp. 86–89).
- <sup>20</sup> Note that the way that I use the term “activity” would correspond to the “second actuality” of the traditional terminology. My point is that the *locus* of this kind of *energeia* (i.e., the exercise of a capacity) are the categories of doing and suffering. In my view, the *energeia* of substance is *not* a second actuality, and I believe that it is a first actuality, but I also

believe that first actualities are not confined to the *energeia* of substance. These are difficult issues that cannot be treated in passing, however, so I will not discuss them further here.

- <sup>21</sup> See also Beere (2009, pp.3–29) and Menn (1994, p. 74).
- <sup>22</sup> Part of this interpretation—namely, that there are on the one hand the *dynamis* and *energeia* of motion and on the other hand the *dynamis* and *energeia* of substance—is already commonly held. However, few scholars have emphasized the role of the categories in their interpretations of the *kata kinēsin-epi pleon* distinction in IX.1 and of Aristotle's analogy in IX.6. Menn mentions their role (Menn, 1994, p. 95, n. 32 and pp. 105–107), but only in passing. Similarly, Averroes, in his “epitome” commentary on the *Metaphysics*, briefly mentions the categorial basis of Aristotle's analogy in IX.6, but he interprets the analogy in a different way (Averroes, 2010, p. 99).
- <sup>23</sup> In *Metaphysics* IX, Aristotle discusses the relation between the capacity for doing or suffering and the capacity for doing or suffering well (IX.1, 1046a17; IX.2, 1946b25). An analogue of this discussion can be found in *Metaphysics* V.12, where Aristotle talks about the difference between walking and walking well (1019a24–26) and adds in the next sentence that the same holds for *paschein*, from which we can gather that the capacity to walk is a *dynamis tou poiein*.
- <sup>24</sup> Note that there is an important extent to which my understanding of *Metaphysics* IX is not incompatible with the interpretation of the book advanced by Witt, who argues that Aristotle illustrates the relationship between *dynamis* and *energeia* “with two kinds of examples: the relationship between an inactive capacity and its active exercise, and the relationship between an incomplete substance and a complete (or perfected) substance” (Witt, 2003, p. 39). To acknowledge, as I do, that there is “one” concept of *dynamis* and “one” concept of *energeia* that apply analogically in different categories is to acknowledge what Witt would call the “ontological” sense of these terms, in which case Witt's interpretation of the text is not much different from mine, at least in this respect. Similarly, I would not disagree with Frede, according to whom the *dynamis* and *energeia* treated in IX.6–7 is not “a further, distinct kind” of *dynamis* (Frede, 1994, p. 180) or “a distinct, special kind” of *energeia* (Frede, 1994, p. 182) over and above those already treated in IX.1–5. The point that I have been trying to make is that there is an analogical extension of these concepts in different categories, in which case I am in no way denying that the analogues enjoy some kind of unity. I discuss this issue in a recent paper, where I address the question of what ties together the kinetic and non-kinetic variants of *dynamis* and *energeia* (Unlu, 2020, pp. 135–138).
- <sup>25</sup> According to Kosman, walking in the sense of strolling (*spazieren*) counts as an end-inclusive activity (Kosman, 1969, p. 58), but it should give us pause that this is not Aristotle's own example. For further discussion of this example, see Carter (2014, p. 476ff). Cf. Ackrill (1965, pp. 131–133).
- <sup>26</sup> See Ross (1924, Vol. 2, p. 251). Halper talks about similar terminological inconsistencies (Halper, 1989, p. 283, n. 206).
- <sup>27</sup> Beere holds a similar view (Beere, 2009, p. 229).
- <sup>28</sup> Aristotle maintains that every motion (*kinēsis*), as opposed to *energeia* proper, takes time (*Nicomachean Ethics* X.4, 1174a19).
- <sup>29</sup> For example, Halper introduces the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction with the following words: “Since Aristotle defines actuality through this analogy with motion, and since it and the potentiality for it differ from motion and the potentiality for motion, the analogy calls for a distinction between motion and actuality” (Halper, 1989, p. 209). See also Halper (1984, pp. 815–818); Kosman (1984); Gill (1989, pp. 214–218); and Kosman (2013, pp. 73–78).
- <sup>30</sup> Gill tries nevertheless to preserve the unity of (i)–(iii) by suggesting that building is not a motion (Gill, 1989, pp. 224–225). See also Kosman (2013, p. 264, n. 5) and the containing paragraph. My own view is that it is a forced interpretation to use the very distinction by which Aristotle distinguishes building from seeing to argue somehow that building and seeing belong together.
- <sup>31</sup> See Makin (2006, p. 150), Burnyeat (2008), and Beere (2009, pp. 226–227) for a detailed discussion of the manuscript evidence for the passage on the *energeia-kinēsis* distinction.
- <sup>32</sup> Kosman writes similarly that an activity is either “an activity proper or a motion” (Kosman, 2013, p. 71). On another note, it is important to keep in mind that the term *energeia* also refers to *energeia epi pleon*, which is, however, outside of the genus that we are interested in presently. Yet, it is precisely this fact—that is, that there is an *epi pleon* version of *energeia*—that explains why Aristotle treats *kinēsis* as the paradigmatic *energeia*. According to Kosman, “If motion is a degenerate kind of *ἐνέργεια*, it is not clear why Aristotle should have thought it an (even putative) paradigm of *ἐνέργεια*.” (Kosman, 1969, p. 59). I think that the interpretation advanced in this paper resolves this difficulty: there is both a kinetic and a non-kinetic version of *energeia*, and it is the former of these—that is, *energeia* in the sense of activity—that serves as the paradigm.
- <sup>33</sup> Note that unlike Kosman, who divides activity into activity proper and motion (Kosman, 2013, p. 71), Witt divides motion into “incomplete and complete motions” (Kosman, 2013, p. 50), but despite the different terminology, the basic idea is the same.

## REFERENCES

- Ackrill, J. L. (1965). Aristotle's distinction between *Energeia* and *Kinesis*. In R. Bambrough (Ed.), *New essays on Plato and Aristotle* (pp. 121–141). London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Aquinas, T. (1994). *Sentencia libri De anima*. Translated by K. Foster and S. Humphries. Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books.
- Aquinas, T. (1995a). In *duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*. Translated by J. P. Rowan. Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books.
- Aquinas, T. (1995b). In *octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis expositio*. Translated by R. J. Blackwell, R. J. Spath, and E. Thirlkel. Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books.
- Averroes. (2009). *Long commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*. Translated by R. C. Taylor. New Haven, CT and London, England: Yale University Press.
- Averroes. (2010). *On Aristotle's "Metaphysics": An annotated translation of the so-called "Epitome"*. Translated by R. D. Arnzen. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter.
- Beere, J. (2009). *Doing and being: An interpretation of Aristotle's metaphysics theta*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Beere, J. (2018). Activity, actuality, and analogy: Comments on Aryeh Kosman, *The Activity of Being: An Essay on Aristotle's Ontology*. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 26(2), 872–880.
- Blair, G. A. (1995). Unfortunately, it is a bit more complex: Reflections on 'Ενέργεια. *Ancient Philosophy*, 15(2), 565–580.
- Brentano, F. (1975). *On the several senses of being in Aristotle*. Translated by Rolf George. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Brentano, F. (1977). *The psychology of Aristotle: In particular his doctrine of the active intellect*. Translated by Rolf George. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Burnyeat, M. (2008). *Kinesis vs. Energeia: A much-read passage in (but not of) Aristotle's Metaphysics*. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 34, 219–292.
- Carter, J. P. (2014). Heidegger's *Sein zum Tode* as radicalization of Aristotle's definition of *Kinēsis*. *Epoché*, 18(2), 473–502.
- Charles, D. (2018). Comments on Aryeh Kosman's *The Activity of Being: An Essay on Aristotle's Ontology*. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 26(2), 860–871.
- Ford, A. (2014). Action and passion. *Philosophical Topics*, 42(1), 13–42.
- Frede, M. (1994). Aristotle's notion of potentiality in *Metaphysics*  $\theta$ . In T. Scaltsas, D. Charles, & M. L. Gill (Eds.), *Unity, identity, and explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (pp. 173–193). Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Gill, M. L. (1989). *Aristotle on substance: The paradox of Unity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Graham, D. W. (1995). The development of Aristotle's concept of actuality: Comments on a reconstruction by Stephen Menn. *Ancient Philosophy*, 15(2), 551–564.
- Halper, E. C. (1984). Aristotle on knowledge of nature. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 37(4), 811–835.
- Halper, E. C. (1989). *One and many in Aristotle's Metaphysics: The central books*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1995). *Aristotle's Metaphysics  $\theta$  1–3: On the essence and actuality of force*. Translated by Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Kosman, L. A. (1969). Aristotle's definition of motion. *Phronesis*, 14(1), 40–62.
- Kosman, L. A. (1984). Substance, Being, and *Energeia*. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 2, 121–149.
- Kosman, L. A. (2013). *The Activity of Being: An Essay on Aristotle's Ontology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kosman, L. A. (2014). Being properly affected: Virtues and feelings in Aristotle's ethics. In *Virtues of thought: Essays on Plato and Aristotle* (pp. 62–76). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lennox, J. G. (2001). *Aristotle: On the parts of animals I–IV*. Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press.
- Makin, S. (2006). *Aristotle: Metaphysics book  $\theta$* . New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Menn, S. (1994). The origins of Aristotle's concept of 'Ενέργεια: 'Ενέργεια and Δύναμις. *Ancient Philosophy*, 14(1), 73–114.
- Olshewsky, T. (1997, December). *Energeia and Entelecheia: Their conception, development and relation*. The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter. Paper presented at the SAGP Meeting for the American Philological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Ross, W. D. (1924). *Aristotle's Metaphysics: A revised text with Introduction and commentary* (Vol. 2). Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press.
- Ross, W. D. (1936). *Aristotle's physics: A revised text with Introduction and commentary*. Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press.
- Unlu, H. (2020). Aristotle, Heidegger, and the Megarians. *Revue Roumaine de Philosophie*, 64(1), 125–140.
- Witt, C. (2003). *Ways of being: Potentiality and actuality in Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

**How to cite this article:** Unlu H. *Dynamis and Energeia in Aristotle's Metaphysics*. *Eur J Philos*. 2022;30:17–31.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12635>