Eudaimonia in the Eudemian Ethics

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In this dissertation I defend an “Intellectualist” reading of the *Eudemian Ethics* (EE). According to this view, Aristotle identifies *eudaimonia* in the EE with the activity of “God’s contemplation,” subject to certain qualifications. In Chapter One I discuss Aristotle’s argument in EE I.8 that *eudaimonia* is the *telos* of the practicable goods. Next, in Chapter Two I analyze the Eudemian *ergon* argument. This argument is often thought to show that Aristotle holds an “inclusive” conception of *eudaimonia*, according to which *eudaimonia* is the combination of all forms of virtuous activity performed in a suitably long life. I argue that this reading is mistaken, and that the *ergon* argument is compatible with Intellectualism. Next, in Chapter Three I argue that Aristotle makes use of his result in EE I.8 at the very end of the EE and argues that the *telos* of the practicable goods is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Chapters Four and Five discuss two important topics left in the wake of my argument in Chapters One through Three. In Chapter Four I offer an account of how God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, could serve as the *telos* of the practicable goods. Finally, in Chapter Five I analyze Aristotle’s argument at the end of the EE for his conclusion that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is this *telos*.
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Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to defend an Intellectualist reading of Aristotle’s *Eudeman Ethics* (EE). Roughly, according to this view, Aristotle identifies *eudaimonia* with one particular form of virtuous activity, viz. theoretical contemplation, or, as Aristotle calls it, “God’s contemplation.” More precisely, he identifies *eudaimonia* with this activity qualified in certain ways.

I shall do two things in this introduction. First, I shall explain how I understand Aristotle’s question, “What is *eudaimonia*?” Second, I shall outline the main argument of my dissertation. This argument constitutes my interpretation of Aristotle’s answer to his question.

I. Aristotle’s Question

In the EE, I shall argue, Aristotle provides a substantive account of *eudaimonia*. This account is his answer to a question he poses at the beginning of the treatise. Consequently, we shall gain some understanding of this account by briefly examining the question that the account is meant to answer.

Aristotle formulates the question of interest in a few different ways. One version, the version I shall favor, is simply, “What is *eudaimonia*?” (1214b25; 1217a20-21). At one point Aristotle poses the question in a closely-related form, “What it is necessary (*chrē*) to think *eudaimonia* is?” (1215a21-22). An alternative version of his question is, “In what does living well consist?” (1214a15) Despite their differences, these formulations of the question have two basic components: ‘*eudaimonia*’ or some equivalent phrase; and a question about it (e.g. What is it? What does it consist in?). Let us consider each component in turn.

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1 Dirlmeier 1962, 169-170; von Fragstein 1974, 25; Kraut 1979, 174, n.15; Cooper 1986, 120; and Broadie 1991, 32 all seem to take Aristotle’s question at EE I.5, 1215b17-18 to be a question about what *eudaimonia* is. I do not share this view. On my reading, this question is about what makes living preferable to not living.
a. Eudaimonia

In much of the EE Aristotle is concerned with offering an account of what eudaimonia is. But what is this thing, eudaimonia, that he is inquiring into? What can be said in advance of his inquiry to help us understand what he is asking about?

One point Aristotle makes at the outset of his inquiry is that eudaimonia is the best good. We are told in I.7 that eudaimonia is generally agreed to be “the greatest and best of human goods” (1217a21-22). Aristotle then clarifies this claim and concludes that eudaimonia is “the best of goods practicable for a human being” (1217a39-40). Indeed, at the very beginning of the EE, Aristotle announces that eudaimonia is the best, finest, and most pleasant of all. This position contrasts with that of the author of the Delian inscription, who believed that these properties belonged to distinct goods (1214a1-8). Eudaimonia, then, is eminent among other goods in terms of value.

Another prefatory point Aristotle makes is that eudaimonia is a good which plays a special role vis-à-vis lives that people lead. Importantly, eudaimonia is a good that enters into to well-lived lives; it is not the well-lived life itself. Thus, Aristotle’s examples of goods generally thought to be eudaimonia are goods such as: philosophical wisdom; virtue, or virtuous activity; bodily pleasure; or combinations thereof. These serve as aims (telê) around which a life is to be organized (1214b10-11). Additionally, they are goods which lives (bioi) “concern” or “are about” (peri) (1215a32-b5). Relatedly, eudaimonia is something that is “applied to” or “brought to” (epi...pherousi) certain kinds of lives (1216a27-29). The life at issue, apparently, must be of a suitable length for eudaimonia to emerge. Thus, nobody is happy for a day or for one period of one’s life; and Aristotle approves of Solon’s point that we ought not to felicitate anyone who is living (1219b4-8).
The word ‘eudaimonia’ is traditionally translated as “happiness.” Properly understood, this plausibly answers to the two points I’ve just mentioned. Of course, ‘happiness’ sometimes refers to a mood or transient feeling—the sort of feeling picked out when we say that we were happy this morning but are now sad this afternoon. But often when we ask someone, “Are you happy?” or “Is there happiness in your life?” we are asking them to reflect upon their life as a whole, and we are wondering whether some great good has entered and stayed in their life. Similarly, it is this sort of thing someone has in mind when they say that their ultimate goal is happiness. Although I shall leave ‘eudaimonia’ untranslated throughout, one would not go far astray in thinking that happiness is what Aristotle means to offer an account of.²

b. What Is...

In the EE, Aristotle pursues the question, “What is eudaimonia?” But what, more precisely, is Aristotle is after in asking this question?

It is clear that Aristotle is not seeking just any uniquely identifying description that would pick out eudaimonia from all other things in the world. Aristotle begins his inquiry in I.7 with the observation that eudaimonia “is the greatest and best of human goods” (1217a21-22). Such a description is true of eudaimonia. Moreover, it plausibly uniquely refers to eudaimonia—it distinguishes eudaimonia from everything in the world that isn’t eudaimonia. But despite its truth and unique reference, Aristotle does not take this to be an answer to his question of what eudaimonia is.

A similar observation can be made about the way Aristotle begins his inquiry into what virtue of character is in II.1:

² For similar thoughts, see Kraut 1979, 167-170.
Indeed, it’s necessary to seek, just as everyone seeks in the other cases by having something, so as always to try to take up something both truly and clearly said through things said truly but not clearly. For we are currently in a similar state just as if [we were to say] also that health\(^3\) is the best disposition of the body, and that Corsicus is that darkest person in the marketplace. For we do not know what either of them is, but being in this state is relevant (pro ergou) to knowing what either of these things is. (1220a15-22).

The claim that health is the best disposition of the body, or that Corsicus is the darkest person in the marketplace, are claims that pick out the object of interest from everything else. Such claims do not, however, amount to clear statements about what these things are.

A more attractive view would be to say that in seeking to discover what *eudaimonia* is Aristotle is after a definition of *eudaimonia*. Definitions are standard Aristotelian answers to “What is it?” questions: they “reveal what something is” (*APo. II.3, 91a1*). Moreover, they go beyond uniquely specifying their *definienda* in that they are an account of the “what it is to be” or essence of the *definienda*, rather than just any unique specification of the item being defined.\(^4\) Although Aristotle does not come out and say that he is seeking a definition of *eudaimonia* in the EE, there are some signs that this might be what he is after.\(^5\) The conclusion of the ergon argument in II.1, a part of Aristotle’s clarification of what *eudaimonia* is, appears to be the statement of the genus of *eudaimonia* (1219a39), and genera are components of something’s essence or “what it is.”\(^6\) Additionally, the discussion of what ethical virtue is later in Bk. II provides yet another parallel: Aristotle characterizes what seems to be the end result of his inquiry into what virtue is

\(^3\) The text here seems intelligible. The “we were to say” is suggested by the *legomenōn* at 1220a16-17.

\(^4\) On this point see, e.g., *APo. 90b16* and *Top. 101b21-22, 38*.

\(^5\) I reject as evidence certain passages in the EE that are often taken as evidence that Aristotle is searching for a definition of *eudaimonia*. It is often thought that Aristotle is claiming at I.4, 1214b20-22 that by defining what *eudaimonia* is various controversies will be solved; and that Aristotle has offered a definition (*horos*) of *eudaimonia* in the conclusion of the ergon argument at 1219a38-39. In Chapter Two I argue this *horos* of *eudaimonia* is merely a “demarcation” of *eudaimonia*.

\(^6\) On this point see *Top. 102a31-35*.
as a definition (1227b12). Given that this inquiry into what ethical virtue is ends with a definition, we might expect Aristotle’s inquiry into what eudaimonia is to end similarly.

That said, it seems to me that there is little solid evidence that Aristotle is after a definition of eudaimonia so understood. The common answers to his questions that he canvasses at the beginning of his inquiry are simply answers like “phronēsis” or “bodily pleasure.” These do not obviously conform to the strictures of Aristotelian definition (e.g. genus-differentia form). Of course, these are ultimately rejected as answers to the question of what eudaimonia is. But they are never rejected on formal grounds that they couldn’t possibly be answers to a “What is it?” question. Indeed, Aristotle’s own answer on my view, viz. “God’s contemplation, suitably qualified,” does not similarly obviously meet the standards of an Aristotelian definition. Nor, as we shall see, do the arguments that lead to Aristotle’s identification of eudaimonia ensure that he has hit upon a definition.

The safe thing to say is this. Aristotle is not interested in just any uniquely identifying description of eudaimonia. Rather, he is after a fairly contentful, uniquely identifying description of eudaimonia. In using the phrase ‘fairly contentful’, I mean to be getting at the difference between a description of eudaimonia such as “the best practicable good” and, say, “the performance of virtuous theoretical intellectual activity over a sufficiently long life, and performed as an exercise of kalokagathia.” The former description, though uniquely specifying, does not really tell one what good to organize one’s life around. Upon learning that eudaimonia is the best practicable good, one is not all that much closer to being able to identify eudaimonia than one was before learning this. The latter description, by contrast, is both uniquely specifying and fairly

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7 I have in mind here the genitive absolute phrase toutōn...diōrismenōn. I take virtue of character to be defined at 1227b8-10. Aristotle speaks of plural items having been defined presumably because vice has also been defined in a way in these lines, since vice is said to be an excess or deficiency which concerns the same things virtue concerns (1227b6-7).
contentful: from this description, one knows what activity *eudaimonia* is, the length of time in which it is to be performed, and the virtue that it is an exercise of. Aristotle is after a description of *eudaimonia* like this second one—one that tells us a good deal about *eudaimonia* and clearly distinguishes it from everything else. And indeed, it will be precisely this kind of description that the arguments I detect in the EE entitle him to. Whether this amounts to an Aristotelian definition of *eudaimonia*, or whether Aristotle’s arguments are sufficient to yield a such a definition of *eudaimonia*, however, will remain a question for further study. Nothing in the EE seems to require that this be Aristotle’s aim.

Some would disagree with this. According to Joseph Karbowski,

> Aristotle conceives the EE as an attempt to discover the first principles of a demonstrative science of ethics/politics along the lines of the *Posterior Analytics*. These first principles are substantive definitions of happiness, character virtue, etc., which explain why these items have their derivative necessary features.

On this view, Aristotle recognizes that ethics is a domain ripe for scientific investigation and organization. Aristotle is after a definition of *eudaimonia*—one that, moreover, serves as a scientific first principle. At the very least, this principle is able to explain why *eudaimonia* has the other necessary features it has. Presumably, as a first principle it is also meant to explain, or partially explain, other things in ethics too, such as why this or that is beneficial for human beings.

To be clear, I do not want to rule out the possibility that Aristotle hits upon a scientific first principle of ethics in answering his question, “What is *eudaimonia*?” Indeed, I shall argue in this dissertation that *eudaimonia* does explain a great deal about why other things are good, why certain choices are right but others wrong, etc. I do not, however, see evidence that *Aristotle conceives of the EE as an attempt to discover or establish such a first principle*. There is, as far as I can tell, no evidence that Aristotle is consciously on the hunt for definitional principles that can be used in an

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8 2015, 205. Roughly the same view is defended in Falcon 2019.
ethical science, or that at the outset of his inquiry in the EE he thinks that ethics is a domain fit for scientific examination and organization.

The evidence Karbowski cites in favor of his position is Aristotle’s characterization of the study he undertakes in the EE as one “through which not only ‘the what’ is clear, but also ‘the why’” (1216b38-39). Noting the similarity between this claim and Aristotle’s claim in APo. that “the ‘what it is’ and the ‘why it is’ are the same” (90a14-15), Karbowski argues that Aristotle aims in the EE to hit upon “the what” of eudaimonia—its definition—which he also recognizes to be “the why,” i.e. an explanation at the very least for the necessary features that eudaimonia has.

In the first place, however, it should be noted that Aristotle does not make the crucial claim that “the what” and “the why” are the same in the EE passage under consideration—or, indeed, anywhere else in the EE. 1216b38-39, then, do not provide evidence that Aristotle is conceiving of “the what” and “the why” as the same.

Furthermore, there is a more plausible option for what “the why” is at 1216b38-39. “The why” is not the explanans of derivative features of the thing defined as it is in the APo. passage Karbowski cites. Rather, “the why” is the reasons and arguments offered in support of the “the what” that Aristotle hits upon in his inquiry.\(^9\) Aristotle’s point at 1216b38-39 is that it is not superfluous for the politician to understand the reasons and arguments for his eventual identification of eudaimonia. This reading is supported by the claim a few lines earlier that Aristotle will proceed in his inquiry by “demonstrating in a way” from initial unclear statements (1216b31-32). These “demonstrations” are the arguments adduced in favor of Aristotle’s clearer descriptions of eudaimonia. As demonstrations (in a way) they constitute “the why,” i.e. the

\(^9\) My interpretation also contrasts with Woods 1992, 58. On Woods’ view, “the what” are statements indicating which things are human goods, while “the why” is the explanation for why they are good. This interpretation does not, I think, take seriously enough the immediate context of 1216b38-39, in which demonstration in a way is something done in the course of progressively clarifying what eudaimonia is.
explanation, for why these clearer statements are true of eudaimonia. The claim at 1216b31-32, then, provides the context in which we are to understand the referent of “the why,” rather than the APo., whose crucial claim of sameness is not made by Aristotle in the EE.\textsuperscript{10}

II. Aristotle’s Answer

What, then, is Aristotle’s answer to the question, “What is eudaimonia?” in the EE?

The usual answer to this question is that Aristotle is an Inclusivist in the EE. According to this view, eudaimonia is the combination of all forms of virtuous activity performed in a suitably long life. A virtuous agent’s ethically virtuous activity—their courageous activity, generous activity, temperate activity, etc.—along with their intellectually virtuous activity would compose that agent’s eudaimonia. Eudaimonia “includes” all these goods.\textsuperscript{11}

The main evidence adduced for this view is the conclusion of the EE’s ergon argument in II.1. There, Aristotle concludes that “eudaimonia would be activity of a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue” (1219a38-39). Undoubtedly, “teleia virtue” here refers to kalokagathia, or fineness and goodness. This virtue is a composite of all the individual virtues of character and of intellect. So understood, proponents of the Inclusivist reading claim that Aristotle concludes that that eudaimonia is the activity of this composite virtue, and so must be the performance of all

\textsuperscript{10} Nor does the reference to the Analytics in Aristotle’s methodological ruminations, at 1217a17, support Karbowsk\’s interpretation. The point Aristotle draws from the Analytics is simply that one can produce demonstrations which have true conclusions but false (and, hence, non-explanatory) premises, not that the definition he seeks in the EE plays the role of a first principle in a science.

\textsuperscript{11} Like any good philosophical term bandied about for decades, ‘Inclusivism’ means different things to different people. As I shall use the term, ‘Inclusivism’ is simply the view that eudaimonia includes within it all forms of virtuous activity. Sometimes ‘Inclusivism’ means not merely this, but additionally the view that these forms of virtuous activities are intrinsically or finally valuable independent of bearing any connection to eudaimonia. Or, again, sometimes ‘Inclusivism’ means not merely what I mean, but additionally the view that eudaimonia doesn’t have any particularly robust structure to it. Eudaimonia is just some collection of goods. As I shall use the term, these are special cases of Inclusivism. (Thus, Buddensiek 1999 is someone who is not an Inclusivist in these narrower senses but is an Inclusivist in my sense. On this labeling issue, see Kenny 2016, 292-293.)
forms of virtuous activity over a *teleia* lifetime. Furthermore, Aristotle’s conclusion at 1219a38-39 is characterized as a “horos” by Aristotle (1219a39-40), which is almost always taken to mean “definition.” Inclusivists, then, are wont to point out that Aristotle defines *eudaimonia* at the end of the *ergon* argument. Surely, the thought goes, he must be answering here the question of what *eudaimonia* is.

In this dissertation I shall defend an alternative reading. On my view, Aristotle is not an Inclusivist in the EE. Instead, *eudaimonia* is one particular kind of virtuous activity, viz. the activity of “God’s contemplation.” It is, in other words, the contemplation of philosophical and scientific truths about the world. To count as *eudaimonia*, this activity needs to be qualified in certain ways: it must be performed over a suitably long lifetime; it must be performed as an exercise of *kalokagathia*; and it must be unimpeded. Indeed, the *eudaimōn* life might well look quite similar to how it would look on an Inclusivist picture. But on the reading I shall defend, the *eudaimonia* in the *eudaimōn* life is just one form of virtuous activity. My reading, then, is “Intellectualist,” in that it identifies *eudaimonia* with a certain form of contemplative intellectual activity.

As I read the EE, Aristotle’s answer to the question, “What is *eudaimonia*?” has two basic steps:

(Claim A) *Eudaimonia*, the best practicable good, is the *telos* of the practicable goods.

(Claim B) The *telos* of the practicable goods is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

(Claim A) identifies *eudaimonia* with a particular causal entity, viz. the final cause—the end or aim—of goods that human beings can achieve through their action. Having identified *eudaimonia* with this *telos*, Aristotle then goes on in the EE to determine what good plays this causal role. On
my view, Aristotle argues at the very end of the EE that the good in question is God’s contemplation, subject to the various qualifications I pointed out earlier. It follows from this that eudaimonia is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

My argument for this reading unfolds in the following way:

In Chapter One, I discuss Aristotle’s argument for (Claim A). This chapter focuses on EE I.8, where Aristotle argues that the best practicable good is the telos of practicable goods. In essence, his argument for this claim turns on the thought that the best practicable good is that good which is causally prior to all other goods, in that it causes their goodness. Aristotle contends that it is the telos, or final cause, of the practicable goods that plays this role.

Next, in Chapter Two I turn to the EE’s ergon argument. As I mentioned above, this argument is the “go-to” text for those who endorse the Inclusivist reading of the EE. As it is standardly read, Aristotle uniquely specifies in a contentful way what eudaimonia is in the argument. In other words, by the end of this argument he has answered his question of what eudaimonia is. I argue, however, that this reading of the EE’s ergon argument is mistaken. The result of this argument is more modest: Aristotle merely specifies a kind into which eudaimonia falls, viz. activity of a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue. This conclusion is compatible with Inclusivism. But it is equally compatible with Intellectualism. The Eudemian ergon argument, then, does not decide the question of what eudaimonia is.

Indeed, it is only that the very end of the EE where Aristotle reveals eudaimonia’s identity. I argue in Chapter Three that Aristotle argues for (Claim B) in the EE’s final lines. Aristotle announces at the very end of the EE that he has said what the skopos of the unqualified goods—i.e. the telos of the practicable goods—is. This skopos or telos, I argue, is identified by Aristotle as God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, in the final lines. There, Aristotle identifies God’s
contemplation, suitably qualified, as both the horos, or demarcator, of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, and the horos of the soul. It follows from this, I argue, that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified is the telos of the practicable goods.

The argument of Chapters One through Three raises two key questions. First, could God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, really play the causal role the telos of practicable goods plays? If so, how? In Chapter Four, I face this question head-on and sketch Aristotle’s theory of how goodness would be caused by God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Aristotle recognizes four broad forms of goodness in the EE: goodness as an end; goodness not as an end; natural fineness; and non-natural fineness. These forms of goodness, I suggest, are all to be accounted for by the goods in question standing in telic production relations to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Additionally, the voluntariness of certain goods plays a role in accounting for their fineness.

The second question that emerges from Chapters One through Three is why Aristotle identifies God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as the two horoi I mentioned. In Chapter Five I examine Aristotle’s argument at 1249b6-19 for this conclusion. The argument here turns on Aristotle’s view that it is good for living beings, such as the human being, to live in relation to their ruling principles, along with his views as to what these ruling principles are (phronēsis, God’s contemplation, suitably qualified) and how they are related to one another. I suggest, somewhat dissatisfyingly, that while Aristotle clearly has an argument for identifying God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as the two aforementioned horoi, some of his moves in this argument are under-explained or under-justified.
The NE and EE as we have it share three books, the so-called “common books,” whose proper home is unclear. In trying to make sense of Aristotle’s Eudemian theory of *eudaimonia*, I have made little use of these books. When I do refer to or quote them, I make use of passages whose applicability does not depend on whether the common books are Nicomachean or Eudemian. In many cases using a common book passage to make sense of the EE should be thought of as analogous to using, say, a passage from the *Physics* or from *de Anima* to make sense of the EE. The important point for their applicability to EE interpretation is simply that the passage is written by Aristotle, not whether it belongs to the EE specifically.

My reason for proceeding in this way is that it is generally a good thing to avoid entering into disputes one needn’t enter into. As I hope to show, there is a coherent theory of *eudaimonia* that can be gleaned from the uniquely Eudemian books alone, one worth studying independently of any key reliance on the common books. Because of this, we needn’t take a stance on which of the common books, if any, actually belongs to the EE. Of course, Aristotle says some things about *eudaimonia* in the common books, and the content of these books would doubtless supplement Aristotle’s account of *eudaimonia* in whichever treatise they belonged to. But as I see it, they would be just that—supplementary. The main moves of Aristotle’s account of *eudaimonia* in the EE are to be found in the uniquely Eudemian books.

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12 These are NE V/EE IV, NE VI/EE V, and NE VII/EE VI. Scholars debate about which of these books (or which parts of which books) belong to which treatise. Kenny 2016 (whose first edition was published in 1978) is an influential defense of the view that the common books are Eudemian. Frede 2019 is a recent response to Kenny, arguing for the view that the common books are Nicomachean.
Chapter One: The Best is the End

After six introductory chapters, Aristotle begins his inquiry into *eudaimonia* proper in EE I.7:

And with these things having been presented as introductory material (*peprooimiasmenōn*), let us speak beginning first from the first things, just as was said, not said clearly, seeking for the purpose of discovering clearly what *eudaimonia* is. (1217a18-21)

Aristotle characterizes what he has written up to this point as a preface or introduction (*prooimion*). In this introductory material, he has, among other things, introduced the main questions of the work (what is *eudaimonia*, how is it to be acquired), and he has canvassed some possible and popular answers to both of these questions. He has noted that *phronēsis*, virtue, and pleasure, as well as possible combinations of these, are the main contenders for what *eudaimonia* is. He has highlighted both important distinctions, such as the distinction between a constituent or part of *eudaimonia* and a mere *sine qua non* of *eudaimonia*, as well as some important questions that need to be answered, such as whether *eudaimonia* is a state or activity. Additionally, he has made some methodological observations and has proposed a method by which he will proceed. With all of that out of the way, Aristotle now moves on to discovering clearly what *eudaimonia* is.

In EE I.8, Aristotle argues for the following claim:

(Claim A) *Eudaimonia*, the best practicable good, is the *telos* of the practicable goods.

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13 I follow PC and read *de* rather than the OCT’s *de kai*.
14 Rowe reports that M reads *epi το(i)*, while PCL read *epi to*. Since seeking isn’t a verb of motion, it seems preferable to follow M (and I am unaware of any other parallels in Greek for the combination of *zēteō*, *epi*, and an accusative).
15 We needn’t settle the question of what *tou tōn* at 1217a18 refers to in order for me to claim this. There are two plausible possible referents: (i) everything in the EE up to this point; (ii) the most recent methodological remarks in I.6. If (i) is the referent, Aristotle explicitly characterizes the first six chapters as an introduction. If (ii) is the referent, then just the methodological remarks in I.6 are explicitly characterized as introductory. But (a) the first five chapters serve just as well as introductory material; and (b) one wonders what would precede an introduction if just chapter six is characterized as an introductory. On reading (ii), Aristotle’s point is now that he has presented the last bit of introductory material (the methodological remarks) he can go on to start his inquiry in earnest.
In this chapter, I shall discuss this key move of Aristotle’s. (Claim A) is not Aristotle’s final word on what *eudaimonia* is. But it is important for his overall argument in the EE. Having argued for (Claim A), Aristotle is then in a position to determine what *eudaimonia* is by way of determining what the *telos* of the practicable goods is. As we shall see in later chapters of my dissertation, this is precisely what Aristotle goes on to do.

I. The Argument

a. The Shape of the Argument

As just mentioned, Aristotle begins his inquiry into what *eudaimonia* is in I.7. The starting point for this inquiry is the generally agreed-upon statement that *eudaimonia* is “the greatest and best of human goods” (1217a21-22). Aristotle then sharpens this characterization of *eudaimonia* in the chapters and books that follow. Just prior to I.8, Aristotle concludes that “*eudaimonia* must be posited to be the best of goods practicable for a human being” (1217a39-40). Having concluded this, Aristotle then pursues in I.8 the question of what the best such good is. His answer is (Claim A).

> Before looking at the argument for (Claim A), it will be helpful to say a word about what “the practicable goods” are. In I.7, Aristotle says that

> [T]he practicable is said in two ways (for both those things for the sake of which we act and those things [which we do] for the sake of these things have a share in action. E.g. we posit both health and wealth among the practicable things, and the things done for the sake of these things, viz. the healthy things and the money-making things). (1217a35-39)
Aristotle indicates here that “the practicable” and, hence, the practicable goods, comprise two sorts of things: ends, and things done for the sake of ends. This class of goods, then, is quite broad and includes the vast majority of things that are good for human beings.\textsuperscript{16}

As a clarificatory point, I shall speak throughout simply of “the practicable goods” as the relevant domain of goods that Aristotle has in mind. Strictly, however, Aristotle has in mind the goods that are practicable \textit{for a human being}. He allows that there are goods which are practicable only for other beings (e.g. God). For the sake of convenience, however, I shall use the shorter phrase.

With this clarification in mind, we can now turn to Aristotle’s argument in I.8. This chapter begins as follows:

Let us examine, then, what the best is, and in how many ways it is said. Indeed, [what the best is] appears especially to be in three beliefs. For they say [a] that the best of all is the good itself, and [b] that the good itself is that to which belong being the first of goods and being the cause by means of presence for the other goods being good; and [c] that both of these things belong\textsuperscript{17} to the Idea of \textit{The Good}. (By ‘both’ I mean being the first of goods and being the cause for the other goods being good by means of presence.) (1217b1-8)

Aristotle first announces that two questions are to be examined. The first is what the best is, by which he means what the best good practicable is. The second question concerns in how many ways this good is said. For the remainder of the chapter his attention is directed only to the first question.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} Segvic 2004, 154-155 takes issue with understanding \textit{prakton} as “achievable in action.” On the strength of 1218b4-7 Segvic claims that \textit{prakton} instead should be understood as that which “is, or can be, a genuine end [i.e. \textit{telos}] of human action” (155). There are two problems with this interpretation. (i) 1218b4-7 are not characterizing what \textit{to prakton} is. Aristotle is simply claiming that the “that for the sake of which” is a practicable good, not that the “that for the sake of which” is to be identified with the \textit{prakton}. (ii) At 1217a35-40 Aristotle claims that means—things that are done for the sake of some \textit{telos}—are practicable. So the practicable goods are not exhausted by what is or can be a genuine \textit{telos}.

\textsuperscript{17} I defer to Rowe ms. and the OCT in reading \textit{huparchein}. But the unanimous MSS support for \textit{huparchei} is not to be trifled with. (For my purposes, nothing crucial hangs on this choice.)

\textsuperscript{18} The end of I.8 makes this clear. Aristotle repeats the claim that we must examine in how many ways the best of all is said (1218b26). This implies that he did not examine this question in I.8.
Next, Aristotle indicates that what the best is “appears especially to be in three beliefs.” He justifies this claim (gar, 1217b2) by reporting something that “they,” presumably Platonists, say. Given this, the “three beliefs” in which the best good appears would seem to be located somewhere in the Platonists’ [a]-[c]. These claims are [a] the best good is “the good itself”; [b] the good itself is the first of goods and the cause, by means of presence, for the other goods’ goodness; and [c] the Idea of The Good has these two features.¹⁹

There is some unclarity in what, precisely, the three beliefs are. They could be each of the three claims [a]-[c]. After [c], however, Aristotle indicates that he considers being first and being the cause of goodness to be two distinct properties (amphotera, 1217b6-7). This raises the possibility that the three beliefs are just [a] and [b]. The best good would seem to appear in the three beliefs on either option. [a]-[c] compose an argument for the view that the best good is the Idea of the Good. Clearly, then, the best appears in all three of them. But [a]-[b] by themselves tell one what to look for in order to identify the best good. The best good appears in [a]-[b] alone in that, according to these two claims, the best good is the first good and the cause of goodness, whatever that proves to be. Consequently, I shall remain neutral on which of these two options is right.²⁰

¹⁹ There is disagreement about what the three beliefs to which Aristotle refers are. Candidates include beliefs about the properties that the good itself has (Woods 1992, 63); beliefs about the good itself being either the Idea of The Good, the common good, or the telos of the practicable goods (Dirlmeier 1962, 194; Inwood and Woolf 2013, 11, n.19; Simpson 2013, 219; Dalimier 2014, 301); and the three views of what eudaimonia is discussed earlier in the EE, viz. philosophy, virtue, and pleasure (Fritzsche 1851, 17).

²⁰ The hparchein/huparchei question (n. 17) does not settle the matter. Suppose we read huparchei at 1217b6. One might think that since there would then be three claims made in indirect statement before Aristotle’s parenthetical remark in first person, the three beliefs are [a]-[c]. Given the amphotera point, however, the three beliefs could still be just [a]-[b]. Alternatively, suppose we read huparchei. On this reading, one might be tempted to say that the three beliefs must be [a]-[b] since [c] would no longer be in the mouths of the Platonists. But this reasoning is specious. Whether or not [c] is in indirect statement, it is still clearly a belief that Aristotle attributes to the Platonists. After all, the reasons for thinking [c] are stated in indirect discourse (1218b8-16). [c], then, is still clearly a view being attributed to the Platonists, whether it is stated in their own mouths or in Aristotle’s.
Although the Platonists think [a]-[c], Aristotle does not wholly accept their view. As the chapter continues, he challenges, among other things, the existence of the Idea of the Good.\footnote{Arguments against the existence of the Idea of the Good are given or alluded to at 1217b16-23 and 1218a1-15.} In doing so, he thereby rejects [c]. The Idea of the Good does not exist. Consequently, it is neither the first of goods nor the cause of the other goods’ goodness. Beliefs [a] and [b], however, remain untouched.\footnote{Simpson 2013, 223 takes Aristotle to criticize [a] at 1218a9-15. But Aristotle does not criticize [a] itself in these lines. He criticizes a reason one might have for accepting [a]. His point is that an entity which is F is not more F than other F things on grounds of it being eternal and separate. This is consistent with the good itself being best for some other reason.}

Having subjected the Platonists’ position to fierce criticism, Aristotle turns to identifying his own candidate for the best good. On his view, it is the telos of practicable goods (1218b10-12).

This passage merits some discussion. Here is OCT’s text and a representative translation:\footnote{The text is essentially the same in Susemihl 1884 and Rowe ms., though they don’t print a comma after agathon.}

\begin{quote}
τὸ δ’ οὗ ἐνεκα ώς τέλος ἄριστον καὶ αἴτιον τῶν ύφ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ πρῶτον πάντων. ὥστε τοῦτ’ ἂν εἴη αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν, τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀνθρώπω πρακτῶν.
\end{quote}

And the “that for the sake of which,” as end, is best, the cause of the things under it, and the first of all. Hence this would be the good itself, the end of the goods practicable for a human being.

On this construal, Aristotle first claims that the telos of practicable goods is best, the cause of things under it, and the first of all. He does not specify the domain of goods in which the telos is best or first, but, in keeping with what we saw at the end of I.7, he presumably has in mind the practicable goods. Similarly, the goods “under” the telos are the goods that are for its sake, i.e. the other practicable goods. Additionally, Aristotle makes clear in an argument that I shall discuss below that the telos is specifically the cause of the things under it in that it causes their goodness (1218b16-20). Just as in the Platonists’ argument earlier, being best, first, and the cause of...
goodness all play a key role in Aristotle’s own argument. As this construal would have it, Aristotle uses these properties to infer that the *telos* of practicable goods is the good itself.

So understood, Aristotle’s argument is odd. The aim of EE I.8 was to determine what the best good is. But here, the *telos’s* being best appears as a *premise* in the argument. He infers from the fact that this *telos* is the cause of things under it, the first of all, and *best* that it is the good itself. Aristotle, then, appears to assume what he was meant to argue for in the service of a conclusion different from his target as announced at the beginning of I.8.

The root of this problem lies in taking *kai* at 1218b10 to be a conjunction linking *ariston* with *aition tōn huph’ auto*. On this reading, the end’s being the best is just one of three properties in a list. But this *kai* should instead be understood epexegetically. Additionally, the period after *pantōn* should be replaced with a comma. On this reading, the translation of 1218b10-12 is:

> And the “that for the sake of which,” as end, is best—i.e. (*kai*) it is the cause of the things under it, and the first of all, with the result that this would be the good itself, the end of the goods practicable for a human being.

This construal gives us just what we want. The *telos’s* being best is no longer a premise of the argument. Instead, it is the conclusion of an argument found in the *id est* clause. That argument, moreover, mirrors the Platonists’ argument for their candidate good. The *telos* of the practicable goods is the good itself because it is the cause of goodness and first. It follows that this *telos* is best. Aristotle here employs the Platonists’ [a] and [b], which went unchallenged in the chapter.

Aristotle’s argument for the claim that the best practicable good is the *telos* of the practicable goods, then, runs as follows:

1. *Eudaimonia*, the best practicable good, is the good itself.
2. The good itself is the first of the practicable goods and the cause of the other practicable goods’ goodness.

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24 I thank David Charles and Reier Helle for insisting that I take this *kai* epexegetically. (I don’t know if they agree with the particular way in which I construe the epexegesis, however.)
(3) The telos of the practicable goods is the first of the practicable goods and the cause of the other practicable goods’ goodness.

So, (4) the telos of the practicable goods is the good itself. [(2) and (3)]

Thus, (Claim A) eudaimonia, the best practicable good, is the telos of the practicable goods. [(1) and (4)]

Claims (1) and (2) represent the Platonists’ [a] and [b], with which Aristotle agrees, while (3)-(Claim A) is the argument just rehearsed at 1218b10-12.25

b. Two Clarifications

Two points regarding how I extract (1)-(Claim A) from the text of EE I.8 are worth highlighting.

The first concerns an apparent difference between what the Platonists and Aristotle say about how the good itself causes goodness. According to the Platonists, the good itself causes goodness by means of presence (tē(i) parousia(i), 1217b5). Aristotle does not claim, however, that the telos of practicable goods so causes goodness.

Indeed, Aristotle does not specify the way in which the telos operates as a cause. But it is false that the telos of practicable goods must be “present” in order for the other practicable goods to be good.26 Money, honor, and health are good regardless of whether their telos, eudaimonia, has come about. We can imagine a community in which every member was aiming to lead a materialistic, money-making life. Nobody would be eudaimôn in such a community. Nevertheless, people in this society would have all kinds of (misused) practicable goods. The telos of practicable goods, then, isn’t the cause of the goodness of other things by means of presence,

25 Allan 1963, 279 says that Aristotle’s overall argument in EE I.8 has “the shape of an argument from elimination.” This is misleading. Aristotle argues directly that the telos of practicable goods is the best good. Although he explains why other candidates aren’t to be identified as the best good, his position does not rely on his having eliminated them.

26 Rowe 1971a, 21 seems to assert that eudaimonia causes goodness by means of presence.
since its presence is irrelevant to its causal activity. If Aristotle were implicitly claiming that this \textit{telos} operates in this way, he would be mistaken.

There is another way to go. “Presence” enters the picture at the beginning of I.8 because the Platonists have a causal theory according to which causes exercise their causal powers by means of presence. \textit{In the mouths of the Platonists}, then, the good itself is said to have the property of causing goodness by means of presence because for a Platonist this is the only way that goodness can be caused. The notion of the good itself \textit{per se}, however, does not include a presence condition. Consequently, it is no problem that Aristotle’s candidate for the good itself doesn’t cause goodness in this way.

There is some evidence of such an assumption in Plato.\footnote{In commenting on 1217b5, Dirlmeier 1962, 195 and Décarie 1978, 67, n.80 note that the claim that things are F because of the presence of the Idea of F is evidenced by Socrates’ remark in the \textit{Phaedo} that “I simply, naively, and perhaps foolishly cling to this, that nothing else makes [something] beautiful other than the presence (\textit{parousia}) of, or the sharing in, or however you may describe its relationship to that Beautiful we mentioned” (100d3-6; Grube trans.). This evidence is so-so. Socrates is not insistent (\textit{ou gar eti touto diischurizomai}, 100d6-7) that the Idea of Beauty causes other things to be beautiful by means of presence. The \textit{sharing in} relation is another candidate relation mentioned, and Socrates furthermore seems open to the possibility that some other relation besides these two is the causal relation that obtains between an Idea and its participants.} In the \textit{Lysis}, Socrates endorses the principle that when $x$, a thing that is F, is present in a particular way in something else, $y$, $y$ is also F (217e1-4). The principle affirmed here is quite broad. Although Socrates is interested in the case of whether people are good or bad in virtue of something good or bad being present in them, he introduces this principle with the example of the color white being present in someone’s hair. In the \textit{Gorgias}, Socrates has Gorgias affirm an instance of this principle when Gorgias says that “the good men are good and the bad men bad because of the presence of good or bad things in them” (498d2-3). These passages both suggest that things are caused to be F specifically by means of presence.
The second point of clarification concerns the domain of goods at issue throughout the argument. The Platonists say that the good itself is the best of all, or the first of the goods, or the cause of goodness for the other goods. It is natural to assume that for a Platonist the domain over which these claims is made is all goods whatsoever. Yet, clearly, for Aristotle the telos of practicable goods is the first and best of merely the goods practicable for a human being, and is the cause of goodness for the other practicable goods.28

On closer inspection, however, Aristotle is best read as attributing to the Platonists the more restricted claims. As we saw, at the very end of I.7 Aristotle says that eudaimonia is the best of the goods practicable for a human being (1217a39-40). This sets the relevant domain over which the best good at issue is best. Thus, when Aristotle says that the best good appears in the Platonists’ three beliefs and then reports their first belief as the idea that the best of all is the good itself, we should likewise understand the domain at issue to be the best of all goods practicable for a human being. This domain then carries over into [b] and [c]. The best of all goods whatsoever is not germane to Aristotle’s inquiry. He is not looking for that good.29

I stress these two points of clarification because they are important for the validity of Aristotle’s argument. If the good itself caused goodness by means of presence, and if it were the

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28 Woods 1992, 82 recognizes this domain problem.
29 This interpretation assumes that Aristotle attributes to the Platonists the thought the good itself is a practicable good. After all, if the good itself is best of the practicable goods, it must be a practicable good. There is some evidence that Aristotle would indeed attribute this to the Platonists (or, at least, to certain Platonists). Later in EE I.8, Aristotle criticizes the demonstration that The One is the good itself (1218a24-33). Based on Aristotle’s criticism, that Platonist argument seems to have run as follows:
(a) All beings aim at (epihesethai) some one thing, viz. the good itself.
(b) Numbers aim at The One.
So, (c) The One is the good itself.
Premise (a) is of particular interest. This premise implies that human beings aim at some one thing, viz. the good itself. But at EE I.7, 1217a35-39, Aristotle identifies aims—things for the sake of which we act—as things that are practicable (prakton). Based on this argument, along with what counts as practicable, Aristotle has reason to think that the Platonists maintain that the good itself is a practicable good.
first of all goods whatsoever and the cause of every other good’s goodness, Aristotle’s argument would be this:

(1) *Eudaimonia*, the best practicable good, is the good itself.

(2*) The good itself is the first of all goods whatsoever and the cause of all other goods’ goodness by means of presence.

(3) The *telos* of the practicable goods is the first of the practicable goods and the cause of the other practicable goods’ goodness.

So, (4) the *telos* of the practicable goods is the good itself. [(2*) and (3)]

Thus, (Claim A) *eudaimonia*, the best practicable good is the *telos* of the practicable goods. [(1) and (4)]

This argument is clearly invalid: (4) does not follow from (2*) and (3).

Key to my interpretation, then, is that the Platonists and Aristotle agree on the concept of the good itself. It is what is expressed in (2). This is why I argue that the relevant domain of goods throughout is restricted to the practicable goods, and why the presence condition is not strictly a feature of the good itself, but a consequence of how the good itself would operate in the Platonists’ picture. The disagreement between them lies simply in what thing is to be identified as the good itself.

One might challenge this thought. Perhaps the argumentative arc of I.8 instead goes like this. The Platonists have a notion of the good itself as expressed in (2*). Aristotle denies that the good itself, so understood, exists at all. Instead, he has an alternative conception of the good itself which is expressed by claim (2). This conception is in the neighborhood of the Platonists’ concept and hence merits the name ‘the good itself’. This reading of I.8 would give Aristotle a valid argument for his conclusion but also allow the Platonists to say that the good itself is the first of all goods whatsoever and *per se* causes by means of presence.
My reservation about this reading is that Aristotle gives us no clue that he means to repudiate the Platonists’ conception of the good itself. His criticisms in EE I.8 are directed towards possible candidates for what satisfies this concept (the Idea of the Good, the One, the common good), rather than whether it’s a good concept in the first place. Indeed, just before introducing his own candidate for the good itself, he denies that the Idea of the Good and the common good are “the good itself being sought for” (*to zētoumenon auto to agathon*, 1218b7-8). The phrase ‘being sought for’ suggests that when Aristotle introduces his own candidate for the good itself just a few lines later, he is introducing it as something that the Platonists should recognize as answering to their own concept. Since he then uses what appear to be the very same criteria that the Platonists use to identify the good itself, the simple, straightforward reading should be favored. He borrows the Platonists’ concept and proposes a new candidate for what satisfies it.

II. Premises (1) and (2)

*a. Aristotle’s Reason for Accepting (1) and (2)*

For the remainder of this chapter I shall discuss why Aristotle accepts the premises of his argument and what they mean. As we saw, (4) is a consequence of premises (2) and (3). The conclusion of the argument, (Claim A), results from (1) and (4). Thus, I shall focus on premises (1)-(3), since they are not consequences of any premise in the argument itself.

I shall begin with claims (1) and (2). Recall that these are:

(1) *Eudaimonia*, the best practicable good, is the good itself.

(2) The good itself is the first of the practicable goods and the cause of the other practicable goods’ goodness.

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30 At 1218a33 Aristotle denies that *auto ti agathon* exists. I take the *ti* here to qualify the good itself whose existence Aristotle is denying: “So then, there is not a good itself of a sort.” The relevant sort is the good itself of the kind the Platonists suggested—an Idea, say, or the One.
On my view, we can make short work of why Aristotle holds (2). In the mouths of the Platonists, of course, phrases of the form “the F itself” have connotations of, say, being F and in no way not-F; or being F per se, as opposed to being F in virtue of something else. One might even go so far as to think of this simply as another name for the Form of F. But Aristotle searches for “the good itself” in I.8 and identifies this as the telos of practicable goods. For this reason, something being “the good itself” should not have any implications that Aristotle himself would object to. Indeed, given that we know nothing about the good itself beyond the fact that it is the first practicable good and the cause of the other practicable goods’ goodness, this would seem to be precisely what the good itself amounts to in EE I.8. Premise (2), in other words, explains what “the good itself” is in the context of this argument.

Premise (1), by contrast, is a substantive thesis. This claim effectively says that the best practicable good—the practicable good that has the most goodness, or is better than any other practicable good—is prior to all of the other practicable goods and the cause of their goodness. Why should Aristotle think this?

My answer is that the methodology that he employs in the EE allows him to rely on reputable opinions (endoxa) in his argument. The Platonists are wise people who assert (1) and (2). Aristotle finds nothing wrong with these claims. Given this, he has reason to accept them.

In his description of his Eudemian methodology, Aristotle says that “we must try…to seek conviction through arguments, making use of phainomena as testimony and as examples” (EE I.6, 1216b26-28). Unsurprisingly, Aristotle aims to persuade by means of rational arguments. More interesting for our purposes is his claim he will make use of phainomena, i.e. “things that appear.”

Phainomena, as I understand them, are things that seem or appear to be true. As such, there is, we might say, “something to them,” and they have a claim to be taken seriously. Of
course, *phainomena* are hardly flawless: many *phainomena* prove to be false or at least a gross misrepresentation of what is true. *Phainomena* can and should be scrutinized. But absent reasons to doubt them, it seems sensible to take the *phainomena* on board. In the coming chapters and books, then, Aristotle will make use of things that seem true by considering them and, in some cases, accepting them.

Aristotle does not say here what counts as *phainomena*. But in another, infamous methodological passage, the scope of *phainomena* is broad enough to include *endoxa*, or reputable opinions.\(^3\) Near the end of NE VII.1/EE VI.1, Aristotle says that

> it’s necessary…to set out the *phainomena* and, having puzzled through them first, most of all to prove all of the *endoxa* about these affections—but if not that, the most and most authoritative [*endoxa*]. For if the difficulties are resolved and the *endoxa* remain standing, sufficient proof will have been given. (1145b2-7)

Aristotle begins by saying that *phainomena* are to be “set out” or “put down” (*tithentas*). At the end of this passage, it is *endoxa* which are said to be left standing (*kataleipētai*). This strongly suggests that *endoxa* number among the *phainomena* that were set out or put down at the beginning of the process he describes here.\(^3\) This is confirmed by the fact that at least some of the appearances laid down right after this passage are in fact *endoxa*.\(^3\)

That *endoxa* are among the *phainomena* Aristotle has in mind in EE I.6 is also confirmed by his characterization of *endoxa* in the *Topics*. There, *endoxa* are characterized in the following way:

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\(^3\) To be clear, I am not suggesting that the methods being described in the two passages are the same. Rather, I simply mean to claim that the NE VII.1/EE VI.1 methodological passage indicates that Aristotle is happy to count *endoxa* among *phainomena* when he refers to *phainomena* in descriptions of his method.

\(^3\) I do not make the stronger claim, endorsed by Owen, “‘Tithenai ta phainomena,’” 240-241 in LSD; and Barnes 1980, 490 that *phainomena* here are co-extensive with *endoxa*. Barnes 1980, 506, and Zingano 2007, 303-305 carry this view over to the EE I.6 methodological passage. But Karbowsk 2015, 212-213 makes a good case that other things besides *endoxa* number among EE I.6’s *phainomena*.

\(^3\) Cooper 2009, 25-26.
Endoxa are the things that seem true (ta dokounta) to everyone, or to the majority, or to the wise, and to these, either to all [of the wise], or to the majority, or to the most well-known and reputable. (I.1, 100b21-23)

Endoxa, then, are a fairly wide class of things that seem true to various groups of people or, in the case of eminently wise people, individuals. So characterized, endoxa are clearly among the phainomena Aristotle uses in the EE according to his method. After the Eudemian ergon argument, Aristotle says that “the things that seem true to all of us serve as testimony [μαρτύρια τὰ δοκοῦντα πᾶσιν ἡμῖν] that we say well the genus and horos of [eudaimonia]” (II.1, 1219a40-b1). Things that seem true to everyone—one of the subcategories of endoxa listed in the Topics—are invoked here as testimony (marturia), one of the two ways in which Aristotle said he would use phainomena in I.6.

Aristotle, then, is happy to make use of endoxa, a type of phainomena, in the course of the EE. This nicely accounts for his presentation of the Platonists’ beliefs at the beginning of I.8. Aristotle says that what the best is appears (phainetai, 1217b2) especially in the three beliefs he goes onto mention. This use of phainetai indicates that Aristotle treats the Platonists’ position as phainomena. In particular, these beliefs would count as endoxa, since Plato and other Platonists are no doubt eminently wise.

As we saw, Aristotle does not claim merely that he will make use of phainomena, but that he will do so as either testimony or as examples. For two reasons we should think that Aristotle invokes the Platonists’ beliefs as an example. First, testimony of the sort referred to in EE I.6 seems mainly to serve as corroboration for claims that are established on independent grounds. This is certainly how the marturia are used after the ergon argument. After Aristotle presents the

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34 Karbowski 2015, 211-212 denies that the individual beliefs of philosophers are among the phainomena Aristotle uses as witnesses and examples in the EE. Indeed, he thinks that the Platonists’ views about the best good are “foil endoxa,” in that they serve as useful contrasts with Aristotle’s view (211, n.47). I hope to have shown that Aristotle accepts at least some of these endoxa.
argument, he provides the *marturia* as further pieces of evidence to bolster the argument’s conclusion. A similar pattern is found in various places where *marturia* are invoked in the scientific works. But Aristotle does not use the Platonists’ beliefs in this way. These beliefs instead supply some important premises for his own argument. They do not corroborate a claim that has been defended on independent grounds. If they are not testimony, then, they must be examples. Second, the Platonists’ beliefs are in fact being used as an example for how to determine what the best good is. If the three beliefs are just [a]-[b], Aristotle follows the Platonists’ example completely, barring the issue of presence I discussed above. If the three beliefs are [a]-[c], Aristotle follows the Platonists’ example only partially, balking at the suggestion that the Idea of the Good is to be identified as the good itself. In either case, Aristotle clearly follows the Platonists’ lead.

*b. Dissatisfaction*

In the EE, then, Aristotle’s reason for accepting (1) and (2) is based on his respect for *endoxa*. (1) and (2) are asserted by people who are wise, and Aristotle offers no reason to doubt these claims. Consequently, he takes them on board. However reasonable this approach to ethical inquiry is, it is philosophically dissatisfying. Are there any reasons for Aristotle to think that the best practicable good is also the first such good and the cause of their goodness besides the fact that the Platonists say so?

It might be thought that just as Aristotle follows the Platonists in endorsing (1) and (2), he could also follow them in their reasons for (1) and (2). This is unlikely.

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35 See, e.g., *Phys.* IV.6, 213b21-22; PA III.4, 666a22-23; GA I.17, 721b28; I.18, 725b4-5; I.19, 727a30-32.
The most straightforward reason for why the Platonists think (1) and (2) seems to be as follows. According to [c] the Idea of the Good is the first practicable good and the cause of goodness. Now, as Plato would have it, the Idea of F is also the most F thing. The many equals “fall short in respect of being this sort, the sort which the Equal Itself is,” i.e. in being equal (*Phd.* 74d6-7). Similarly, “the Beautiful Itself is pure, clean, unmixed” (*Symp.* 211e1) in contrast to the many beautifuls, which are beautiful in some respect but ugly in other respects, or beautiful at one time but ugly at another time, etc. Comparisons between the Ideas and their deficient participants such as these suggest that the Idea of F will be the most F thing. Thus, the Idea of the Good will be the best (practicable) good in addition to being first and playing the relevant causal role.\(^{36}\)

Importantly, as Aristotle sees it for the Platonists this bestness is exhibited among things that have the same property of goodness, or are synonymously good. This is because on his view, it is a Platonist commitment that Ideas of F and the particular F’s are all synonymously F. When Aristotle reports Plato’s belief that the perceptibles derive their name from the Forms, the perceptibles are referred to as “the things synonymous with the Forms” (*Meta*. A.6, 987b9-10).\(^{37}\) Such an assumption is also at play in Aristotle’s presentation of the Platonists’ Argument from Relatives\(^{38}\) and in his own argument that the Platonists are committed to there being Forms only of substances.\(^{39}\) Of course, by the transitivity of synonymy, this implies that the particulars are additionally synonymous with one another. In Aristotle’s eyes, then, for the Platonists there is some one property of goodness exhibited by both the Idea of the Good and all the individual

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\(^{36}\) Aristotle seems to understand the Idea of F to be the most F thing on the Platonists’ view. In EE I.8 this is suggested by 1217b8-9 and 1218a9-15.

\(^{37}\) I follow Primavesi’s text in his 2012, 444.

\(^{38}\) In this argument, the relationship of paradigm and likeness is taken to be a case in which a predicate is predicated “not homonymously, but mak[ing] clear some one nature” (*Peri Ideōn*, 82.11-83.7). Later in the argument, the paradigm-likeness model is applied to the Equal Itself and the particular equals (83.15-17). (On this, see Owen, “A Proof in the *Peri Ideōn*,” 104-105 in LSD; and Fine 1993, 144-149.)

\(^{39}\) *Meta*. A.9, 990b27-991a8 = M.4, 1079a24-b3. For the thought that this argument implies that Aristotle thinks that the Ideas are synonymous with their participants I follow Annas 1976, 158; and 1977, 157-158.
practicable goods. This Idea is the best good in that it exhibits this property more than any other practicable good.

Aristotle, however, cannot accept this picture. As I discussed earlier, Aristotle denies the existence of the Idea of the Good in EE I.8. Because of this, he cannot appeal to the Idea of the Good to tie bestness together with primacy and causing goodness. Furthermore, even if the Idea of the Good did exist, Aristotle could not accept that it exhibits some one, synonymous property of goodness to a greater extent than any other practicable good.

On Aristotle’s view, many goods are homonymously good with one another. Homonyms, according to Aristotle, are things “whose name alone is common, but the account of being in accordance with the name is different” (Cat. 1, 1a1-2). Thus, if A and B are F homonymously, the account of the property in virtue of which we call A ‘F’ and the account of the property in virtue of which we call B ‘F’ differ. The F-ness of A and the F-ness of B are different properties, despite the fact that A and B are called by the same name. Thus, in many cases, two or more practicable goods exhibit different properties of goodness, despite both being called ‘good’.

Aristotle rehearses a version of this thought in EE I.8 when criticizing the utility of the Idea of the Good for action and living:

40 Could a Platonist justify (1) and (2) simply from the nature of causation and priority alone, without having to appeal to the Idea of F? Suppose, for example, that the Platonists maintain a strong version of the Transmission Theory of causation, according to which x is a cause of y’s being F only if x is more F than y. If they maintained this view independently of the fact that x is a Form, they might be able to infer (1) simply from (2).

But it is unclear that the Platonists—or, indeed, the Platonists as Aristotle saw them—allow for this move. The Transmission Theory is often discussed in connection with the Phaedo, where some scholars detect the beginnings of the strong version. (E.g. Annas 1982, 316-317.) But Plato does not adopt the strong version of the Transmission Theory independently of the Forms there. The closest he comes is in his claims that the cause of something’s being F can’t be the opposite of F: “and this indeed is monstrous (teras), viz. that something is big because of something small” (101a9-b1). Perhaps one can glean from this that the only thing that can cause something to be F is something that is itself F. But this falls short of the idea that the cause must be more F than the effect.

41 I do not take a stance on whether two things being homonymously F implies that there is a multiplicity of senses of the word ‘F’ (as defended generally by Shields, 1999; and in the context of NE and EE arguments for the homonymy of goodness by Ackrill 1997a and Woods 1992, 65); or rather a multiplicity of essences signified by the word ‘F’ (as defended generally by Irwin 1981 and in the context of the NE and EE arguments by MacDonald 1989).
For good is said in many ways and in as many ways as being is said. For being, just as has been distinguished elsewhere, signifies what it is, and quality, and quantity, and when, and, additionally, what consists in being changed and what consists in changing. And the good is in each of these categories: in substance, intelligence and god; in quality, the just; in quantity, the measured; in when, the right moment; and teaching and being taught regard change. Just as, then, regarding the things that have been mentioned being is not some one thing, nor is good. (1217b25-34)

The goodness that a member of one category of being has is not the same property of goodness that beings in any other category have. A good state of the soul—virtue, or a particular virtue—exhibits a different form of goodness than does, say, a virtuous activity, or the opportune moment at which to do something. Because of this, no good can be the best in that it exhibits some one property, goodness, more than all the other practicable goods exhibit it.42

c. Satisfaction

The foundation for a more promising Aristotelian justification of (1) and (2) can be found in a passage from the Protrepticus. There, Aristotle offers a way in which comparisons can be made even among things that are homonymously F. He moreover correlates being more F, priority, and causation in a way that would explain his endorsement of (1) and (2). Additionally, this passage also clarifies the kind of priority at issue in EE I.8.

The passage runs as follows:

Whenever, then, the same thing is said in respect of each of two things, and the one is said either because of acting or because of being acted upon, we assign the thing said belonging to this more. For example, the one making use [of their knowledge] knows more than the one who possess knowledge, and the one applying their sight sees [more] than the one capable of applying [their sight]. For we do not say ‘more’

42 Interestingly, Aristotle himself sometimes seems to claim that two things must be synonymously F in order for them to be compared in their F-ness. In Physics VII.4, for example, Aristotle claims that “as many things as are not synonymous, all these are incomparable (asumbliēta)” (248b6-7). More perspicuously, if two things are not synonymously F, they are incomparable to one another with respect to their F-ness. The contrapositive of this is that if two things are comparable to one another with respect to their F-ness, they are synonymously F. For discussion of the problems this poses for Aristotle’s interest in comparing goods, see Shields 2015.
only in accordance with the excess of things of which the account is one, but also in accordance with one thing being prior and the other posterior. E.g. we say that health is more good than healthy things, and that the thing choiceworthy in respect of its own nature is more good than the productive thing. Yet we see that it is not because the (ton ge) account is predicated of both that each thing is good in the case of the beneficial things and virtue. And consequently the person who is awake must be said to be more living than the sleeping person, and the person exercising his soul more living than the one who merely has it. For we say that this one lives too on account of (dia) that one, since he is such as to act or be acted upon, like that one. (Düring, B81-83)

This passage comes from a section of the Protrepticus in which Aristotle is keen to claim that a person who is awake is more living, or more alive, than someone who is asleep. But Aristotle faces a problem. On his view, the awake person and the asleep person are not alive synonymously. The former is alive in that they are exercising certain soul capacities, while the latter is alive in that they are capable of doing so. Because of this, one might think, no comparison between the two can be made in terms of which is more alive or living.

Not so. Aristotle denies that synonymy is required for comparisons to be made. ‘More’ is said not only when two things are F synonymously, with one of them exhibiting F-ness to a greater degree. ‘More’ is also said “in accordance with one thing being prior and the other posterior.” As his examples of health and healthy things, and virtue and beneficial things indicate, this second form of comparison does not require synonymy: “the account,” i.e. the same account of the predicate ‘good’, does not apply to health and to the healthy things, nor to virtue and things beneficial for virtue. Instead, these goods are comparable because of some sort of priority and posteriority that obtains between them. Similarly, Aristotle continues, the awake person really is more alive than the sleeping person despite the fact that they are not alive synonymously.  

43 Owen, “Logic and Metaphysics in Some Earlier Works of Aristotle,” 183-184 in LSD; and de Strycker 1968, 608-610 argue that Aristotle distinguishes different senses of ‘mallon’ in B81-83. When comparing things with respect to a univocal property, ‘mallon’ means “more.” When comparing things in respect of a homonymous property, it means “rather” (de Strycker) or “in a stricter sense” (Owen). I follow Morrison 1987, 397-401 in thinking that Aristotle’s
That comparisons are made in accordance with priority and posteriority suggests a picture on which things that are F (not necessarily synonymously) fall into a ranking of some sort, with things higher in the ranking being more F than things lower in the ranking. The active knower comes "before" the merely capable knower in the ranking of knowers, and hence is more of a knower. Virtue comes "before" things beneficial to virtue in the ranking of goods, and hence is more good. The end of this passage gives us a clue as to how this ranking is established. In the case of living, the awake person is first identified as living. It is then on account of that person that the sleeping person is said to live. In particular, it is on account of the fact that the sleeping person is capable of doing what the awake person actually does that the sleeping person is said to be alive. Aristotle seems to suggest that among living things the awake person is prior to the sleeping person in that the awake person serves as the explanatory item for why the sleeping person is alive.

Aristotle indicates that causation can serve as the grounds for a priority ordering in his discussion of priority in Categories 12. Among the various sorts of priority Aristotle identifies in this chapter is the following:

For with things reciprocating in respect of the implication of being the cause in some way of being for the other would reasonably be called prior in nature. And that there are some things of this sort is clear. For [the fact] that a human being is

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44 For this interpretation of 'mallon' understood in terms of an ordering, see Morrison 1987, 383-384; and Pakaluk 1992, 118-121. Pakaluk applies this to our Protrepticus passage at 123.

45 Cf. Protrepticus B80: "The awake person must be said to live truly and strictly, while the sleeping person [must be said to live] on account of being capable of transitioning into that change in virtue of which we say that someone is awake and perceiving something." Two points are worth noting about this passage: (i) The awake person is said to live truly and strictly. This seems to suggest that there is nothing further in virtue of which the awake person is said to live. They are the "base case" of living, so to speak. But I don’t take being the base case to be necessary for being causally prior to something else. (ii) The object of dia at B80.5 is not the awake person but “being capable of transitioning into the change that the awake person undergoes in virtue of their living.” This indicates some flexibility on Aristotle’s part for how explanations work: sometimes an explanandum is explained “on account of” simply an explanatory item, while in other cases it is explained “on account of” the explanatory item plus other information.

46 Corkum 2008, 75; Beere 2009, 298-299; Peramatizis 2011, 241-243; and Katz 2017, 37, along with n.34 all take Cat. 12, 14b11-22 as evidence that Aristotle recognizes causal priority as a kind of priority.
reciprocates in respect of the implication of being with the true statement about him. For if a human being is, the statement is true by which we say that a human being is. And it reciprocates— for if the statement is true by which we say a human being is, a human being is. But the true account is in no way a cause of the thing’s being, yet the thing appears to be in some way a cause of the statement being true. For it is by the thing being or not that the statement is either said truly or falsely. (14b11-22)

If one thing is the cause of being for another, that thing is prior to the other. Thus, in Aristotle’s example, the human being is prior to the statement in that the human being is the cause of the statement’s being true. The statement “a human being exists” is true because the human being exists. Of course, in this example, the “being” caused by the human being is arguably different from the being at issue in the Protrepticus examples. In the Protrepticus, being good or being alive are the sorts of being that are effected. Here, by contrast, the being at issue is being true. But this is surely just an artifact of Aristotle’s example. Abstracting from this case, we see that one thing can be prior to another in that the former is the cause of the latter’s being.47

This form of priority also makes sense of the other examples in the Protrepticus passage. Virtue is good, as are things beneficial for virtue. But virtue is also precisely the thing that explains why, say, this educational process is good. Because this bit of moral training promotes virtue, a good thing, we deem it good. Similarly, this or that medical regimen is good because it leads to health, a good thing. In both of these cases, the things that are more good are also things that are causally prior to the items that are less good. Causal priority applies equally well to Aristotle’s rather odd case of knowledge. The person who knows the Pythagorean theorem more is causally

47 Must we add that the two things in question also reciprocate in being? Aristotle mentions this in his characterization of causal priority, but it is unclear whether this is required for causal priority to obtain. He might add this condition simply to draw our attention to clear cases in which such priority obtains. Things that do not reciprocate in being could instead (or additionally) be cases of the second form of priority Aristotle mentions in Cat. 12 (14a29-35). Consequently, they are not the best examples to use for illustrating causal priority. Nevertheless, if reciprocity of being is required for causal priority to obtain, it is plausible that this condition is met among things that are good. Facts about what is good, after all, seem to be necessary facts. And if these facts are necessary, entities that are good would trivially reciprocate in being good.
prior to the person who is merely capable of actively thinking about the theorem, since the latter is said to know in virtue of the fact that he is able to do what the former actually does.\textsuperscript{48}

Aristotle, then, allows for comparisons to be made among things that are homonymously F, provided that a causal priority ranking obtains among them. With two further observations, we can see that this view offers an attractive explanation for why Aristotle endorses (1) and (2).

The first observation is that the second use of ‘more’ can be extended to a second use of ‘most’. Given that Aristotle cashes out being more F in terms of causal priority, he can also cash out being most F along the same lines. To be the most F among some set of F things is to be more F than all other F’s in that set. Thus, something can be the most F among some not necessarily synonymously F things when it is causally prior to all the other F’s.

The second observation is that comparative and superlative forms of adjectives should operate just as ‘more F’ and ‘most F’ operate. Strictly, Aristotle speaks only of something being “more good” in the Protrepticus passage. But he presumably means for his observations about how ‘more good’ works to apply just as well to ‘better’. After all, to say that one thing is better than another is an alternative way of saying that one thing is more good than another. Similarly, to say that something is the best is just to say that it is the most good. Just as more and most F, then, can be said in accordance with priority and posteriority, so too should comparative and superlative adjectives.

The best practicable good, then, is also the first of the practicable goods and the cause of their goodness in EE I.8 because of Aristotle’s view of how homonymously good things are

\textsuperscript{48} Owen, “Logic and Metaphysics,” 195 in LSD; and Robinson 1971, 188-189 take the second form of comparison in B81-83 to involve core dependent homonyms. E.g. the account of the goodness of things that are beneficial to virtue will refer to (the account of) virtue, but not vice-versa. Relatedly, these commentators take the priority at issue in the second form of comparison to be (at least in part) definitional priority. While the Protrepticus passage could well be consistent with this thought, I hesitate to say that Aristotle specifically has core dependent homonyms in mind—at any rate, nothing in this passage forces us to think so.
compared. Among homonymous goods, being best is simply a matter of being the first good in the causal ranking. The best good just is that good which serves as the cause for the goodness of the other practicable goods. And in playing this causal role, this good also has a claim to being first among these goods.49

*d. Priority in EE I.8*

It is important for my view that Aristotle has causal priority in mind in EE I.8 when he says that the best practicable good is the first good. In truth, Aristotle says little about the kind of priority that the best good exhibits in the EE. The reason to think that he has specifically causal priority in mind is that, as we have seen, this form of priority is tied to goodness in just the way he needs in EE I.8.

There are, however, a couple of details regarding priority in EE I.8 that need to be addressed, since they might seem to be obstacles to my interpretation.

The first detail is that Aristotle treats being first among all practicable goods and being the cause of goodness for the other practicable goods as separate properties. They are distinguished in the mouths of the Platonists (1217b3-6), and Aristotle refers to these two properties as “both” in his own voice (1217b6-8). Similarly, they are both listed as properties that the *telos* of practicable goods has (1218b10-11). Yet if being first among the practicable goods is a matter of being at the top of a causal ranking, one might wonder how distinct these properties really are.

Although closely related, these properties are at least intensionally different. It’s one thing to be the cause of goodness for the other practicable goods. It’s another thing to appear at the top

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49 The second use of ‘more’ in the *Protrepticus* might also be on display elsewhere in Aristotle. See, e.g., *APo*. I.2, 72a29-30; *Meta*. A.2, 982b2-4; and *Meta*. a.1, 993b24-26. For discussion of the first and third passage, see Lloyd 1976, 149-151.
of a causal ranking of the practicable goods. The former property consists in being the cause of
the goodness for practicable good 1, and for practicable good 2, and so on. The latter property
consists in being neither causally on a par with nor beneath any other practicable good. This
intensional difference is sufficient for Aristotle to treat these as distinct properties. That said, he
seems to recognize their logical proximity. While he provides an argument for the claim that the
telos of practicable goods is the cause of goodness, he offers no independent argument for the
claim that it is the first of goods.\textsuperscript{50} This makes sense if, although distinct properties, one can infer
the telos being first from it being the cause of goodness.

The second detail is this. Recall that it is the Platonists who initially say that the good itself
is first among the practicable goods. This claim should cohere with the other claims that the
Platonists make about this good’s being first. Among these claims is the following:

And [the Idea of the Good] is the first of goods. For with the thing being
participated in being taken away, the things participating in the Idea are also taken
away, things which are called [sc. good] in virtue of participating in that, and the
first stands in this way in relation to the posterior. (1217b11-13)

Some commentators take this passage as evidence that for the Platonists, the good itself is first
among goods in that it is existentially prior to all the other goods.\textsuperscript{51} The Platonists argue that the
Idea of the Good is first among goods in that the Idea can exist without any other practicable good
existing, but not vice versa. This seems to imply that the firstness of the good itself is a matter of
existential primacy. But that is different from causal primacy.

That said, this passage seems just as well suited for justifying the firstness of the Idea of
the Good along the lines I have suggested. In this passage, Aristotle emphasizes the fact that the

\textsuperscript{50} Woods 1992, 82 and Simpson 2013, 228 suggest that 1218b22-24 might be Aristotle’s argument that the telos of
practicable goods is first. The eti at 1218b22 makes this unlikely, however. These lines instead seem to supplement
Aristotle’s argument that the telos is the cause of goodness.

\textsuperscript{51} Fine 1984, 38; Peramatzis 2011, 214-215.
Idea is the cause of the goodness of the participants (“things which are called [sc. good] in virtue of participating in that”). Aristotle is pointing out that if one takes this cause away, all the other good things are removed. No good participant remains. The Idea, then, is at the top of the causal order of the practicable goods. 52 1217b11-13, then, also makes sense as an argument for the causal primacy of the Idea of the Good. 53

As I see it, there are no obstacles to understanding the priority that the good itself exhibits in EE I.8 as causal priority. And since there is good reason to do so, we should. 54

e. Homonymy in EE I.8

Another potential obstacle for my reading concerns the extent to which goodness is homonymous in EE I.8. When Aristotle argues for this at 1217b25-34, he has specifically trans-categorical homonymy in mind. In other words, the goodness of something in one category of being will be homonymous with the goodness of things in any other category. Now, I have suggested that Aristotle can tie being the best practicable good to being prior to, and the cause of the goodness of, all other practicable goods by way of Protrepticus-style comparison. Mere trans-categorical homonymy, however, limits this solution.

One clear way to see this is as follows. Suppose that the best good, eudaimonia, falls in the category of doing. 55 Given the trans-categorical homonymy of goodness, it follows that the

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52 Would Aristotle also need to point out that if the participants are taken away, the Idea of the Good is not taken away? I don’t think so: since the Idea is a cause, this asymmetry is presumably already assumed.

53 In fact, there is good reason to think that being first should not be understood in existential terms in EE I.8. As I have suggested, we need to understand the Platonists’ [a] and [b] in such a way that Aristotle can accept them and use them for his own argument. But the telos of practicable goods is not existentially prior to all other practicable goods. Other practicable goods would be good even if no eudaimonia existed.

54 Berti 1971 and Robinson 1971 both take the priority at issue in EE I.8 to be (at least in part) priority in definition. Similar to my hesitation in reading this into our Protrepticus passage, I am also hesitant to detect this form of priority in EE I.8. Perhaps there is nothing inconsistent in EE I.8 with this proposal, but I don’t see much evidence for it.

55 This is presumably the category referred to as to en tō(i) kinein at 1217b29.
best good is homonymously good with all other practicable goods in all the other categories. And given *Protrepticus*-style comparability, it would follow that the best good is indeed prior to and the cause of goodness for all these other goods outside the category of doing. It does not follow from this, however, that the best good is prior to and the cause of goodness for *all* other practicable goods. Nothing has been said about how the best good relates to other goods in *its own* category. By hypothesis, the best good is better than the other doings. But for all that has been said, the best good might be synonymously good with them. If so, *Protrepticus*-style comparability does not entail that the best good is causally prior to the other practicable goods in the category of doing.

Indeed, this issue is a special case of a more general problem. If *Protrepticus*-style comparability is to justify (1) and (2), the best good needs to be homonymous with every other practicable good. Otherwise, Aristotle would need to supplement his view with some further claims about how priority and causation arise even in those cases where two goods are synonymously good.

I can offer only a partial response to this problem. In EE I.8 Aristotle endorses the idea that goodness is just as homonymous as being is. But elsewhere he suggests that being is homonymous even within each category, and quite fine-grained. There are, then, hints—but hints only—of just the thought needed to resolve this issue.

In EE I.8, Aristotle claims that good is said in as many ways as being is said (1217b26). He then points out that being signifies the various categories (1217b26-29). The categories, however, needn’t be the only ways in which being is spoken of. Aristotle’s argument in EE I.8 does not demand this. His aim is to show that, like being, goodness is not “some one thing,” contrary to what the Platonists think (1217b33-34). It is sufficient for showing this to point out some different ways in which being and, hence, goodness is spoken of. Even if Aristotle doesn’t
list all of the ways in which being is said, his argument still goes through. The proper lesson to
draw from EE I.8 is that goodness is spoken of in as many ways as being is spoken of; and that
being is spoken of in at least as many ways as there are categories of being.

Now, Aristotle nowhere comes out and says that being is said in more ways than there are
categories. But a passage in *Metaphysics* H.2 strongly suggests that this is so (1042b11-31). In
this passage, Aristotle is contending with Democritus. When it comes to material objects,
Democritus seemed to hold that there are just three differentiae. But in fact, says Aristotle, there
are many. Having listed several examples of the many differentiae, Aristotle then says, “Hence,
it is clear that ‘is’ (*to esti*) is said in so many ways. For a threshold is because it lies thus, and its
being signifies it (*auto*)56 lying thus, and being ice signifies [something] having been frozen thus”
(1042b25-28). Here, the many ways in which being is said are not correlated with the categories.
Instead, they correspond simply with different kinds of things. Being57 is said differently for a
threshold and for ice, as well as for lintels, breakfast, books, etc. The homonymy of being here
tracks different, definable kinds.58

In this passage, Aristotle is focused on material objects, and mainly artifacts—substances,
or quasi-substances (depending on one’s views about the status of artifacts in Aristotle). But there
is no reason for this line of thought to be limited to differences of being among substances. The
point seems applicable to non-substances as well: where there is a difference in a definable kind,59

56 The referent of *auto* is controversial. It might refer to the threshold or, instead, to the matter that composes the
threshold. I have tried to remain neutral on this question.
57 The being at issue in this passage, as well as in the doctrine of the homonymy of being more generally, has been
debated. Some (Owen, “Aristotle on the Snares,” 76 in LSD; Bostock 1994, 255-257; Matthews 1995) take it to be
existence. Others (Lewis 2004, 26-28) take it to be predicate being, or being what one is. It is not crucial for my
purposes which of these views is right. The important thing is that being (whatever it is) is homonymous in the fine-
grained way H.2 suggests.
58 Though there are substantial differences in detail, this view is maintained by Owen, “Snares,” 76-78; Bostock 1994,
59 Note the *horisthētai* at 1042b29.
a difference in being emerges. If Aristotle is prepared to distinguish between the being for a threshold and ice, he should be equally prepared to distinguish between the being for a moment in surgery and the being for a moment in battle.\textsuperscript{60}

Being, then, proves to be much more homonymous. And since goodness is as homonymous as being is, goodness too will be homonymous with respect to all the different definable kinds of being. The goodness of a threshold will be homonymous with the goodness of ice; the right moment in surgery will be homonymously good with the right moment in battle.\textsuperscript{61}

If this is Aristotle’s view, justifying (1) and (2) by way of Protrepticus-style comparability seems viable. In response to my particular worry about intra-categorical comparison, Aristotle can avail himself of intra-categorical homonymy. Even if two goods fall in the same category of being, they can nevertheless be homonymously good. Thus, the best good is guaranteed to be causally prior to other goods in its own category.

My more general worry is also somewhat allayed, though a full response is beyond the scope of this chapter. Suppose that goodness is distinguished in a corresponding way as kinds of beings are distinguished. That is, suppose that $x$ and $y$ are homonymously good just in case $x$ and $y$ are goods whose being differs. If this is right, the best good, it seems, is homonymously good with all other practicable goods. The only practicable good which fails to be homonymously good with the best good is a practicable good which doesn’t differ in being from the best good. But this would just be the best good. The radical homonymy of being and goodness, then, could plausibly ensure that the best good really is homonymously good with every other practicable good.

\textsuperscript{60} Owen, Ackrill, and Matthews also seem to accept that the H.2 view extends beyond the category of substance.

\textsuperscript{61} Ackrill 1997a, 209-210. I follow him in using H.2 to argue for a fine-grained picture of the homonymy of goodness.
Aristotle’s endorsement merely of trans-categorical homonymy of goodness in EE I.8, then, does not block him from accepting stronger forms of homonymy that are needed for my reading.

III. Premise (3)

a. Aristotle’s Argument for (3)

In the previous section, I considered Aristotle’s official justification for premises (1) and (2), viz. that the Platonists assert these claims. I additionally argued that there is an independent Aristotelian justification for these claims which coheres with what is said in EE I.8. I shall now turn to Aristotle’s reason for premise (3).

Recall that this premise was:

(3) The \textit{telos} of the practicable goods is the first of the practicable goods and the cause of the other practicable goods’ goodness.

In (3) Aristotle refers to the “\textit{telos} of the practicable goods.” He does not explain what this is or try to justify its existence in EE I.8. Instead, he assumes that his audience is familiar with it and believes in its existence. This \textit{telos} is the “aim” or “end” that all other practicable goods have. Of course, the various practicable goods have other diverse aims too. A good house, for example, has the aim or end of keeping its occupants and their possessions secure, while a good medical procedure aims at health. But security and health are not their only ends. For we may ask, “What’s the point of being safe and secure?” or “What’s the point of being healthy?” and receive some further answer. It is Aristotle’s view that every chain of aims or ends of the practicable goods will bottom out in some one good, viz. the \textit{telos} of the practicable goods. This good is consequently the end at which all other practicable goods aim.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{62} This conception of the \textit{telos} of practicable goods is articulated in NE I.1-2, but I shall not defend this claim here.
Premise (3) claims of this entity that it is the first of the practicable goods and the cause of the other practicable goods’ goodness. As I mentioned earlier, Aristotle offers no independent argument for the primacy of the telos of the practicable goods. He seems to think that arguing that this telos is the cause of goodness suffices to show that it is also first.

Aristotle’s argument for premise (3), then, runs as follows:

And that the telos is the cause for the things under it teaching makes clear. For having demarcated (horisamenoi) the telos they show that each of the other things is good. For the “that for the sake of which” is the cause. E.g. since being healthy is this, it is necessary that this is the beneficial thing for it [i.e. health]. And the healthy thing is the cause of health as a mover, and in this case (tote) the cause of health existing but not of health being good. Further, nobody even shows that health is good, unless they’re a sophist and not a doctor… (1218b16-23)

This is a general argument about telē and the things “under them,” i.e. the goods that are for their sake. Indeed, Aristotle illustrates his point with an example in which health is the telos of interest. Clearly, as an argument for (3) this general line of thought is meant to apply in particular to the telos of all practicable goods.

To argue that the telos of a set of goods is the cause of their goodness, Aristotle appeals to the practice of teaching someone that the things under the telos are good. A teacher demarcates the telos and then shows, or explains (deiknuousin), that the things which are for its sake are good. Such a lesson counts as explaining why other things are good because “the ‘that for the sake of which’ is the cause.” It is because the telos is an explanatory item that such teaching can occur. Importantly, the teacher does not merely prove that the things under the telos are good, but also explains why they are good. If the teaching Aristotle envisions merely showed that the things

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63 An alternative translation of 1218b19-20 is “it is necessary that this exists, viz. the thing beneficial for it [i.e. health].” On this reading, to sumpheron pros autēn is in apposition to tote, rather than the predicate of tote. This reading is grammatically possible, but I think it is mistaken. 1218b19-20 is supposed to be an example of the teacher’s procedure of first defining the telos and then showing that something is good. But on this alternative reading, the teacher does not show that “this” is good. She shows instead that “this” must exist.
under the *telos* are good without showing why this is so, his appeal to teaching would not show that the *telos* is a cause.

As it stands, Aristotle’s argument goes some way towards defending premise (3). Consider how the medical example goes. Health is taken to be a good thing. It is then because “this” (a medical procedure, say, or a diet) bears some connection to health that this is also good. Similarly, the thought must be, the *telos* of practicable goods is a good thing, and it is on the basis of bearing some connection to this *telos* that all other practicable goods are good.

That said, there are also some oddities in the argument that are themselves in need of explanation. First, Aristotle notes that part of the explanation of goodness involves demarcating the *telos*. Second, although we know that the *telos*, given that it’s a *telos*, ought to be invoked as a final cause in the explanation for something’s goodness, Aristotle doesn’t actually make it clear how this is done. And third, the conclusion of the explanation in the medical example is different from what we expect. One would think that the conclusion should be, “This is good.” Instead the conclusion is, “This is the beneficial thing for health,” or, more simply, “This is beneficial for health.”

A similar passage in *APo*. II.11 sheds some light on these oddities. In this chapter, Aristotle illustrates how it is that each of the four causes serves as a middle term in demonstrations. His illustration for the case of the final cause runs as follows:

Of as many things whose cause is the “that for the sake of which”—e.g. why does one walk around? In order that he may be healthy. Why does a house exist? In order that his possessions may be preserved. The former is for the sake of being healthy, the latter for the sake of things being preserved. And why he ought to walk around after dinner and for the sake of which he ought [to walk around after dinner] differ in no way. A walk after dinner C, food not floating at the surface B, being healthy A. Let causing food not to float at the mouth of the stomach inhere (*huparchon*) in walking after dinner, and let this be healthy. For it seems that food

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64 Fortenbaugh, 1966, 192-193 also draws upon *APo*. II.11 to make sense of Aristotle’s discussion of final causation in EE I.8. Our readings of both passages are quite different, however.
not floating, B, inheres in walking, C, and A, the healthy thing, inheres in this. What is the cause, the “that for the sake of which,” of A inhering in C? B, the food not floating. And this is, as it were (hōsper), an account of that. For A will have been explained (apodothēsetai) thus. (94b8-20)

Aristotle begins by asking “Why does one walk around?” and “Why does a house exist?” These are questions about (good) things existing or (good) events happening. But at 94b11-12, Aristotle asks a different kind of question: “Why ought one to walk after dinner?” and “For the sake of what ought one to walk after dinner?” The explananda in these questions are normative: the questions do not ask why something exists or happens, but rather why something ought to be the case.

It is to these normative questions that the example syllogism responds. On a first pass, the syllogism is:

(i) Food not floating at the mouth of the stomach inheres in walking after dinner.
(ii) Being healthy inheres in food not floating at the mouth of the stomach.
(iii) Being healthy inheres in walking after dinner.

These inherence relations can be unpacked to construct an argument similar to the medical example in EE I.8. As Aristotle notes, the B-term, food not floating at the mouth of the stomach, is “as it were” an account of the A-term, being healthy. Thus, (ii) is a quasi-definitional claim in which a good thing, health, is described in some contentful way. Interestingly, Aristotle does not go so far as to say that the B-term actually defines being health; instead, it is merely “as it were” an

On this point, my reading departs from the usual understanding of what the example syllogism is meant to explain. Commentators usually understand the syllogism to explain why someone walks. This interpretation, however, renders the example syllogism confused: the middle term for the explanation for why Socrates walks is health, but health is the major term, rather than the middle term, of the example syllogism. (See Barnes 1993, 229; Detel 1997, 65-66.) Leunissen 2007 tries to solve this problem by denying that the example syllogism is an example of a syllogism in which a final cause serves as the middle term. One virtue of my interpretation is that the syllogism is such an example. I take “health” here not to be general bodily health, but a more specific form of health, such as “digestive health.” “Food not floating at the top of the stomach” could plausibly be an account of digestive health; it certainly isn’t a plausible account of general bodily health.
account of being healthy in this particular case. Since this syllogism is supposed to be an
illustration of final causation, the inherence relation in (i) should be replaced with a “for the sake
of” relation. Aristotle is explicit that the B-term is a final cause: “What is the cause, the ‘that for
the sake of which’, of A inhering in C? B, the food not floating” (94b18-19; emphasis added).67

Properly unpacked, Aristotle’s example syllogism is:

(i*) Walking after dinner is for the sake of food not floating at the mouth of the
stomach.

(ii*) Health ≈_{def} food not floating at the mouth of the stomach.

(iii*) Walking after dinner is for the sake of health.

Just as in EE I.8, walking (a medical good chosen for the sake of example) is said to bear a relation
to health in the conclusion of the syllogism.68 Additionally, (ii*) demarcates, or gives an account
“as it were” of health, the good thing that walking is for the sake of.

This parallel text in the *APo*. helps make sense of the oddities I highlighted earlier. Here
too, Aristotle demarcates the telos of interest, viz. being healthy. This demarcation step is
important because in this form of explanation, the medical good in question (walking after dinner)
bears a “for the sake of” relation to a certain, quasi-*definiens*. Once one additionally sees that this
quasi-*definiens* is the quasi-*definiens* of the telos of interest (health), one can then conclude that
walking is for the sake of this telos.69

Furthermore, as in EE I.8, the conclusion of this syllogism is not strictly the claim that
Aristotle announced he was explaining. The announced *explanandum* was why one ought to walk.

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67 Barnes reads 94b18-19 this way. The alternative is to read *to hou heneka* in apposition to *to A*, as Ross and Leunissen
do. Again, it seems to be a cost of that interpretation that the B-term is not identified as a final cause in the syllogism.
68 One might worry that in EE I.8, the relation that “this” bears to health is that of being beneficial to health, rather
than being for the sake of health. But being beneficial to something can be an instance of being for the sake of
something. In many cases, one thing is for the sake of something else precisely in that it promotes that end.
69 My view about how the B-term counts as a final cause has broad affinity with the view espoused by Peramatzis
2019, 336-338.
But the conclusion of the syllogism is that walking is for the sake of health. This mismatch in both the EE and the APo. suggests that Aristotle means for us to “read off” these explanations the fact that one ought to walk, or the fact that this or that thing is good. In Aristotle’s eyes, the burden of explanation for such normative conclusions really lies in showing that this or that thing is for the sake of something good. Once such explanations are on the table, one can then infer the desired normative conclusions.\textsuperscript{70}

If this is right, explanations of the goodness of all practicable goods other than their telos will take this form:

\[ (\alpha) \text{x is for the sake of blah-blah (e.g. theoretical contemplation; virtuous activity generally).} \]

\[ (\beta) \text{The telos of practicable goods} \approx_{\text{def}} \text{blah-blah.} \]

\[ (\gamma) \text{x is for the sake of the telos of practicable goods.} \]

Explanations of this form explain the goodness of every other practicable good, in that one can infer from this explanation that x is good. And since explanations of goodness take this form, the telos of the practicable goods is the cause of their goodness. For it is in bearing a “for the sake of” relation to this good that the goodness of each practicable good is explained.

\textit{b. Transitivity}

We must confront a consequence of the general nature of the thesis Aristotle uses to support premise (3). Aristotle argues that, in general, the telos of the goods under it causes their goodness.

\textsuperscript{70} This “reading off” could go a couple of ways. It might be that the account of the medical good’s goodness just is “being for the sake of health.” Thus, one would infer “walking after dinner is good” from “walking after dinner is for the sake of health” by replacing the definiens, “being for the sake of health” with “good.” Alternatively, it might be that walking after dinner’s goodness has an account that is not simply the predicate in (iii*). On this view, some further substantive claim linking (iii*) and “walking after dinner is good” is needed. (‘Ought’ claims would presumably have to be read off in this second way.) For my purposes it is unnecessary to favor one of these readings over the other.
To justify premise (3), he applies this claim to the telos of all the other practicable goods. But, as we saw from his medical example, this thesis applies equally to the case of health and the goods that are for its sake. One walks after dinner for the sake of health. Thus, it is health that causes walking after dinner’s goodness. But health is not the telos of the practicable goods.

It seems, then, that Aristotle must say that both health and the telos of the practicable goods explain the goodness of walking after dinner. Does this make sense?

Very briefly, I think the answer is, “Yes.” The telos of practicable goods causes health to be good in the first place. Health, after all, is a practicable good that is other than the telos of practicable goods. Given this, it seems sensible to say that both health and the telos cause the goodness of walking after dinner. For, on this picture, the telos of practicable goods causes the goodness of walking by way of health. The goodness of the telos of the practicable goods first transfers, so to speak, to health. It then further transfers from health to the things that are for the sake of health.

Put differently, Aristotle should allow for final causal relations to be transitive: if A is for the sake of B, and B for the sake of C, then A is for the sake of C. If this is right, it will be true to say both that walking after dinner is for the sake of health (and so has its goodness caused by health) and that it is for the sake of the telos of practicable goods (and so has its goodness caused by that too). Explanations for why something is good that appeal to more “local” ends, then, do not pose a problem for his view.

IV. Two Open Questions; Looking Forward

I have now presented Aristotle’s argument for (Claim A). As we shall see, this claim will prove important to Aristotle’s inquiry into what eudaimonia is going forward. In particular, we shall see
in Chapter Three that Aristotle takes a stance on what the *telos* of practicable goods is. It is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

In closing, I would like to highlight two points that are open as far as the argument in EE I.8 goes. These are the topics of what kind of goodness is caused by the *telos* of practicable goods; and what sorts of relations count as “for the sake of” relations. Both of these will be the topics of Chapter Four.

1. Following Aristotle, I have said throughout that the good itself is the cause of “goodness.” But goodness comes in varieties. One basic distinction in goodness is that between being good “as an end” and being good “as a means.” Aristotle also sometimes employs a threefold division among goods as either fine, pleasant, or advantageous.\(^{71}\) Which form(s) of goodness, then, is *telos* of practicable goods responsible for?

As far as EE I.8 goes, the answer is: any form of goodness which the other practicable goods exhibit. Aristotle nowhere qualifies the forms of goodness caused by their *telos*, nor hints that such qualification is to be made. We should take Aristotle at his word: the *telos* of practicable goods causes the goodness, whatever it may be, of the other practicable goods.

In order to determine what kind(s) of goodness these are, however, we would need to know which goods are “other than” the *telos* of practicable goods. To see why, consider two extreme views one might have about what these other goods are.

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\(^{71}\) This division is more apparent in the NE, e.g. 1104b30-31. But it also seems to be at play in the distinction among different kinds of friendship in EE VII.2 1236a7-15. It is also possibly at play as well in EE I.1, where Aristotle claims that *eudaimonia* is the best, most pleasant, and finest good, as Cooper 1999, 266 suggests.
One might think that the *telos* of practicable goods includes all intrinsic, or finally valuable, goods whatsoever.\(^{72}\) Suppose further that a good is “other than” the *telos* of practicable goods just in case it isn’t the *telos* or a proper part of the *telos*. On this view, no good other than the *telos* of practicable goods would be intrinsically good. Consequently, as far as EE I.8 is concerned, the only forms of goodness that would have to be caused by the *telos* of practicable goods would be forms of instrumental goodness.

Alternatively, according to Intellectualism, the *telos* of practicable goods is just one kind of virtuous activity, viz. theoretical contemplation.\(^{73}\) If this is right, intrinsic goods will number among the goods that are other than the *telos*. Brave and liberal activity, for example, would be both fine and other than the *telos* of practicable goods. Consequently, the fineness of these activities would be explained by them bearing a “for the sake of” relation to this *telos*.

The identity of the *telos* of practicable goods cannot be gleaned from EE I.8 alone. Instead, we must read further on to learn what it is. Because of this, we cannot identify on the basis of just EE I.8 which forms of goodness are caused by the *telos* of the practicable goods. On my account, however, it will turn out that there are goods which are intrinsically good but which are not included in *eudaimonia*. Consequently, Aristotle will need some explanation for how such goodness can be caused.

2. The second important question left open at this point in the EE is what relation(s) count as “for the sake of” relations. As I noted earlier, in the health example Aristotle provides in EE I.8, the

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\(^{72}\) Such a view is defended by Ackrill 1980 and Crisp 1994 about the NE. For want of a better term, I would consider these views to be “Super-Inclusivist.” Super-Inclusivists include in *eudaimonia* everything that Inclusivists as I have defined them include, since Super-Inclusivists too claim that *eudaimonia* includes all forms of virtuous activity. But on their view *eudaimonia* includes more than this, since some intrinsic goods (e.g. honor) are not virtuous activities. (For my characterization of Inclusivism, see Introduction p.8, n.11)

\(^{73}\) This is suggested by Berti 1971. Cf. Tuozzo 1995.
conclusion of the explanation is that this (a diet, say) is for the sake of health. This was the
expected conclusion if, as I suggested above, the unexpressed premise in the explanation is that
this diet is for the sake of whatever health is defined to be. The stated conclusion, however, is that
the diet is *beneficial for, or advantageous to*, health.

This clash between what is expected and what Aristotle actually says suggests that standing
in some kind of benefactor or advantage relation is one way of being for the sake of something
else. Importantly, this suggestion is not that such a relation is constituted merely by being
beneficial for or advantageous to something. Chemotherapy regularly promotes bodily pain and
suffering, and is consequently “beneficial for” or “advantageous to” bodily pain. But
chemotherapy is not for the sake of bodily pain. The thought is rather that one way of being for
the sake of a *telos* is by being beneficial for or advantageous to *that telos*. So understood,
chemotherapy is not for the sake of bodily pain, since bodily pain isn’t its *telos* (even though bodily
pain is promoted by chemotherapy). Chemotherapy is for the sake of bodily health, however,
precisely in that chemotherapy promotes as its *telos* bodily health.\(^74\)

But though Aristotle suggest that *one kind* of “for the sake of” relation is that which is
instantiated by some kind of “beneficial to” or “advantageous for” relation, nothing Aristotle says
in EE I.8 itself precludes other kinds of relations from also instantiating the “for the sake of”
relation. In addition to promotion relations, scholars have suggested that the “for the sake of”
relation can be instantiated by relations of parthood,\(^75\) of approximation,\(^76\) and of regulation of the

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\(^74\) This naturally raises the question of what distinguishes cases of promoting something as a *telos* from cases of
promoting something that is not one’s *telos*. An analysis of the “for the sake of relation” in terms of promotion, which
I have not attempted to provide, would answer this question. Kraut 1989, 200-201, for example, claims that the “for
the sake of” relation has both a causal and normative component: *x* is for the sake of *y* just in case *x* causally promotes
*y* and *y* provides a norm that guides *x*.

\(^75\) Ackrill 1980.

\(^76\) Lear 2004.
extent to which, and when, something should be pursued.\textsuperscript{77} At this point, Aristotle leaves open which of these additional kinds of “for the sake of” relation (if any) \textit{eudaimonia} stands in vis-à-vis the goods under it, and, consequently, which relation(s) cause goodness.

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By the end of Bk. I of the EE, Aristotle has established that \textit{eudaimonia} is the \textit{telos} of practicable goods. For the remainder of this dissertation, I shall focus on the following claim:

\begin{quote}
(Claim B) The \textit{telos} of the practicable goods is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.
\end{quote}

I shall argue in Chapter Three that Aristotle argues for this claim at the very end of the EE. In Chapter Four, I shall consider how it is possible for God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, to play this causal role, while in Chapter Five I shall examine a key part of Aristotle’s argument for (Claim B).

Before tackling (Claim B) directly, however, we must first turn to the EE’s \textit{ergon} argument. For it is often thought that here, if anywhere in the EE, is where Aristotle determines what \textit{eudaimonia} is. As I hope to show, this reading is incorrect.

\textsuperscript{77} Meyer 2011.
Chapter Two: The “Belonging to a Kind” Reading of the Eudemian Ergon Argument

In the previous chapter, I discussed Aristotle’s argument in EE I.8 for

(Claim A) *Eudaimonia*, the best practicable good, is the *telos* of the practicable goods.

I further suggested that Aristotle would then go on in the EE to determine what this *telos* is. In doing so, he will have then hit upon *eudaimonia*.

Aristotle’s search continues into the next book with the Eudemian *ergon* argument (1218b31-1219a39). As expected, Aristotle sharpens further his picture of *eudaimonia*. He concludes that *eudaimonia* is good life activity (1219a27-28); that it is activity of a good soul (1219a34-35); and that it is activity of a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue (1219a38-39). But the force of these claims and, consequently, the conclusions of this argument, are unclear.

According to many scholars, the *ergon* argument is the culmination of Aristotle’s inquiry into *eudaimonia*. By means of this argument Aristotle discovers what *eudaimonia* is. Of course, afterwards he goes on to clarify important concepts relevant to this discovery. Thus, for much of the EE he examines what virtue is, what virtues there are, and how they themselves and their activities interrelate. But, fundamentally, he completes his search for what *eudaimonia* is in the *ergon* argument. He has hit upon the uniquely specifying, contentful description of *eudaimonia* that picks this good out from everything else in the world.

Indeed, the *ergon* argument is the chief piece of evidence adduced for the popular, Inclusivist reading of the EE. According to this reading *eudaimonia* is a combination of all forms of virtuous activity performed over a sufficiently long lifetime.footnote{78} Underlying this thought is the

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idea that “activity of a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue” uniquely specifies *eudaimonia*, along with a further view of how to understand this unique specification.

On my view, however, the *ergon* argument is a more modest step in his search for *eudaimonia*. Rather than determining once and for all what *eudaimonia* is, Aristotle argues merely that *eudaimonia* belongs to a certain kind. In other words, he locates the *telos* of the practicable goods among a certain class of goods. This result further clarifies what *eudaimonia* is. But Aristotle does not yet hit upon the final answer to his central question by means of this argument.

I. Unique Specification or Belonging to a Kind?

Let me first set up the interpretive issue I wish to discuss.

The Eudemian *ergon* argument has three parts. Each of these parts is an argument for a claim about what *eudaimonia* is. Their conclusions run as follows:

(Concl. 1) τοῦτ’ ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ πλέον ἀγαθόν, δπερ ἦν ἡ ἐυδαιμονία. (1219a27-28)
Consequently, the greater good, the very thing which *eudaimonia* was, is this [viz. good life activity, ζωὴ σπουδαία, 1219a27].

(Concl. 2) ἔστιν ἄρα ἡ εὐδαιμονία ψυχῆς ἀγαθῆς ἐνέργεια. (1219a34-35)
Consequently, *eudaimonia* is activity of a good soul.

(Concl. 3) …εἴη ἂν ἡ εὐδαιμονία ζωῆς τελείας ἐνέργεια κατ’ ἀρετὴν τελείαν. (1219a38-39)
…*eudaimonia* would be activity of a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue.

Each of these conclusions is an “is-statement”: each has a subject, a form of the verb “to be,” and a predicate.

Is-statements can express two rather different kinds of claims. Sometimes an is-statement *uniquely specifies* what the subject of the statement is. Suppose a teacher is asked to define

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79 I shall discuss these parts in detail later. Part One is 1218b32-1219a28; Part Two is 1219a28-35; Part Three is 1219a35-39.
80 I retain the MSS pleon.
triangles. The teacher might say, “Triangles are closed, three-sided, planar figures.” In this case, the teacher commits themselves to the view that all and only triangles are closed, three-sided, planar figures. The predicate of their sentence uniquely specifies triangles.

Alternatively, is-statements can indicate merely that the subject of the statement belongs to a kind. Suppose someone is asked for some examples of athletes. As part of their response to this request, they might say, “Jockeys are athletes.” Although this sentence has the same grammatical form as the teacher’s statement about triangles, it does not uniquely specify jockeys. In uttering this sentence, the answerer is not committed to the idea that only jockeys are athletes. (Nor, strictly speaking, does the answerer rule out that only jockeys are athletes.) All they are committed to is that if someone is a jockey, they are also an athlete.

This ambiguity of is-statements is not just a feature of English. The same phenomenon occurs in Ancient Greek. Consider the following sentences:

(A) Ἐστιν ἄρα ἡ ἀρετὴ ἑξις προαιρετική, ἐν μεσότητι οὖσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὡρισμένη λόγῳ καὶ ὁ ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσει. (NE II.6, 1106b36-1107a2)

(B) ὁ…Κορίσκος καὶ ἄνθρωπός ἐστι καὶ ζῷον (GA IV.3, 767b30-31)

Both sentences are is-statements. Each has a subject, a form of εἰμί, and at least one predicate. But they differ as to what Aristotle is committed to in each case. (A), Aristotle’s Nicomachean definition of character virtue, uniquely specifies what character virtue is. All and only character virtue is a state involving decision, consisting in a mean relative to us, a mean having been determined by the reason by which the phronimos would determine it. By contrast, Aristotle does

81 I use the term ‘kind’ throughout this chapter broadly. I intend simply a class or group of things by this term. In particular, the kind referred to by a predicate needn’t be something that would feature in the definition of the subject. Thus, both, “Triangles are figures,” and, “Triangles are lovely shapes,” count as “belonging to a kind” statements, even though ‘figures’ is (arguably) part of the definition of triangles while ‘lovely shapes’ isn’t.

82 Aristotle often uses aretē to refer simply to character virtue.
not suggest with (B) that all and only Corsicus is human, or that all and only Corsicus is animal. Rather, he indicates merely that Corsicus belongs to the kinds *human being* and *animal*.

This ambiguity of *is*-statements raises an important interpretive question about (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3). We may ask about each conclusion\(^83\) whether Aristotle uniquely specifies *eudaimonia* or instead indicates merely that it belongs to the kind specified by the predicate.\(^84\)

This question has not been tackled head-on in the EE scholarship. One finds simply an overwhelming preference for reading at least some of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) as unique specification claims, and no recognition that Aristotle might have more modest aims in the *ergon* argument. Several scholars think that (Concl. 1) or (Concl. 2) uniquely specifies *eudaimonia*.\(^85\) (Concl. 3), which has received the bulk of scholarly attention, is thought by many to uniquely specify *eudaimonia*, if not define it.\(^86\)

\(^83\) The demonstrative pronoun *tout*' poses no problem for the “belonging to a kind” construal of (Concl. 1). Cf. *Meteor*. III.4, 375a20-22. The most plausible interpretation of *toute d’ estin to phoinikoun* is that red belongs to a particular kind. Thus, Webster 1984 translates, “So, just as fire is intensified by added fire, black beside black makes that which is in some degree white look quite white; and red is like that.” Lee 1952 translates similarly: “For as fire increases fire, so dark placed by dark makes a dim light (like red) appear clear and bright.”

\(^84\) One might wonder about the prospects for a third reading of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3), according to which Aristotle says that only, but not necessarily all, *eudaimonia* falls under the kind referred to by the predicates of these *is*-statements.

Some have interpreted part of the NE *ergon* argument’s conclusion along these lines. The conclusion of the NE *ergon* argument is that “the human good proves to be (ginetai) activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and if the virtues are many, [sc. the human good proves to be activity of the soul] in accordance with the best and most *teleia* virtue” (1098a16-18). According to Robert Heinaman and David Charles, when Aristotle says that *eudaimonia* proves to be activity of the soul in accordance with the best and most *teleia* virtue, he means that the *highest kind of eudaimonia* proves to be such activity (Heinaman 1988a, 37); or that *eudaimonia* paradigmatically proves to be such activity (Charles 1999, 211-213 and 2015, 74-78). Similarly, one might think, when Aristotle says that *eudaimonia* is that or that in (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) he means that the paradigm case or highest kind of *eudaimonia* is this or that.

The attraction of Heinaman and Charles’s reading of the conclusion of the NE *ergon* argument is not paralleled in the EE, however. The chief merit of their reading is that it offers a simple solution to a difficult problem. Since there are multiple virtues, *eudaimonia*, it seems, must be activity in accordance with the best and most *teleia* virtue, i.e. *sophia*. But in NE X.7-8 Aristotle implies that practical virtuous activity is a lesser kind of *eudaimonia*, despite this activity not being in accordance with *sophia* (1178a9). Heinaman and Charles’s reading resolves this inconsistency. But this issue does not arise in the EE.

\(^85\) Zeller 1880, 556, takes (Concl. 2) to be a definition, with whom Dirlmeier, 1962, 226 concurs. Rowe 1990 says that (Concl. 2) is a “general definition.” (194) and it is “equivalent to, and a restatement of, the first preliminary definition,” i.e. (Concl. 1) (194 n.5). Woods 1992, 91-92 tentatively suggests that (Concl. 1) is a definition. Karbowksi 2019, 122 refers to (Concl. 2) as a definition.

\(^86\) Dirlmeier, 1962, 226; Rowe 1971a, 25; Cooper 1986, 116; Hutchinson 1986, 43; Buddensiek, 1999, 64; Broadie 2010, 4-5; Karbowski 2015, 200; Simpson 2013, 239; Kenny 2016, 200 all take (Concl. 3) to define *eudaimonia*. 

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The “belonging to a kind” (BK) reading of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) is the better reading, however. The arguments for these conclusions entitle Aristotle only to the view that *eudaimonia* belongs to the kinds specified by the predicates of these claims. They are insufficient for the “unique specification” (US) readings of these conclusions. On grounds of charity we should think that Aristotle intends the BK reading of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3).

It might be thought that, whatever his reasoning entitles him to, Aristotle indicates in a couple of different ways that he has uniquely specified *eudaimonia* in the *ergon* argument. First, immediately after the argument, he says that the genus and *horos* of *eudaimonia* has been well said (1219a39-40). ‘*Horos*’ here means “definition,” so the thought goes. Thus, Aristotle takes himself to have defined, and, hence, uniquely specified, *eudaimonia* in the course of the argument. If so, at least one of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) must be a definition. Second, it might be thought that in the *ergon* argument Aristotle employs the “method of division” described in the *Posterior Analytics*, a method meant to yield definitions. But these lines of thought are too quick. ‘*Horos*’, I shall argue, does not mean “definition” here, but “demarcation.” Offering a demarcation of *eudaimonia*, however, does not require uniquely specifying it. Similarly, although Aristotle does do a fair bit of dividing in the *ergon* argument, on closer inspection the argument fails to meet certain conditions which are required to hit upon a definition by way of the method of division.

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87 The only commentator I’m aware of who has thoughts along these lines is Woods 1992. He remarks, briefly, that “all that the preceding argument [i.e. the arguments for (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2)] has established is that happiness is an activity of a good soul” (90; emphasis original).

88 Another strategy for resisting the US readings of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) is employed by Majithia 2005, 372-373. He suggests that (Concl. 3), at least, is not a statement about what *eudaimonia* is, but rather a statement about “what components constitute the total life of a happy human being” (370). On this view, unique specification takes place in the *ergon* argument, but it is unique specification of the *eudaimon* life. This cannot be right. In the *ergon* argument Aristotle is clearly continuing the project begun in EE I.7 of clarifying what *eudaimonia* itself is, rather than the life in which it is found.
II. Parts One and Two of the *Ergon* Argument

To make good on my claim that the *ergon* argument entitles Aristotle only to the BK construals of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3), I shall need to lay out the argument’s main steps. I turn first to Parts One and Two.

Prior to the *ergon* argument, Aristotle concludes that *eudaimonia* is the best of the practicable goods (hereafter simply “goods”) (1217a39-40). In Parts One and Two, Aristotle clarifies what this best good is by arguing that good life activity, or activity of a good soul, is better than all other goods.

In both parts, Aristotle first divides the goods into goods in the soul and goods external to the soul, and argues that the best good must be a good of the soul. He next offers an exhaustive division of goods of the soul: goods of the soul are either states of the soul or activities produced by these states. Using this division, along with some principles about how the value of states compares to that of activities, Aristotle concludes in both arguments that the activity of the soul’s virtue is better than its best state, virtue. On this basis, he concludes that *eudaimonia*, the best good, is good life activity (Concl. 1), or activity of a good soul (Concl. 2).

a. Part One of the *Ergon* Argument: 1218b32-1219a28

The argument of Part One is especially involved. Since my goal is simply to lay out the steps of the argument relevant for my purposes, I shall be somewhat brief in my presentation.

Aristotle begins Part One as follows (1218b32-36):

All goods are either external to or in the soul, and of these the goods in the soul are more choiceworthy….For *phronēsis*, virtue, and pleasure are in the soul, of which either some or all of these seem to all to be a *telos*.

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89 Throughout this chapter, I shall use the phrases ‘goods in the soul’ and ‘goods of the soul’ interchangeably.
90 For premise-by-premise reconstructions of Part One as well as the rest of the *ergon* argument, see Hutchinson 1986, 39-45; Woods 1992, 85-88; and Simpson 2013, 233-237.
Aristotle has already concluded

(1) *Eudaimonia* is the best good.

In this passage Aristotle makes the following two moves:

(2) All goods are either external to or in the soul.

(3) The goods in the soul are better than the goods external to the soul.

Aristotle does not characterize either class of goods in (2). But he does offer *phronēsis*, ethical virtue, and pleasure as examples of goods in the soul. Items like these seem to contrast with goods external to the soul (e.g. bodily health, money) in that they are things of which the soul itself is the subject, or things which the soul plays an efficient causal role in bringing about.\(^91\)

After dividing the goods, Aristotle notes that the goods in the soul are more choiceworthy than those external to the soul.\(^92\) This claim is officially about the relative choiceworthiness of goods. But in making this point, he also means to claim that goods in the soul are *better than* goods external to the soul. After all, Aristotle aims to clarify what *eudaimonia* is by way of the fact that it is the *best* good, not the most choiceworthy good. Given what follows in the argument, (3), couched in terms of betterness, is the relevant claim.

From (1)-(3) follows

(4) *Eudaimonia* is a good of the soul.

\(^91\) Virtues are states of the soul. But Aristotle insists at DA I.4, 408b11-18 that the *human being*—the hylomorphic compound of human body and soul—is the subject of psychological activities such as feeling pity, learning, or thinking. Additionally, the human being engages in these activities by means of, or because of, the soul (*tē(i) psuchē(i)*, 408b15). Psychological activities do not number among goods in the soul in virtue of the soul being the subject of these activities, but because the soul plays an important causal role in occurrences of these activities.

\(^92\) It is unclear what (3) means. (3) might mean that every good of the soul is better than any good external to the soul. But Top. III.2, 117b33-38 suggests a weaker interpretation. On this interpretation, (3) means merely that the best good of the soul is better than the best good external to the soul. Claim (4) will be validly inferred from (1)-(3) on either interpretation.
Eudaimonia, like all goods, must be either in the soul or external to the soul. Since eudaimonia is the best good, and goods of the soul are better than goods external to the soul, eudaimonia must be a good of the soul. For the remainder of Part One Aristotle turns his attention specifically to these goods.

Aristotle’s next move is as follows (1218b36-37):

And of goods in the soul, some are states or capacities, but others are activities and kinēseis.

Aristotle again offers an exhaustive division, this time of goods in the soul. The distinction is initially one between states or capacities, and activities and kinēseis. As the argument continues, however, he operates with a simpler division between potentialities of the soul (states, dispositions, and capacities) and actualizations of these potentialities (activities, kinēseis). More simply, then, Aristotle claims

(5) All goods of the soul are either states or activities.

where ‘states’ refers broadly to the soul’s potentialities, and ‘activities’ to their actualizations.

Aristotle next turns to making evaluative comparisons among these goods. His first move along these lines is

(6) The soul’s best state is virtue.

This is argued for at 1218b37-1219a5. The best state of anything that has an ergon is its virtue. Something has an ergon if it has a characteristic activity or product whose sake it is for. A cloak, for example, has an ergon, since it is meant to keep its wearer warm. Consequently, its best state

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93 Although the division is not explicitly exhaustive, this is required for the argument to work.
95 Aristotle is somewhat inconsistent with his potentiality and actuality language throughout Parts One and Two. But ‘states’ refers to potentialities broadly at 1219a7, where he states an important principle to be discussed later; and the division of goods of the soul in Part Two is presented as one simply between states and activities (1219a30-31). I follow Aristotle in these uses of ‘state’ and ‘activity’.
96 Cf. 1219a13-18. Partly on the basis of these lines, Baker 2015 convincingly argues that Aristotle’s concept of an ergon is not limited to activities.
is its virtue. Similarly, a house’s best state is its virtue since it is for the sake of preserving one’s goods and oneself. The soul too has an *ergon*, viz. life activity—activity such as nutrition and growth, perception, or rational activity. Consequently, its best state will be the virtuous state.

In addition to things like cloaks, ships, and souls having *erga*, Aristotle allows for the states of these things to have *erga* themselves as well. The *ergon* of their states is their respective *ergon* qualified in some evaluative way. Aristotle illustrates this with the craft of shoemaking (1219a19-23). The *ergon* of shoemaking *per se* is a shoe. Hence, the *ergon* of the virtue of shoemaking (if there is such a thing) is an excellent shoe. Presumably, Aristotle also thinks that if one’s shoemaking abilities were in poor condition, the *ergon* of this state would be a middling or even bad shoe.

With this clarification in mind, we can now understand Aristotle’s next moves:

And let the *ergon* of the better state be better. And as states stand in relation to one another, in this way let also the *erga* from these stand toward one another. And the *ergon* is the *telos* of each. Accordingly, it’s clear from these things that the *ergon* is better than the state. For the *telos* is best as *telos*. For it was laid down that the *telos* is the best and the last thing, for the sake of which all the other things are.

One important claim here is

(7) The *ergon* of a state is better than its state.

This is argued for on grounds that the *ergon* of a state is that state’s *telos*, and that the *telos* of *x* is better than *x*.

The second important claim in this passage concerns a correspondence between the betterness ordering of states and that of their corresponding *erga*. Assign to each of an item’s

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97 For these various forms of life activity, see DA II.2, 413a20-26, as well as NE I.7, 1097b33-1098a4. At 1219a23-24 Aristotle seems to identify the *ergon* of the soul as *producing* life activity. But 1219a25-27 suggest instead that Aristotle takes the *ergon* of the soul to be life activity itself. The *ergon* of the soul’s virtue is excellent life activity. But since the *ergon* of the soul’s virtue and of the soul are “the same” this implies that the *ergon* of the soul is life activity.
possible states a name: \( S_1, S_2, \ldots \). Additionally, let these states’ *erga* be assigned the corresponding name \( E_1, E_2, \ldots \). Aristotle claims

(8) Whatever betterness ordering \( S_1, S_2, \ldots \) stand in relative to one another, their corresponding *erga* \( E_1, E_2, \ldots \) stand in the same betterness ordering in relation to one another.

(6)-(8) have the following consequence:

(9) The *ergon* of the soul’s virtue is (9a) better than all states of the soul and (9b) better than the *erga* of all other corresponding states of the soul.

Clause (9a) follows from (6) and (7). (6) says that the best state of the soul is the soul’s virtue. But since, as (7) indicates, the *ergon* of a state is better than that state, this means that the *ergon* of the soul’s virtue is better than the best state. *A fortiori*, it is better than all states of the soul. Clause (9b) follows from (6) and (8). The best state of the soul is virtue. Virtue, in other words, is at the top of the betterness ranking of states. Consequently, by (8) its *ergon* will be at the top of the betterness ranking of *erga* of those states.

Aristotle’s last step in Part One before drawing his conclusion is to determine what the *ergon* of the soul’s virtue is. Aristotle claims

(10) The *ergon* of the soul’s virtue is good life activity.

The soul’s *ergon* is life activity. Consequently, the *ergon* of the soul’s virtue will be life activity qualified in an excellent way.

Aristotle seems to think that the line of thought I have presented is sufficient to conclude

(Concl. 1) The greater good, the very thing which *eudaimonia* was, is this [viz. good life activity, ζωὴ σπουδαία, 1219a27].

But it is unclear how this is so. (9) and (10) yield

(11) Good life activity is (11a) better than all states of the soul and (11b) better than the *erga* of all other corresponding states of the soul.
This could support (Concl. 1) if we additionally assume that all the activities of the soul are *erga* of the states of the soul. For then Aristotle could reason as follows. *Eudaimonia* must be a good of the soul, which means it must be a state or activity. By (11), good life activity is better than all states of the soul and (now relying on our assumption) better than all other activities of the soul. Since *eudaimonia* is also the best good, it must be good life activity.

This additional assumption, however, is not something that Aristotle would endorse. Some activities of the soul are not *erga* of the soul’s states. The housebuilding craft, a state of my soul, is active when I engage in some housebuilding. But this activity is not the *ergon* of the housebuilding craft. The *ergon* of this craft is a house (1219a14-15).

A better tack is to revisit (9). Clause (9a) in (9) was supported by (7). But Aristotle’s argument for (7) actually entitles him to a stronger claim:

(7*) The *ergon* of a state is better than that state and anything else that is for the sake of the *ergon*.

Aristotle is entitled to (7*) because states aren’t necessarily the only things that are for the sake of their *ergon*. In the case of housebuilding, both the craft and the activity of housebuilding are for the sake of the house. Consequently, both the housebuilding craft and its activity will be inferior to the *ergon*, the house.

From (7*), Aristotle can actually claim

(11*) Good life activity is (11a) better than all states of the soul, (11b) better than the *erga* of all other corresponding states of the soul, and (11c) better than anything else that is for the sake of those corresponding *erga*.

(11*) supports the conclusion Aristotle wishes to draw. All other activities of the soul besides good life activity fall into one of two classes. Some are *erga* of the soul’s states. Good life activity is better than these by clause (11b). Others are activities done for the sake of the *erga* of the states,
such as the housebuilding done for the sake of the house. Good life activity is better than these by clause (11c).

(11*) entitles Aristotle to the claim that good life activity is better than all other goods of the soul. And because *eudaimonia* is both a good of the soul and the best good, Aristotle can draw (Concl. 1).

**b. Part Two**

Part Two runs as follows (1219a28-35):

And it’s clear from the things laid down (for *eudaimonia* was the best, and the *telē* in the soul are also the best of goods, and this is either a state or an activity), since the activity is better than its disposition, and the best activity is of the best state, and virtue is the best state, that the best (*ariston*) is activity of the virtue of the soul. And the best was also *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia*, then, is activity of a good soul.

The beginning steps of this argument are fairly similar to, and to some extent rely on, those of Part One:

(i) *Eudaimonia* is the best good.

(ii) *Telē* in the soul are the best goods.

So, (iii) *eudaimonia* is a good of the soul.

(iv) All goods of the soul are either states or activities.

So, (v) *eudaimonia* is either a state or activity.

Thereafter, Part Two diverges from Part One in a crucial respect. Aristotle does not make any claims about the *ergon* of the soul or of its virtue. Instead, Aristotle makes use of claims that compare the value of activities and states:

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98 Commentators disagree about how Part Two relates to Part One. Woods 1992, 87-88 takes 1218b31-1219a18 of Part One plus Part Two to be the argument for (Concl. 2), and 1219a18-28 to be a “subsidiary” argument for (Concl. 1). Hutchinson 1986, 45, by contrast, divides the arguments for these conclusions as I have divided them.
(vi) The activity of a state of the soul is better than its state.\(^99\)

(vii) The best activity of the soul is activity of the best state of the soul.

From (vi) and (vii), Aristotle is entitled to

(viii) The activity of the best state of the soul is (viiiia) better than all states of the soul and (viiiib) better than the corresponding activities of all other states of the soul.

Clause (viiiia) follows from (vi) and (vii). The best activity is the activity of the best state. Consequently, by (vi) this activity is better than the best state. But if it is better than the best state, it is \textit{a fortiori} better than all states. Clause (viiiib) follows simply from (vii). If the \textit{best} activity is of the best state, then this activity must be better than all other activities.

As in Part One,

(ix) virtue is the best state.

Consequently, Aristotle is entitled to

(x) The activity of the soul’s virtue is (xa) better than all states of the soul and (xb) better than the corresponding activities of all other states of the soul.

From (x), Aristotle may obtain his desired conclusion. According to (x), along with (iv), activity of the virtue of the soul is better than any other good of the soul. Since \textit{eudaimonia} is both a good of the soul and the best good,

(Concl. 2) \textit{eudaimonia} is activity of a good soul.

Clearly, ‘activity of a good soul’ is just another name for activity of the soul’s virtue.\(^100\)

\(^99\) The provenance of this principle is unclear. Aristotle does not argue for or assert (vi) in Part One. Nor does (vi) follow from anything that Aristotle claims in Part One.

The closest Aristotle comes to defending such a principle is at the beginning of \textit{Metaphysics} \(\Theta.9\), where he seems to defend the claim that an activity is better than its capacity. But the argument there cannot show that the activity of every state is better than its corresponding state in the broad sense of ‘state’ outlined earlier. Aristotle defends the idea that an activity is better than its capacity on grounds that the activity’s capacity is a capacity for opposites: “the same capacity is for being healthy and being sick; and being at rest and moving; and housebuilding and demolition” (1051a8-10). But not all states are capacities for opposites. (See, e.g., NE V.1/EE IV.1, 1129a11-17). In particular, one cannot use one’s virtue to engage in vicious activity.

\(^100\) Cf. 1219a21-22.
III. BK, not US, for (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2)

I have rehearsed Aristotle’s arguments for (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2). I contend that these arguments do not support either of these conclusions if they are construed as unique specification claims. They do, however, show that *eudaimonia* belongs to the kinds *good life activity* and *activity of a good soul*.

Supposing that Aristotle were uniquely specifying *eudaimonia* in (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2), it is not obvious what he would be uniquely specifying *eudaimonia* as. Several options are available. I shall discuss the three most plausible candidates and show that none of them makes good sense of the arguments.

*a. US-Simple*

To get a handle on the first US reading of (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2), consider that Aristotle has clarified what *eudaimonia* is by way of dividing goods into more and more specific kinds. He first divides goods into goods external to the soul and goods in the soul. He then divides goods of the soul into states and activities. Finally, he singles out one form of activity, activity of the soul’s virtue, and claims that *eudaimonia* is this.

According to the *US-Simple* reading, virtuous activity is an *infima species* of goods. In terms of the kinds of goods there are, virtuous activity admits of no further division. Since Aristotle is after the best good, and since he has arrived at an *infima species* which is better than all other goods, he can uniquely specify *eudaimonia* as this species.

The problem with this interpretation is that virtuous activity *does* admit of further division. There are different subkinds of virtuous activities, each of which is a distinct kind of good. When
Aristotle says that *eudaimonia* is good life activity or activity of a good soul, he cannot be uniquely specifying *eudaimonia* as an *infima species*.

As the EE continues, it emerges that the soul’s best state is composite. Soon after the *ergon* argument, Aristotle says that “just as good health is composed of the virtues of the parts, so too is the virtue of the soul *qua telos*” (1220a3-4). In particular, the soul’s virtue is a composite of the intellectual virtues—the virtues of the properly rational part of the soul—as well as the ethical virtues—the virtues of the part of the soul that is obedient to reason (1220a4-5).¹⁰¹

Although the soul’s virtue is composite, instantiations of its *ergon* needn’t be. In particular, the *ergon* of the soul’s virtue is constituted by the performance of *individual forms* of virtuous activity. Near the end of the EE, the soul’s virtue is identified as “fineness and goodness” (*kalokagathia*) (1248b8-16). Just as bravery is the disposition to perform brave activity, or justice the disposition to perform just actions, fineness and goodness is the disposition to act in ways that are fine and good. But Aristotle identifies individual forms of virtuous activity as fine and good. He offers both acts of justice and acts of temperance as examples of fine and good actions (1248b18-22). These kinds of action all on their own count as fine and good activity. In other words, each is itself an instance of the *ergon* of the soul’s virtue.

Of course, there is nothing special about just and temperate action. Indeed, Aristotle considers each individual type of virtuous action to be fine and good (1248b36-37).¹⁰² Thus, each individual form of virtuous activity is an instantiation of fineness and goodness’s *ergon*, and, hence, the *ergon* of the virtue of the soul.

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¹⁰¹ Aristotle excludes the virtues of nutritive part of the soul and, implicitly, the perceptual part at 1219b31-32 and b36-39.
¹⁰² Aristotle says simply that the virtues and the *erga* from virtue are fine. But being fine implies being good (1248b18-20).
In claiming that the individual forms of virtuous activity are fine and good, Aristotle additionally indicates that each such form is a kind of good in its own right. Goodness is predicated of just or temperate activity all by itself. Elsewhere, in Bk. III, Aristotle is happy to say that brave activity, i.e. “withstanding the fearful things,” is itself fine, and, consequently, good (1230a29-32). If Aristotle were to draw up a list of the kinds of goods there are, each individual form of virtuous activity would feature on it.

Good life activity, then, or activity of a good soul is not an infima species. At the very least, this kind can be further divided into the individual forms of virtuous activity. Because of this, US-Simple cannot be the right reading of (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2).

b. US-Kind and US-Combo

Two other US readings are worth considering.

The first is the US-Kind reading. This reading is similar to the US-Simple reading. The only difference is that what eudaimonia is uniquely specified as, viz. virtuous activity, is not an infima species. Instead, it is a form of activity that admits of further division. Aristotle is certainly permitted to identify eudaimonia as a divisible kind. On this view, it would simply turn out that there are various species of eudaimonia. Brave activity all by itself would be one species; temperate activity another; and so on. US-Kind would be a pluralistic view of eudaimonia.

According to the second reading, Aristotle uniquely specifies eudaimonia as all the members of the kinds good life activity or activity of a good soul, taken collectively. According to this US-Combo reading, eudaimonia is brave activity plus temperate activity plus…. This view would be an Inclusivist view of eudaimonia, in that eudaimonia would include all forms of virtuous activity.
While both of these interpretations do justice to the fact that there are multiple forms of virtuous activity, Aristotle is not entitled to these positions either. (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2) construed in either of these ways do not follow from the arguments in Parts One and Two.

Consider what Aristotle would need to argue for if he wanted to uniquely specify eudaimonia as virtuous activity along either of these lines. According to the US-Kind interpretation, Aristotle concludes that eudaimonia is any form of virtuous activity. Eudaimonia, however, is the best good. So if each species of virtuous activity counts as eudaimonia, each species must be the best. Importantly, this would mean that no species of virtuous activity could be better than any other species. If brave activity, say, were better than temperate activity, temperate activity would not be the best good. Brave activity, another good, would be better than it. If Aristotle is entitled to (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2) according to the US-Kind interpretation, he had better establish that each species of virtuous activity is equally the best.

Likewise, according to the US-Combo interpretation, Aristotle uniquely specifies eudaimonia as all the species of virtuous activity in combination. If Aristotle is entitled to (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2) so construed, he had better establish that the combination of all species of good life activity or activity of a good soul is the best good.

Neither of these points is made in Parts One or Part Two, however. In Part One, Aristotle says nothing about how the different instantiations of the same ergon compare to one another, nor anything about how the combination of these instantiations compares to other goods. Recall the key comparative principles Aristotle lays out in Part One:

(7) The ergon of a state is better than its state.

(8) Whatever betterness ordering S₁, S₂,… stand in relative to one another, their corresponding erga E₁, E₂,…stand in the same betterness ordering in relation to one another.
(7) says nothing at all about how *erga* compare.\textsuperscript{103} (8) is a claim about how the *erga* of different states stand towards one another. The sentence from which (8) is derived is: “as states stand in relation to one another (*pros allēlas*), in this way let also the *erga* from these stand toward one another” (1219a6-8). It would be bizarre if among the cases that fall under this principle are cases in which one state stands in relation to itself. Thus, (8) does not address the question of how different instantiations of the same *ergon*, which stem from the same state, evaluatively compare to one another. And neither of these claims refers to combinations of an *ergon*’s instantiations or anything like that.

The same point holds for the argument in Part Two. In this argument, the key comparative principle is

(vi) The activity of a state is better than its state.

Like (7) and (8), this principle is silent about how to compare the value of an *ergon*’s different instantiations, or the value of the combination of such instantiations to that of other goods.

Parts One and Two, then, do not contain any resources by which Aristotle could conclude (Concl. 1) or (Concl. 2) construed along the lines of US-Kind or US-Combo. In response to this observation, it might be thought that Aristotle makes use of some implicitly assumed premise to draw these conclusions. A proponent of the US-Kind interpretation might say that although Aristotle does not explicitly state any principles by which the values of the different activities of the soul’s virtue are to be compared, he assumes that they are of equal value, and, hence, all equally best. Similarly, a proponent of the US-Combo interpretation might say that although Aristotle does not go into the matter, he assumes that the composite of all virtuous activity is the best good.

\textsuperscript{103} The same holds for (7*).
If either of these proposals is right, Aristotle would be entitled to uniquely specify *eudaimonia* as virtuous activity.

It would, however, be odd for Aristotle to assume either of these views without comment given the dialectical context of the *ergon* argument. Aristotle is keenly aware that some people would agree that *eudaimonia* is *some form* of virtuous activity but balk at the suggestion that it is *any* form of virtuous activity, or that it is the combination of *all* forms of such activity. In EE I.5 (1216a10-27), Aristotle puts on the table two popular views of what *eudaimonia* is. The first view is maintained by people like Anaxagoras, who think that *eudaimonia* is philosophical wisdom. The second view is held by people who think that the political life is the best life, and that *eudaimonia* consists not in wisdom but in performing ethically virtuous activity. The idea that *eudaimonia* is not just any virtuous activity or all of it in combination, but instead a more specific form of virtuous activity to the exclusion of others, is not a mere conceptual possibility. It is a widely-held view which Aristotle himself alludes to in the previous book. To assume without argument, and to fail even to assert, a key premise that runs contrary to these views would be a glaring omission, to say the least.

c. **BK for (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2)**

It is always possible that Aristotle has drawn hasty, unwarranted conclusions. But a more charitable interpretation is available. Aristotle does not uniquely specify *eudaimonia* in (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2). He means simply to claim that *eudaimonia* belongs to the kinds *good life activity* and *activity of a good soul*.

At any rate, the arguments of Parts One and Two do show that *eudaimonia* must be virtuous activity of some kind or other. According to these arguments virtuous activity is better than all
other goods. Since *eudaimonia* is the best good, it must fall somewhere within the sphere of virtuous activity. But Aristotle offers no principles by which he can determine what more precisely within this sphere *eudaimonia* is.

This is precisely what the BK interpretation of (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2) claims. When Aristotle says that *eudaimonia* is good life activity, or activity of a good soul, he means that *eudaimonia* belongs to these kinds. Further argument is required to precisify *eudaimonia* beyond this, however.

### IV. Part Three of the *Ergon* Argument

The *ergon* argument continues for a few lines more (1219a35-39):

> And since *eudaimonia* was something *teleon*, and life activity is both *telea* and *atelēs*, and virtue similarly (for some is whole, and some is partial), and the activity of *atelē* things is *atelēs*, [(Concl. 3)] *eudaimonia* would be activity of a *teleia* life\(^\text{104}\) in accordance with *teleia* virtue.\(^\text{105}\)

In Parts One and Two Aristotle made use of the fact that *eudaimonia* is “the best” to clarify what it is. Here, in Part Three, he clarifies what *eudaimonia* is by way of the fact that it is something *teleon*.\(^\text{106}\) In (Concl. 3), Aristotle specifies both the kind of state in accordance with which, as well as the kind of life in which, *eudaimonia* is performed.

*Teleia* virtue has already been at play in the *ergon* argument, albeit implicitly. Near the end of the EE, Aristotle argues that this virtue is fineness and goodness (1249a16-17). *Eudaimonia* is the activation of this particular state of the soul. That *eudaimonia* is “of a *teleia* life,” however,

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\(^\text{104}\) Ζωή here refers to a life in which *eudaimonia* takes place, rather than to life activity, as it did in Part One and again at 1219a36. That life activity is now picked up by *energeia* at 1219a38.

\(^\text{105}\) Aristotle switches between spelling *teleios* with and without an iota. I follow his spellings in my transliterations. 

\(^\text{106}\) The word *teleon* has several different meanings, such as “complete,” “final,” and “perfect.” It is disputed what it means here. Since it isn’t necessary for me to take a stance on this question, I shall leave *teleon* and its cognates untranslated.
is a new thought. In claiming this, Aristotle has in mind the length of time over which the activity constituting eudaimonia occurs.\(^{107}\) As he points out shortly after the ergon argument (1219b4-8), no one can be happy over a single day, or over any single stage of one’s life. Indeed, he approves of Solon’s thought that we shouldn’t call anyone living ‘happy’, but must wait until their life is completely over. For my purposes I do not need to characterize precisely the timespan over which eudaimonia is performed. The important point is that eudaimonia being of a teleia life is a matter of it taking place over a certain length of time.

As with (Concl. 1) and (Concl. 2), Part Three entitles Aristotle only to (Concl. 3) construed according to the BK interpretation. Aristotle argues that because eudaimonia is something teleon, it must have certain features, viz. being performed over a teleia life and in accordance with teleia virtue. The claim that eudaimonia is something teleon, however, entails that eudaimonia has other features which go unmentioned and which are not implied by those mentioned in (Concl. 3). These features distinguish eudaimonia from things that aren’t eudaimonia. Because of this, the description “activity of a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue” underspecifies eudaimonia. Were Aristotle to uniquely specify eudaimonia with this description, he would include too much. (Concl. 3), then, is more charitably understood as claiming merely that eudaimonia belongs to a certain kind.

One feature of eudaimonia left unmentioned and not implied is the fact that eudaimonia must be unimpeded activity. Aristotle argues for this at NE VII/EE VI, 1153b14-21:

And on account of this everyone thinks that the eudaimōn life is pleasant, and they entwine pleasure into eudaimonia, reasonably. For no activity is teleios when it is impeded, and eudaimonia is of teleia things. That is why the eudaimōn person needs in addition goods of the body and external goods and fortune, in order that

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\(^{107}\) For a recent defense of understanding being of a teleia life in temporal terms, see Lear 2015, 128-130. The NE provides some indirect evidence for this interpretation. In the NE Aristotle says that eudaimonia must be “in a teleios life” (I.7, 1098a18). This is cashed out explicitly in terms of taking place over a certain timespan at 1098a19-20; I.10, 1101a14-16; and X.7, 1177b24-26.
he not be impeded with respect to these things. And those who say that the person
who is tortured on the rack or who falls into great misfortune is happy if he is good,
are either willingly or unwillingly saying nothing.

The first half of this passage is strikingly similar to the argument in Part Three. Both arguments
make use of the idea that eudaimonia is of teleia things to conclude that eudaimonia has some
feature. Instead of concluding that eudaimonia is in accordance with teleia virtue or of a teleia
life, however, Aristotle here concludes that it is unimpeded. This is why people reasonably
entwine pleasure into eudaimonia. Pleasure, at least according to NE VII/EE VI, is unimpeded
activity (1153a14-15).

Aristotle does not detail what it is for an activity to be unimpeded. But he does offer some
examples of impediments. One kind of impediment are pleasures that are “foreign” (allotriai) to
the activity in question (1153a20-23). In the extreme case, foreign pleasure prevents one from
performing the activity at all. Nobody can think seriously while in the throes of passion (1152b16-
18). But the impediment from foreign pleasure can be less severe. To take an example from NE
X, Aristotle allows that someone who enjoys aulos music could well still think about a
philosophical argument. But they would not be able to think about it attentively (1175b3-4), and
their philosophizing would be “corrupted” (phtheirei, 1175b6).

Pain is similarly an impediment. It might be impossible to philosophize if one were on
the rack. At the very least, it would not be easy to do. The physical pain would make it very
difficult to think clearly, and such philosophizing would be much less enjoyable than the
uninterrupted, tranquil sort of philosophizing one does when not being tortured.

In the passage above, Aristotle also notes that one needs to be furnished with an adequate
supply of external goods, as well as good fortune, so that one is not impeded in performing the

108 So Aristotle suggests at 1153b1-3.
activity or activities that constitute *eudaimonia*. Again, in the extreme case, a lack of resources, or bad luck, will simply prevent one from acting. One can’t be generous with no money, nor can one have much opportunity to philosophize if constantly beset by grief. But a lack of such goods and good luck might simply make activities much more difficult to do. In these cases, one will be met with challenges, difficulties, and frustrations that could be avoided if one had an adequate supply of external goods and good luck.

These examples of impediments suggest that an activity’s being unimpeded is, at the very least, its being performed smoothly, without obstruction, and with full concentration. Because *eudaimonia* is something *teleon*, it must be unimpeded in this sense.\(^\text{109}\)

A second feature of *eudaimonia* left unmentioned in and not implied by (Concl. 3) concerns the kind of use or activity of virtue it is. In the *Politics*, Aristotle says (VII.13, 1332a7-21):\(^\text{110}\)

> And we say (and we demarcated\(^\text{111}\) it in the *Ethics*, if anything of those accounts is helpful) that [eudaimonia] is *teleia* activity and use of virtue, and this is not conditional but unqualified. And by “conditional” [activity and use] I mean what is necessary, and by “unqualified” [activity and use] I mean [virtue being active and used] finely. For example in the case of things concerning just actions, just penalties and punishments are from virtue, but they are necessary and have their fineness in a necessary way (for it is more choiceworthy if neither a man nor a city has need of any of these sorts of things), but the actions which aim at honors and abundance are the finest unqualifiedly. For the former are a choice\(^\text{112}\) for something bad, but these sorts of actions are the opposite. For they are preparatory to and productive of goods. And the excellent man could make use of poverty, sickness, and other kinds of bad luck. But blessedness depends on the opposite.

\(^{109}\) At least in the cases of sensation and thought, an activity’s being unimpeded might also involve the capacity responsible for the activity being in the best condition and being active in relation to the best objects. This is suggested by Owen, “Aristotelian Pleasures,” 342 in LSD; and van Riel, 1999, 212. (Cf. Gosling and Taylor 1982, 252, who take an activity’s being impeded to imply that the object a state engages with while active is non-defective.) Relatedly, being unimpeded might be equivalent to an activity’s being *teleia* as discussed in NE X (as Stewart 1892b, 237 and Harte 2014, 310 suggest). These are, however, distinctly Nicomachean ideas, and for my purposes it is unnecessary to determine whether they inform us about what unimpeded activity is in NE VII/EE VI.

\(^{110}\) See also 1328a37-38.

\(^{111}\) I translate *diōrismetha* as “we demarcated” rather than “we defined” for reasons that will become clear in section VI.

\(^{112}\) I retain the MSS *hairesis*.
Aristotle first claims that *eudaimonia* is *teleia* activity and use of virtue, and refers to a demarcation in “the Ethics” in support of this. The precise claim that *eudaimonia* is such activity and use of virtue is not found in either the *Nicomachean* or *Eudemian Ethics*. But it is a straightforward consequence of the EE *ergon* argument.\(^{113}\) There, Aristotle thinks of *eudaimonia* as both an activity and as a use (*chrēsis*) of virtue (1219a15-18, b1-2). Additionally, as we’ve seen, *eudaimonia* is something *teleon*. In this *Politics* passage, Aristotle draws the obvious conclusion: *eudaimonia* is *teleia* activity and use of virtue.

For the rest of the passage, Aristotle elaborates on what *teleia* activity or use of virtue is. Such a use or activity is an unqualified, rather than a conditional, use or activity. It is controversial what precisely this distinction amounts to,\(^{114}\) and whether it is philosophically sound.\(^{115}\) But two basic points emerge. First, unconditional uses or activities of virtue are those for which it isn’t more choiceworthy that they don’t take place. Meting out justice is virtuous. But it would be better if this kind of just action didn’t need to be performed in the first place. Meting out justice contrasts with just actions that aim at abundance, such as equitably and justly distributing the fruits of a bountiful harvest. Second, a conditional use of virtue involves choosing something bad.\(^{116}\) In punishing someone, individuals or societies choose to harm the individual being punished. They choose to cause them bodily pain, say, or to reduce their liberty. The punishers might well be justified in doing so, of course. But, nevertheless, there is a clear sense in which the person being punished is the victim of something bad. An unconditional use or activity of virtue, by contrast, involves no such choice.

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\(^{113}\) Cooper 1986, 73, n. 99 and Kraut 1997, 125 likewise understand the reference to “the Ethics” to be specifically to EE II.1.

\(^{114}\) See, for example, the contrasting readings of this passage in Heinaman 1993, 46-51 and Hirji forth., 6-14.

\(^{115}\) Kraut 1997, 126-127 raises some worries about the distinction.

\(^{116}\) If, with Ross, we instead read *anairesis* at 1332a17, conditional uses of virtue are those which are the mere removals of bad things, as opposed to actions that positively brings about a good.
(Concl. 3), then, fails to mention or imply two other distinguishing features of eudaimonia, both of which follow from the fact that it is something teleon and, hence, of teleia things. (Concl. 3) simply specifies the kind of virtue and timespan involved in eudaimonia. It does not say anything about eudaimonia’s being unimpeded or being an unconditional use of virtue. If (Concl. 3) uniquely specified eudaimonia, it would include too much. So understood, (Concl. 3) would imply that impeded activity, as well as conditional uses of teleia virtue, are constitutive of eudaimonia. These unwelcome results can be avoided if we instead interpret (Concl. 3) to mean simply that eudaimonia belongs to the kind activity of a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue. On grounds of charity, then, we should also accept the BK reading of (Concl. 3).

V. Evidence for Definition?

I have argued that Aristotle does not uniquely specify, much less define, eudaimonia in the course of the ergon argument. One might challenge this argument in a couple of ways. First, it might be thought that Aristotle’s announcement that the horos of eudaimonia has been well said indicates that he takes himself to have offered a definition of eudaimonia. Second, it might be thought that the ergon argument is an instance of the “method of division” described in the Posterior Analytics, a method that Aristotle uses to hit upon definitions. In what follows, I shall respond to both of these worries.

a. Horos

Immediately after the ergon argument, Aristotle says

that we say well the genus and the horos of this [i.e. eudaimonia], the things seeming to everyone are testimony for us. (1219a39-40)
He then proceeds to discuss this testimony (1219a40-b26). Our interest is not in this evidence, but rather in the fact that Aristotle takes himself to have stated the **horos** of eudaimonia. Many scholars take this to mean that Aristotle has stated its **definition**. After all, “definition” is a standard translation of ‘**horos**’ in Aristotle, and the **ergon** argument appears in the context of an inquiry into what **eudaimonia** is. If this is right, at least some of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) are definitions.

Translating ‘**horos**’ as “definition” poses a problem for my BK interpretation. Definitions uniquely specify their **definienda**. A definition says that all and only the instances of its **definiendum** are such-and-such. Consequently, if any of (Concl. 1)-(Concl.3) is a definition, Aristotle has uniquely specified **eudaimonia** in the **ergon** argument.

A **horos** needn’t be a definition, however. ‘**Horos**’ also admits of the alternative translation “demarcation.” A demarcation of X says *something* about what X is. To pick up the original meaning of ‘**horos**’ as “boundary,” a demarcation locates X within some bounds and distinguishes it from things that aren’t X. So understood, a **horos** is a specification of a boundary within which X falls. But a demarcation is not necessarily a definition, since other things that aren’t X can be included within the boundary it specifies.

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117 Rackham 1935; Dirlmeier 1962; Décarie 1978; Solomon 1984; Woods 1992; Kenny 2011; Dalimier 2013; Inwood and Woolf 2013; and Simpson 2013 all translate ‘**horos**’ at 1219a39 as “definition.”

118 One might think that the conjunction of ‘**horos**’ with the word ‘**genos**’ suggests that ‘**horos**’ means “definition” at 1219a39. These terms are found together in the **Topics** (e.g. I.4, 101b23-25; I.5, 101b37) where ‘**horos**’ means “definition.” And indeed, a genus is predicated in the “what it is” of something (Top. I. 5, 102a31-35), the full statement of which is the **horos**, i.e. the definition, of that thing.

In fact, the conjunction of these two terms does not straightforwardly favor taking ‘**horos**’ here as “definition.” (i) 1219a39 is the only place where Aristotle uses the specific phrase ‘the genus and the **horos**’. There are no parallel uses showing that Aristotle uses this phrase to indicate that he has given a definition. (ii) If ‘**horos**’ means “definition” here, the conjunction of this term with ‘**genos**’ is odd, if ‘**genos**’ too is to be understood as it is in the **Topics**. After all, a definition of something includes a reference to that thing’s genus. Why, then, would Aristotle mention that the genus has been well-stated, if he also says, more strongly, that the definition has been well-stated?

119 Chiba 2010, 217-227 argues that in the **Topics** a **horos** is a defining-phrase—a sub-sentential phrase describing the **definiendum**’s essence—rather than a definition. The same problem would arise for the BK reading if Aristotle has said well the defining-phrase of **eudaimonia**.

120 Cf. Top. I.8, 103b7-19.
The Politics contains a nice example where ‘horos’ means “demarcation” (IV.15, 1300a9-14).121

[C]oncerning the appointment of offices, let us try to go through these things from the beginning. The varieties (diaphorai) depend on three horoi, it being necessary that all the modes [of appointment] have been taken up with these being combined. One of these three [sc. horoi] is who makes the appointments, the second is from whom, and the third is in what manner.

Aristotle identifies three horoi on which the various varieties or modes of appointing officers depend: who appoints, the group of people from which officers are appointed, and how they are appointed. Together, these horoi jointly determine the varieties or modes of appointing officers. Thus, every citizen selecting from every citizen by means of voting is one such variety; selecting from some citizens by means of lot (and, hence, by luck rather than by anyone in the polis) is another. By themselves, however, none of the horoi uniquely specifies any of these varieties or modes. The horos “every citizen selecting” distinguishes my first example of a variety from my second. But it fails to uniquely specify the former variety, since it does not distinguish this variety from others in which the group of people appointing is the same, but the manner of appointment or the possible candidates differ. These horoi, then, are not definitions of their respective modes of appointment. Each merely demarcates its respective modes from some others.122

121 Cf. the use of ‘horos’ at 1300b15.
122 Bonitz, 1870 cites 1300a11 as a place where horos “signifies that by which the nature of something is constituted and defined.” Newman 1902b, 264 translates ‘horoi’ as “determining factors,” while Reeve 1998 has “defining principles.”

Bonitz, Newman, and Reeve offer yet a third option for what a horos can be. On their views, while a horos can fall short of a definition, it must nonetheless play some role in the definition of the thing of which it is a horos. Thus, while the fact that all citizens appoint people to office does not all by itself constitute the nature of any particular variety of appointing, this fact plus the additional facts about who can be selected and by what means does constitute the nature of one of the varieties of appointing. My demarcation interpretation, however, does not imply that a horos plays such a definitional role.

This alternative view is consistent with my BK reading of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3). But determining whether it is to be preferred over my interpretation will require more work than I can do here. One would need to show that the meaning of ‘horos’ at 1300a11 implies that the horos plays some role in a definition, rather than this being an artifact of the particular passage in which we find it. Additionally, one would need to show that the arguments for (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) yield a horos in this sense.
Taking Aristotle to claim at 1219a39-40 that he has stated well the demarcation of *eudaimonia* fits with the BK reading of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3). This interpretation is further supported by a passage from EE I.4 (1215a20-25):

Most of the things disputed and puzzled about will be clear if what one ought to think *eudaimonia* is is demarcated (*horisthē(i)*)) well—whether it is merely in the soul being of some sort, just as some of the older, wise people thought, or whether it is necessary for one indeed (*kai*) to be of some sort, but more importantly (*mallon*) for one’s actions to be of some sort.

*Horisthē(i)*, a verb derived from the noun ‘*horos*’, is often translated here as “is defined.” But it ought not to be. The *poteron* clause beginning at 1215a22 stands in apposition to the *ti esti* question, the object of *horisthē(i)*. This clause details what the *ti esti* question means. But the *poteron* clause does not ask what *eudaimonia*’s essence is. Instead, it asks whether *eudaimonia* is merely a quality of the soul, or rather a matter of one’s soul having a certain quality and performing actions that also have a certain quality. This question is simply about whether *eudaimonia* is a state or an activity. The *ti esti* question at 1215a21-22, then, is *not* a standard, definitional question. Consequently, *horisthē(i)* should not be translated as “is defined.”

In raising this particular *ti esti* question, Aristotle instead wishes to *demarcate* whether *eudaimonia* is a state or activity of the soul. Answering this question will tell us something

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This relates to how one might understand ‘*genos*’ at 1219a39. Aristotle could mean that he has hit upon the definitional genus into which *eudaimonia* falls. Alternatively, he could simply be claiming that he has identified some important kind to which *eudaimonia* belongs. I have argued that he is entitled to the latter, though, with further argument, the former could be a plausible view too.

*123* *Horisthē(i)* is a form of *horizō* which is formed by adding the *-izō* verbal suffix to ‘*horos*’.

*124* A notable exception is Rackham, who instead opts for “is determined.” Dirlmeier has *bestimmt ist*, which seems ambiguous between “is defined” and “is determined,” but he is clear that the *ti esti* question at issue in this passage asks for the essence (*Wesen*) of *eudaimonia*.

*125* Strictly, the two options are whether one’s soul is of a certain quality and whether one *oneself* (*auton*) and one’s actions are of a certain quality. But I do not think anything important hangs on the shift from speaking of one’s soul to speaking of oneself in this passage.

*126* Another example of a *ti esti* question not asking for the essence of something is DA I.1, 402a23-25. Here Aristotle seems to gloss a *ti esti* question asked about the soul as a question merely about which category the soul belongs to.
important about what *eudaimonia* is. But it would fall short of giving an account of *eudaimonia*’s essence. *Horisthē(i)* should instead be translated as “is demarcated.”

Aristotle clearly thinks that the quality/activity issue is important to address, given that doing so will solve the majority of disputes and puzzles surrounding *eudaimonia*. It is expected, then, that he will tackle the issue head-on at some point in the EE. He flags that he has done so when he says that he has stated well the *horos* of *eudaimonia* at 1219a39-40. 127 ‘*Horos*’ picks up *horisthē(i)* at 1215a21. With (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) Aristotle comes down firmly on the “activity” side of the question he raises at 1215a20-25.

*b. Definitional Methodology?*

Eudemian methodology has received a fair amount of scholarly attention recently. 128 One prominent view within this debate is that EE I.7-II.1 constitutes a definitional inquiry along the lines outlined in *Posterior Analytics*, Bk. II. Crudely, in this book Aristotle enjoins the inquirer to seek definitions by hitting upon an account of the causally basic features *definienda* have in virtue of which they possess their other, derivative necessary features. Some think that the *ergon* argument results in just such a definition. 129 Prior to the *ergon* argument, we are aware that *eudaimonia* is the greatest and best of human goods, say, or the finest thing. On this view, features such as these are explained by the fact that *eudaimonia* is (definitionally) what some or all of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) say *eudaimonia* is.

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127 Aristotle calls it the *horos* because it is the demarcation made salient by the question he raises earlier in I.4 and one which he flags as important to answer.
In the *ergon* argument, Aristotle clarifies what *eudaimonia* is by way of some kind of process of division. Aristotle first divides (*diairoumetha*, 1218b33) goods into goods of the soul and goods external to the soul; then goods in the soul into states and activities; and, finally, activity into activity of either a virtuous or non-virtuous soul. In Part Three, Aristotle makes an additional division between *teleon* and *ateles* forms of such activity. Now, Aristotle describes a method of division by which definitions can be discovered in *APo*. II.13. My interpretation of the arguments of Parts One through Three, however, shows that Aristotle does not abide by the strictures of this method.

In *APo*. II.13 Aristotle lays out the following conditions for what ought to happen in order to discover a definition by way of division (97a23-26):

In order to establish a definition through divisions, it is necessary to aim at three things: taking up the things predicated in the what it is; ordering these things as first or second; and apprehending that these are all.

The third point is of particular interest. Aristotle details what this requires as follows (97a35-39):

And that these are all is clear from taking up the first thing in accordance with division, viz. that every animal is either this or that, and that this belongs to it, and in turn taking up the differentia of this whole, and apprehending that there is no longer a differentia of the ultimate whole, or that straightaway with the ultimate differentia this does not yet differ from the whole in respect of form.

In essence, Aristotle’s third requirement is a requirement to apprehend that one has divided sufficiently for one’s definitional purposes. One does this either by seeing that one has arrived at an *infima species* in one’s division, or by seeing that although further divisions can be made, they are irrelevant to defining the *definiendum*.

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131 The method of division in *APo*. II.13 is Aristotle’s answer to the question of “how one ought to hunt (*thēreuein*) for the things predicated in the what it is” (96a22-23). The metaphor of hunting indicates that this method is meant to be used for discovering definitions (Balme 1987, 70; Bronstein 2016, 196-197).
132 I understand *labein* from 97a24. This verb often takes a *hoti* clause as its object. Barnes 1993 supplies “ensuring,” but it is unclear what warrants this supplement.
One way of putting my criticisms of the US reading of (Concl. 1)-(Concl. 3) is that Aristotle apprehends neither of these things in the *ergon* argument. In Parts One and Two, Aristotle claims that *eudaimonia* is good life activity, or activity of a good soul. But he offers no reason for why he ought to stop his dividing at these points. Nothing in Parts One and Two shows that he has hit upon an *infima species* or that further division would be irrelevant to defining *eudaimonia*. In Part Three, Aristotle underspecifies *eudaimonia* as activity of a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue. Given the argument of Part Three, Aristotle must divide further if he wishes to hit upon *eudaimonia*’s definition.

Although the *ergon* argument clarifies what *eudaimonia* is by way of division, it fails to meet one of Aristotle’s requirements in *APo*. II.13 for defining by way of division. If anything, the argument is “negative evidence” that Aristotle makes use of the *APo*. II method of definitional inquiry. In accordance with this method, he does not define *eudaimonia* since he does not divide in the way that *APo*. II.13 demands.

**VI. Implications for Aristotle’s Inquiry**

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Aristotle is often thought to hold an Inclusivist theory of *eudaimonia* in the EE. Aristotle, so the thought goes, uniquely specifies *eudaimonia* as activity of a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue. It is then claimed that this activity is the combination of all forms of virtuous activity, performed over a *teleia* life.

As I hope to have shown, both of these moves are questionable. If my interpretation is sound, one cannot cite the *ergon* argument as a place where Aristotle uniquely specifies *eudaimonia*. *A fortiori*, Aristotle does not uniquely specify what *eudaimonia* is in a contentful way. Additionally, “activity of a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue” is not equivalent to
the combination of all forms of virtuous activity over such a lifetime. Individual forms of virtuous activity performed over a _teleia_ life count as such activity too, provided that the agent has _teleia_ virtue. As far as the _ergon_ argument is concerned, _eudaimonia_ could just as well be one form of virtuous activity performed over a _teleia_ lifetime.

Importantly, I do not take myself have to have ruled out Inclusivism by means of the BK reading. I have argued merely that the EE _ergon_ argument is far from forcing us to accept Inclusivism. The lesson to draw from this argument is that _eudaimonia_ is located within the kind *activity of a _teleia_ life in accordance with _teleia_ virtue*. The inclusive composite of all forms of virtuous activity over such a lifetime plausibly falls in this kind. But so too do other goods, including individual forms of virtuous activity performed over such a lifetime.

Going forward, then, Aristotle must locate _eudaimonia_ within this kind. He will do so, I argue, by using the result he obtained in EE I.8 that I discussed in Chapter One. Indeed, at the very end of the EE, Aristotle does just that. So it is to this part of the EE that we must next turn.
Chapter Three: *Eudaimonia* is God’s Contemplation, Suitably Qualified

So far in this dissertation I have argued for the following. First, Aristotle endorses the following claim in EE I.8:

(Claim A) *Eudaimonia*, the best practicable good, is the *telos* of the practicable goods.

Second, Aristotle goes some way towards clarifying what the *telos* of practicable goods is in his *ergon* argument in EE II.1. According to that argument, this *telos* is to be found in the kind activity of a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue.

In this chapter, I argue that in the EE’s final lines (1249a21-b25) Aristotle subscribes to

(Claim B) The *telos* of the practicable goods is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

(Claim B) identifies the *telos* of the practicable goods with a particular good, viz. the activity of God’s contemplation. I intend for the phrase ‘suitably qualified’ to pick up the idea that the activity Aristotle has in mind is not just any instance of God’s contemplation, but that activity as qualified in the relevant ways we saw in the *ergon* argument: performed in a *teleia* life, performed by someone with *teleia* virtue, etc.133

On my reading, then, it is at the very end of the EE where Aristotle answers his question, “What is *eudaimonia*?” It is here where he finally identifies *eudaimonia* in a contentful way.134 For (Claim B), in conjunction with (Claim A), tells us what *eudaimonia* is. These claims go beyond any old uniquely specifying description for *eudaimonia*, and go beyond merely formal

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133 To be clear, (Claim B) identifies the *telos* of the practicable goods simply with a form of contemplative activity. The contemplative activity in question is one that must be performed under certain conditions (e.g. in a *teleia* life; as an exercise of *teleia* virtue) in order to qualify as the *telos* of the practicable goods. But these conditions are not “part of” or “included in” the *telos* itself. (Thus, everything else that goes into a *teleia* life will not be part of the *telos* of the practicable goods.)

134 Berti 1971 and Tuozzo 1995 are the only major proponents of this view that I’m aware of. Their defenses in either case are fairly quick. Berti, 182-183 comes closer to my view in that he too thinks that Aristotle identifies the *telos* of the practicable goods as contemplation. But the lines he uses as evidence for this—1249b14-21—concern only the ultimate aim or end of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, rather than all practicable goods.
descriptions of this good (e.g. being the best practicable good; being the telos of the practicable goods). Upon reading through the end of the EE, one would then be a position to pick out which good in the world eudaimonia is. Perhaps Aristotle would consider (Claim A) and (Claim B) to yield a definition of eudaimonia. But I do not insist upon that, and it is not obvious that Aristotle would be entitled to this being a definition.¹³⁵

Aristotle’s Eudemian account of eudaimonia, then, proves not to be Inclusivist. Aristotle does not identify eudaimonia with a complex of virtuous activities (as performed in a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue). Rather, eudaimonia is just one particular kind of virtuous activity so performed, viz. the activity of beholding philosophical and scientific truths. In the EE, Aristotle is an Intellectualist.

The EE’s final lines are complex and difficult to make sense of. Consequently, my aim in this chapter is merely to show that Aristotle subscribes to (Claim B). To that end, I will not attempt in this chapter to make sense of Aristotle’s argument for (Claim B). That argument is instead the subject of Chapter Five. Similarly, I will not here offer an account of how, more precisely, God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, plays the final causal Aristotle claims eudaimonia plays—how, in particular, it causes the goodness of the other practicable goods. This will be the subject of Chapter Four.

The plan for this chapter is as follows. I argue in section I that Aristotle indicates at the very end of the EE that he has identified the telos of the practicable goods. In the remainder of this chapter I explain how the concluding discussion of the EE, which concerns “horoi,” is in fact

¹³⁵ One reason to wonder whether “God’s contemplation, as performed in a teleia life, in accordance with teleia virtue, unimpeded, performed as an unqualified use of virtue…” is a definition is that it is unclear whether this description is picking out eudaimonia by way of its real genus and differentia. Aristotle, as I read him, doesn’t offer us a reason to think so. Nor does this description of eudaimonia seem to express what Bronstein 2016, 96-99 calls a “causally complex” essence, which takes the form “A holds of C because of B.”
also a discussion in which Aristotle identifies this telos. In section II, I argue that horoi as conceived of in the EE’s final lines are in fact telē. Based on this claim, I then argue in section III that in identifying the horoi he identifies, Aristotle also identifies the telos of goods external to the soul and the telos of goods of the soul. Finally, I show in sections IV-V that Aristotle identifies God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as both of these telē. Since God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the telos of both goods external to the soul and goods in the soul, it follows that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the telos for all practicable goods.

I. To the End of the EE

The EE concludes with these words: “Well then, let it have been said what the horos of fineness and goodness, and what the skopos of the unqualified goods, is” (1249b23-25). With this remark, Aristotle tells us what he has accomplished in the preceding lines. This remark, then, guides how we should interpret the lines leading up to it. A successful interpretation ought to show that Aristotle does in fact do what he says he’s done at 1249b23-25.

Key for my purposes is the fact that Aristotle has said what the skopos of the unqualified goods is. In this section, I argue that the phrase ‘the skopos of the unqualified goods’ is another name for the telos of the practicable goods. If this is right, Aristotle announces at the end of the EE that he has identified what the telos of the practicable goods is. We should, then, endeavor to read the preceding lines in such a way that Aristotle does this.

Neglect, or incorrect interpretation, of this final remark of Aristotle’s has led to misinterpretation of the EE’s final section. According to a number of scholars, Aristotle’s aim in

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136 That these are the concluding words of the EE has been doubted by scholars in a couple different ways. Susemihl 1884 believed that the EE continued after 1249b25 with text that has been lost to us. On the other hand, as the OCT’s app. crit. reports, Allan suggested secluding 1249b23-25. I hope to offer an interpretation on which these lines make good sense as concluding lines of the EE.
these final lines is simply to indicate a limit (horos) for goods that are external to the soul,\textsuperscript{137} or for a subset of these goods.\textsuperscript{138} No doubt, this is part of what Aristotle is up to in these final lines. But as I hope to show, he has greater ambitions than this.

My argument in this section proceeds as follows. First, I argue that Aristotle uses ‘skopos’ in the phrase ‘the skopos of the unqualified goods’ synonymously with ‘telos’. Second, I shall argue that the set of unqualified goods is the set of practicable goods of which eudaimonia is the telos.

\textit{a. Skopos}

Aristotle seems to use ‘skopos’ and ‘telos’ synonymously in a number of places throughout his writings.\textsuperscript{139} A good example of this is found in the \textit{Politics}, where Aristotle describes different ways in which agents can err:

\begin{quote}
And since there are two things in which doing well for all proves to be, and of these two things one is in the skopos, i.e. (kai) the telos of actions being posited (keisthai) correctly, and the other is discovering the actions that tend towards the telos (for these things admit both of being discordant and of harmonizing with one another. For sometimes the skopos is posited well, but in the acting people fail to hit upon something, and sometimes they attain all things in relation to the telos, but they posited a bad telos, and sometimes they fail at both, e.g. in medicine: for sometimes neither do they judge well what sort of thing the healthy body must be, nor do they attain the productive things in relation to the horos posited before them. But it’s necessary in the crafts and sciences that both these things are taken charge of, viz. the telos and the actions towards the telos)... (Pol. VII. 13, 1331b26-38)
\end{quote}

In this passage, Aristotle switches effortlessly between speaking of a skopos and speaking of a telos. He registers no difference in meaning between ‘skopos’ and ‘telos’.

\textsuperscript{137} Monan 1968, 128-129; Rowe 1971a, 110; Ackrill 1980, 30-31; Kraut 1989, 169-170.
\textsuperscript{138} Cooper 1986, 138-141; Broadie 1991, 384-385. On Cooper and Broadie’s views, Aristotle’s concern is simply to argue for a limit regarding surplus goods external to the soul that are not already allocated for performing ethically virtuous activity.
\textsuperscript{139} Cf. Stewart’s view that ‘skopos’ is used “as a scientific term equivalent to telos” (1892b, 6).
Another passage in which this synonymy occurs is found at the beginning of the EE:

Knowing these things, everyone capable of living in accordance with his own decision ought to posit (thethai) some skopos of living finely, either honor or reputation or wealth or cultivation, looking toward which he will perform all of his actions (since not having organized one’s life in relation to some telos is a sign of great folly). (EE I.2, 1214b6-9)

Here again, Aristotle switches from speaking of a skopos to speaking of a telos. But nothing suggests that he means anything by this switch. “End” or “aim” or “goal” would be appropriate translations for both ‘skopos’ and ‘telos’ in this passage.

It should be noted that in both of these passage, the skopos/telos is something that an agent posits. Indeed, in the first passage, the skopos/telos is something that an agent can posit either correctly or incorrectly, either well or badly. This suggests that a skopos or telos so understood is an object of a mental act of wishing on the part of an agent. It is the agent’s subjective goal or aim that she has and which she tries to bring about. One agent may wish to bring about some somatic pleasure for herself. Another agent may instead wish to bring about some generous activity. In this subjective sense of telos/skopos, it would be correct to say that their telos/skopos was somatic pleasure and generous activity, respectively.

Aristotle does not use ‘telos’ and ‘skopos’ merely to refer to an agent’s subjective goal or aim, however. These words are also used to refer to what we might call an “objective” or “natural” aim. When Aristotle says in Physics II.3 that the telos of walking is health (194b32-33), he doesn’t mean that an agent has health as their object of wish, and thereby undertakes walking. Rather, he means that the act of walking is naturally for the sake of health: the act of walking “tends towards,” or is objectively suited for, bringing health about. Similarly, the telos of the craft of shoemaking

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140 I accept the insertion of dei at 1214b7.
141 On this point, see, e.g., NE 1111b26-30 and EE 1226a13-17.
is a shoe simply because shoes are the product that this craft is for the sake of. 'Skopos’ too can be used in an objective sense. For example, it is so used at the beginning of NE VI/EE V. There Aristotle says that “in all the aforementioned states [sc. of character], just as all the other things, there is some skopos looking at which the person with reason loosens and tightens” (1138b21-23). Here, the metaphor is one of a knowledgeable archer or, perhaps, musician “looking” at an objective aim. This skopos is “seen” only by the “person with reason.” This skopos is not something posited by just any agent through their wishing, but is instead something to be discovered and viewed only by certain, knowledgeable people.

When Aristotle speaks of a telos or a skopos of a set of goods in the EE, he has in mind an objective telos or skopos. The telos of practicable goods introduced in EE I.8 is their objective aim, what their ultimate “goal” or “end” is. It is what these goods are naturally for the sake of, or what they are especially suited for and tend towards. This telos is not necessarily the aim that agents who make uses of these goods posit through their wishing. Nor is it the kind of aim that could vary among different agents making uses of these goods. Similarly, when Aristotle speaks of the skopos of the unqualified goods in EE VIII.3, he is speaking of their natural, objective ultimate aim or point, rather than what any agent happens to decide to aim at in making use of these goods. In neither case does Aristotle mention an agent who has posited the telos or skopos.143

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142 For arguments that Aristotle recognizes “natural goals” of actions—goals that actions have independently of the agent positing this goal as the reason for which they perform the action—see Lorenz 2015.
143 Perhaps one might object that the skopos referred to at 1249b24 is a subjective skopos: it is what the excellent (spoudaios, 1249a24) person posits as their aim in choosing and making use of the unqualified goods. The reading I shall develop of the final lines of the EE speaks against this view. But even supposing this were correct, this reading would merely complicate how we’re to understand what Aristotle is up to in the EE’s final lines. For the subjective skopos of the excellent person is also the objective skopos or telos of the unqualified goods: the excellent person’s goals accord with the objective goals.
b. The Unqualified Goods

In speaking of a skopos at the very end of the EE, then, Aristotle is speaking of a telos. This skopos, or telos, is more precisely the skopos of “the unqualified goods” (ta hapla agatha). These goods, I argue, are precisely the practicable goods which were discussed in I.7 and I.8.

Although Aristotle does not use the word ‘practicable’ in the phrase “the unqualified goods,” Aristotle has specifically practicable unqualified goods in mind. After the introduction of the practicable goods in I.7, Aristotle uses the word ‘goods’ throughout the EE to refer to specifically practicable goods. Thus, the division of “all goods” into goods external to or in the soul that begins II.1 (1218b32) is really a division among goods practicable for a human being. The Prime Mover, say, or the circular motion of the planets are not among the goods considered in this division. More local to the final lines of the EE, when Aristotle reports the Laconians’ belief that they ought to have virtue for the sake of the external goods (1249a14-15), the belief he reports is the belief that they ought to have virtue for the sake of the external practicable goods. These external goods, after all, are those which the Laconians aim for. But we are told in I.7 that one kind of practicable good are ends that one acts for the sake of (1217a35-38).

What, then, are the unqualified (sc. practicable) goods? In the Topics, Aristotle offers a brief but helpful characterization of what being unqualifiedly F is:

The unqualifiedly [sc. fine or its opposite] is that which you will say is fine or the opposite without anything being added. For example, sacrificing one’s father you will not say is fine but is fine for some people (tisi). It is not unqualifiedly fine, then. But honoring the gods you will says is fine, having added nothing. For it is unqualifiedly fine. Hence, that which seems to be fine or shameful or any of these sorts of things without anything being added, will be said unqualifiedly. (II.12, 115b29-35)

In this passage, Aristotle draws a contrast between something being unqualifiedly fine, and it being fine for some people. If we must qualify the property of being fine for a specific group of people,
the thing that has this property is not unqualifiedly fine. By contrast, those things whose fineness we do not need to qualify by reference to a specific group of people are unqualifiedly fine.

Applying this to the case of goodness, then, the unqualified goods are those things which we say are simply good. By contrast, goods that must be called good for somebody are not unqualified goods.

Now, this is not to say that there isn’t some group of people for whom the unqualified goods are good. Indeed, in EE VII, Aristotle draws a distinction between unqualified goods and goods that are good for someone (tini) which turns on the difference regarding whom the goods are good for (EE VII.2, 1235b31-35). Aristotle illustrates this distinction by considering examples of unqualified and qualified goods for the body. Things that are beneficial for the healthy body are unqualified bodily goods, while things that are good only for sick bodies, such as surgery or medicine, are not unqualified bodily goods. These latter goods are merely bodily goods for some (ailing) body. The thought here is that the unqualified bodily goods, such as those things which are beneficial for the body, are those things which are good specifically for the good, i.e. healthy, body. The good body is the body for which the unqualified goods of the body are good. Similarly, Aristotle tells us, “the unqualified goods are not goods for [the many], but for the good person” (1249a12-13). The good person is the one for whom the unqualified goods are good.144 The good person is, as it were, the touchstone or standard by which unqualifiedly good things are to be measured.145

144 For a contrasting view, see Gottlieb 1991, 33-35. Gottlieb thinks that something can be an unqualified good in one of two ways. Either (i) it is good for everyone; or (ii) it is good for everyone except those in a “particular bad state.” Neither of these characterizations, however, do justice to Aristotle’s thought that the unqualified goods are good specifically for good people.

In saying that the unqualified goods are not goods for the many, I do not take Aristotle to be claiming that no unqualified good is ever good for a non-good person. His point is rather that the many are not the people for whom the unqualified goods as a class are good. As a class, the unqualified goods are good for the good person.

145 This use of ‘unqualified’ should be compared with Aristotle’s discussion of the good as the unqualified object of wish in NE III.4, 1113a23-25. There, Aristotle first says that the unqualified and true object of wish is the good. He
The unqualified practicable goods, then, are the things that are good for the good person, and things which we designate simply as “good” rather than as good for a specific group of people. If these are what the unqualified goods are, this set of goods will include practicable goods external to the body and to the soul, such as honor and wealth. This set will also include bodily goods, such as health or beauty (1248b26-30). Importantly, the practicable goods of the soul will also number among the unqualified goods. Indeed, if anything is good for the good person, and if anything is considered good without qualification in Aristotle’s eyes, it is morally virtuous activity, contemplation, and ethical and intellectual virtue.

Although we cannot be certain, the unqualified goods referred to at the very end of the EE do seem to be precisely the practicable goods Aristotle had in mind when he spoke of the *telos* of practicable goods in EE I. Throughout his discussion of this *telos* in I.8, and his discussion of the practicable goods in I.7-8, Aristotle refers simply to goods. He does not qualify the goods he has in mind as those which are good for some particular kind of individual. These goods consequently satisfy the *Topics* account of what being unqualifiedly good means.

On my view, then, at the end of the EE Aristotle announces, albeit with different vocabulary, that he has said what the *telos* of the practicable goods is.

c. A More Modest Skopos?

In including goods of the soul such as virtue and virtuous activity among the unqualified goods, I depart from the view, endorsed by several scholars, according to which the set of unqualified goods excludes goods of the soul. If this were right, we would have no reason to think that in announcing then says that for the good person their object of wish is the true object of wish. Although Aristotle does not explicitly say that the good person’s object of wish is also the unqualified object of wish, this is clearly implied. So here too is another example where *x*’s being the unqualified *F* entails that *x* is *F* for the good person.
that he has said what the *skopos* of the unqualified goods is, Aristotle announces that he has hit upon the *telos* of the practicable goods.

The evidence adduced for this more restricted view of the unqualified goods, however, is weak. Cooper cites NE V.1/EE IV.1, 1129b1-6 in defense of this view. The relevant portion of this passage is, “And since the unjust person is pleonectic, he will be concerned with goods—not with all goods, but with the goods connected to good and bad fortune, which are always good without qualification, but not always good for someone” (1129b1-4). Cooper’s thought is that the goods of fortune do not include the soul’s virtues and virtuous activities, and that in this passage Aristotle identifies the unqualified goods with the goods of fortune. But this passage hardly requires us to think that Aristotle is making this identification. Aristotle is simply noting that the goods of fortune are among the unqualified goods. He needn’t also be claiming that these are the only such goods.

Another thought along these lines is this. In EE VIII.3, the natural goods appear to be the same goods as the goods that are external to the soul. The Laconians, Aristotle tells us, are people who think that “it’s necessary to have virtue, but for the sake of the natural goods” (1248b39-40). This belief is restated a little later by Aristotle as the belief that “it is necessary to have the virtues for the sake of the *external* goods” (1249a14-15; emphasis added). Noting this, some then go on to say that Aristotle also equates the goods without qualification with the natural goods. If true, it would follow that the unqualified goods are just the goods that are external to the soul. But again, the equation of the natural goods and the unqualified goods is baseless. Kenny’s citation of 1249a8-17 is the best evidence of such an equation. But, as with Cooper’s text, these lines hardly force us to think that Aristotle endorses this equation.

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146 Cooper 1986, 129.
Indeed, at one point in the common books Aristotle strongly suggests that goods of the soul number among the unqualified goods. When Aristotle implements the unqualified good/good for someone distinction at the beginning of NE VII.12/EE VI.12, he says that “since the good is [spoken of] in two ways (for the one is unqualified, the other for someone), it will follow that natures, states, and, hence, changes and comings-to-be [will be good in these two ways]” (1152b26-28). There is no hint here that Aristotle restricts the unqualified goods just to natures, states, changes, and comings-to-be that are external to the soul. More importantly, later in the chapter Aristotle use the word ‘state’ clearly to refer to states of the soul (1153a21). Goods of the soul, then, do seem to number among the unqualified goods. This makes sense, given that the unqualified goods are the things that are simply good, which surely some states and activities of the soul are.

II. Horos and Telos

Despite Aristotle’s concluding announcement that he has said what the skopos of the unqualified good is, one would search in vain for any mention of a telos or skopos in the lines that precede this announcement. In these lines, 1249a21-b25, Aristotle instead focuses on identifying what he calls “horoi.” In particular, Aristotle identifies a horos of choices and “ havings” (hexis, 1249b1) or instances of possession (ktēsis, 1249b16) of the natural goods, as well as a horos of the soul.

This apparent omission might suggest that we are to look further back into the EE for Aristotle’s discussion about the skopos of the unqualified goods. But this would be too hasty. I shall argue instead that Aristotle’s discussion of these horoi is in fact a discussion of telē or skopoi as well. A horos of X is a “boundary marker.” At the end of the EE, at least, the boundary it demarcates is the boundary between good and bad instances of X. What does this demarcating
work, I shall argue, is the telos of the good instances of things of which the horos is a horos. Thus, the horos of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods is the telos of the good such choices and instances of possession. Similarly, the horos of the soul—more accurately, the horos of the states and activities of the soul—is the telos of the soul’s good states and activities. Aristotle, then, is speaking of telē in this passage. But he is discussing them as boundary markers, or as demarcators.

My claim that telē play the role of the horoi that Aristotle identifies in the EE’s conclusion does not by itself ensure that Aristotle discusses the skopos of the unqualified goods in these lines. I shall later advance further considerations to secure this claim. The point of this section is merely to show that Aristotle does indeed discuss telē/skopoī in the discussion that precedes 1249b23-25.

a. Horos as the Boundary Marker of Goods and Bads

Aristotle begins his discussion of the horoi as follows:

[A] Since there is some horos also for the doctor [a1] in reference to which he judges the healthy and unhealthy body and [a2] in relation to which each thing is to be done to a certain extent, and [a3] if [done] well, [the body] is healthy, but if [done] deficiently or excessively, [the body] is no longer healthy, [B] so too for the excellent person concerning the actions and choices of the things by nature good but not praiseworthy, it is necessary that there be some horos of both having and choice, and concerning avoidance of the excess and deficiency of resources and the gifts of fortune. (1249a21-b3)

This passage divides into two parts. In [A] Aristotle says that there is a horos for the doctor which plays two roles, [a1] and [a2]. The horos is that in reference to which the doctor judges whether a body is healthy or unhealthy; and is that in relation to which “each thing” is to be done to a certain extent. In [a3], Aristotle observes that if each thing that the doctor does is done well, the body is

148 Rowe ms. reports that all the MSS read hugiainon, rather than hugieinon, which is what the OCT mistakenly reports. (Cf. Barnes 1992, 30.) Because of this, “the body” must be the implicit subject.

149 ‘Peri’ is awkward, and perhaps should be removed. Rowe ms. brackets it, following Zeller.
healthy, while if they are done poorly—here, “deficiently or excessively”—the body isn’t healthy. Since there is such a horos for the doctor, Aristotle claims in [B] that there must also be a horos for the excellent person. Aristotle does not make explicit how [a1]-[a3] are paralleled in the case of the excellent person’s horos. But the fact that this horos is of having and choice, and concerns avoidance of excess and deficiency, suggests that the excellent person’s horos plays some role analogous to [a2], and that a point analogous to [a3] holds true in his case. There is also an additional point made in [B], unparalleled in [A], that the excellent person’s horos concerns actions and choices regarding a certain set of things, viz. the naturally good but not naturally praiseworthy things.

To begin to unpack what a horos is in the EE’s final lines, it is helpful to consider what ‘horos’ could mean. This word has a range of meanings for Aristotle. As we saw in Chapter Two, this word can mean “definition” as well as “demarcation.” Another, related sense of ‘horos’ found in Aristotle is “that which limits” or “boundary marker.” (This meaning stems from the original meaning of ‘horos’ as a physical boundary marker for parcels of land.) So understood by Aristotle, horoi in this sense demarcate a variety of things. In GA II.6, for example, Aristotle says that the bones of an animal are the horos of its size (megethos) (754a8-9). Aristotle’s thought here is that the bones determine the limit for how large an animal can be. ‘Horos’, then, is correctly translated in this passage as “that which limits.” Similarly, in Politics VII, Aristotle says of a territory that “in number and magnitude it must be so large that the inhabitants are able to live at leisure in a

150 Literally, Aristotle says that the body is no longer healthy, implying, it seems, that the body was healthy prior to the doctor’s bad action. If this is right, perhaps Aristotle has in mind more specifically a doctor who is working to maintain the health of his patient’s body, and does not have in mind cases in which the doctor is curing a patient from sickness.

151 It is unclear whether a point analogous to [a1] holds in the case of the excellent person’s horos. Given that Aristotle draws a parallel between the doctor’s horos and that of the excellent person, it is tempting to think so. But Aristotle does not highlight here or elsewhere how the excellent person makes a judgment analogous to that of the doctor’s judgment in [a1].

152 This is effectively Peck 1943’s translation of ‘horos’ at 754a8-9: “the bones set the limit for an animal’s size.”
manner that is both free and temperate. Whether we have expressed this horos\textsuperscript{153} properly or not is something that must be examined more precisely later\textsuperscript{154} (Kraut trans., slightly modified). The horos expressed here is not a numerical limit on the size of the territory. Rather, it is something that determines what this limit would be, viz. the quality of being sufficiently large such that the citizens who occupy this territory can live freely and temperately. Here too, ‘horos’ is correctly translated as “that which limits.”

It should be noted that while actual, physical boundary markers might be merely epistemic devices for flagging boundaries between properties, the horoi referred to in these passages are not merely epistemic. Bones are not merely a good marker of the size of the animal. They play a determining role in what the limits of the size of the animal actually are. The quality of being such that the citizens can live well actually determines the appropriate size of the territories. In both cases, the relevant horos is a limit setter, not merely a limit indicator.

The sense of ‘horos’ as a boundary marker or limit setter seems to be the appropriate sense of ‘horos’ at play at 1249a21-b3. In particular, the horos for both the doctor and the excellent person demarcates the extent to which things are to be done by them. According to [a2], the doctor’s horos is “that in relation to which each thing is be done to a certain extent.” Given that “each thing” is to be done, “each thing” must be each type of action that the doctor has in her arsenal of medical actions: cutting, administering medicine, burning, etc. When tending to a patient, a doctor must perform these sorts of actions. But what she is to do is not simply just any action that falls under, say, the types burn or apply pressure. Rather, these things are to be done

\textsuperscript{153} Newman 1902a, 106 notes that ton horon is omitted in some of the MSS, but he thinks that this omission is erroneous. Even if it weren’t in the text, we would have to understand touton at 1326b32 with an implicit ton horon since the nearest masculine noun is horos in 1326b23. (Thanks to David Charles for making this point clear to me.)

\textsuperscript{154} Unfortunately, as Newman 1887, xxviii; Vander Waerdt 1991, 242-243; and Kraut 1997, 87 note, Aristotle does not return to this topic later in the Politics. So we can’t look to the promised later discussion for any help on what ‘horos’ refers to or means here.
to some extent: the doctor should burn this much of the body for this long; the doctor should pull on this limb with this amount of pressure for this length of time. The question naturally arises: what, if anything, determines these extents to which her actions are to be performed? Aristotle claims in [a2] that it is the horos. The horos is that in relation to which each action type is to be performed to the extent it is to be performed. Similarly, the excellent person does not make just any choice, or engage in just any instance of possession, regarding money, honor, etc. Rather, she makes choices for this amount of money, and comes to possess these honors rather than those. What determines that these choices and instances of possession are to be done rather than those is the horos of choices and havings of the natural goods.

It is important to emphasize the normative nature of the demarcating work that the horos does for both the doctor and the excellent person. [a2] already indicates that the horos does some kind of normative work: the horos is that in relation to which each thing is to be done (poiēteon). This is further confirmed in [a3]. There, Aristotle contrasts the action being done well with its being done excessively and deficiently. The thought here is that if the action is done just to the extent it is supposed to be done—just to the extent that the horos determines—it is a good action, i.e. something done well. By contrast, if an action is done to an extent that falls outside of the boundary determined by the horos, it is a bad action, i.e. one done excessively or deficiently.

A related idea can be found in [B], where the horos for the good person is said to concern “avoidance of the excess and deficiency of resources and the gifts of fortune.” Here, the horos seems to demarcate the bad, i.e. the excessive and deficient, amounts of resources and gifts of fortune. More generally, Aristotle’s thought would seem to be that it demarcates the bad choices and havings (viz. those choices or havings of an excessive or deficient amount of resources) from the good ones. And as we find a little later after 1249a21-b3, this horos is explicitly said to
distinguish the best choices and instances of possession of the natural goods from the bad ones (1249b16-21).

Generalizing from the picture of the *horos* that emerges from [A] and [B], Aristotle subscribes to the following claim about *horoi* within the context of EE VIII.3:

[Horos]: $x$ is the *horos* of practicable kind $K$ just in case, and because, $x$ demarcates good $k$’s from bad $k$’s.

In the example of the doctor’s and excellent person’s *horoi* above, the relevant kinds are action types (in a broad sense of ‘action’): various kinds of things that the doctor performs, and various kinds of choices and havings that the good person undertakes. But nothing in principle restricts the relevant kinds just to action types.

*b. The Telos as Horos*

Let us now turn to identifying what plays the role of the *horos*—what the ‘$x$’ in [Horos] is—at the end of the EE. In this section I argue that the *horos* of a practicable kind $K$ is the telos of the good instances of $K$. The *horos* of the doctor’s actions is the telos of the good instances of those actions, viz. health. Similarly, the *horos* of the choices and havings of the natural goods is the telos of the good choices and havings of this kind.\(^{155}\)

Part of the evidence for this claim comes from [a3] and [a1]. In [a3] Aristotle does not merely draw a distinction between good actions—those done well—and bad actions—those done excessively or deficiently. He also points out that if the doctor’s actions are done well, the body is healthy, while if the actions are done poorly the body isn’t healthy. This connection between

\(^{155}\) In arguing that in EE VIII.3, the *horos* of a practicable kind $K$ is the telos of good instances of $K$, I do not mean to suggest that the concepts of “being a *horos* of $K$” and of “being a telos of good instances of $K$” are the same. I am merely arguing that the item which is the *horos* of a practicable kind also turns out to be a telos of good instances of that kind. To be a *horos* of $K$ is to be a demarcator of good and bad $k$’s; to be a telos of the good $k$’s is to be their aim or end.
health and the goodness of the doctor’s actions is no coincidence. Indeed, given that [a3] follows upon [a2], the conclusion to draw is that bodily health is the *horos* of these actions: bodily health demarcates good instances of the kinds of medical actions that the doctor can perform from the bad ones. But bodily health, of course, is the *telos* of good medical actions.

In [a1] Aristotle says that the *horos* is that in reference to which the doctor judges or discriminates (*krinei*) the healthy and unhealthy body. This is sensible if the *horos* is health, the *telos* of his good medical actions. Indeed, what better reference point could there be for discriminating between the healthy and the sick? To judge of a body whether it is healthy, the doctor considers whether health, whose nature he grasps, belongs to that body.

A passage reminiscent of [a1] found in the *Protrepticus* supports this interpretation. There, Aristotle says that “the politician ought to have certain *horoi* from nature itself, that is (*kai*), from reality (*alētheias*), in relation to which he judges (*krinei*) what is just, what is fine, and what is advantageous” (Düring, B47.5-7). As this rather Platonic discussion of the politician’s *horoi* continues, Aristotle suggests that the *horoi* that the politician will use to make these judgments are the very things he is to bring about: justice, fineness, and advantage. Aristotle says that “to the philosopher alone among others belongs imitation from the exact things themselves (*autōn tōn akribōn*). For he is an observer (*theatēs*) of these things, but not of imitations” (Düring, B48.5-7). The philosopher-politician does not look to and imitate the actions and political arrangements of actual human beings. Rather, he is to look to the “exact things themselves”—the ideal political system, perhaps, or maybe more abstractly justice itself and fineness itself—to act and legislate accordingly. As in the case of the doctor’s *horos* in [a1], the politician’s *horoi*, which he uses to judge what is just, fine, and advantageous are the very things which he aims to make actual.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ My reading of B47-48 contrasts with the reading defended by Walker 2018, 147-150. On Walker’s view, the politician’s *horoi* are not justice, fineness, etc., but markers of fineness, justice, etc., which are derived from the
Further evidence for my claim that the telos of good instances of practicable kinds demarcates the goods and bads within that kind is found in the Politics. In Pol. I.8, Aristotle characterizes true wealth as follows:

And it looks as if true wealth (alēthinos ploutos) consists of these things [viz. things that are essential for life and useful for the association of state or household]. For self-sufficiency in this kind of property, for purposes of a good life (pros agathēn zōēn) is not limitless. Solon in his poetry says it is: ‘No end (termā) to riches lies stated for men.’ But one does lie, as in the other skills too; for none has any tool which is unlimited in size or number, and wealth is a collection of tools of statesmen and of persons concerned with household management. (1256b30-37; Saunders trans.)

True wealth—the good instance of wealth—is that amount of resources that aims at the good life. And it is precisely this aim, the good life, which sets the upper-bound of the wealth that one ought to have. Amounts of wealth beyond this limit are excessive amounts, which is why Solon is wrong to say that no end to riches lies stated for human beings.

The telos’s role of limit-setting within a kind is discussed again in Pol. I.9 when Aristotle contrasts two forms of wealth acquisition. One form is a part of household management and aims at the good life. The other, second form of wealth acquisition is a craft whose aim is simply the accumulation of wealth. Aristotle contrasts them as follows:

And this wealth is indeed limitless, the wealth from [the second form of] wealth acquisition. For just as medicine is limitless of being healthy, and each of the crafts is limitless of their telos (for they wish to the greatest extent to produce this), but they are not limitless of the things towards the telos (for the telos is the peras for all crafts), thus also of this wealth acquisition there is not a peras of the telos, but the telos is this sort of wealth and possession of resources. But of the wealth acquisition of household management, in turn, there is a peras. For this is not the task of household management. That is why on the one hand in a way it seems necessary that there is a peras of all wealth, but in the things that happen we see

politician’s grasp on justice, fineness, etc. Similarly, Walker takes the doctor’s horos in [a1] to be not health, but the totality of standards and markers of health derived from health: good blood-pressure, a good red-blood cell count, etc. I think that the disagreement between Walker and me boils down to a disagreement about what Aristotle means when he says that the politician ought to have certain horoi from nature itself (B47.5-6), and implies that the politician should take his instruments (= horoi) from the primary things themselves (B48.2-5). Aristotle might mean that the politician should (i) derive horoi from the natures of things; or (ii) take as his horoi natures of things. Walker favors (i), while I favor (ii).
that the opposite results. For everyone acquiring wealth will increase their coinage without limit. (1257b23-34)

The key claim for my purposes is that “the telos is the peras for all crafts.” Like ‘horos’ the word ‘peras’ also can mean “thing that limits.”\footnote{The term ‘horos’ does not appear in this passage. In any case the important thing I take from this passage is the idea of the telos as a limiter. But in fact at the end of Pol. I.9 (1258a14-18), Aristotle says that among the things that have been claimed in the chapter is the fact that the first form of wealth acquisition has a horos. I understand this to be a reference to 1257b23-34.} Aristotle claims that the telos of a craft—and, hence, the telos of the goods that fall under the craft and are for its sake—is a demarcator of a boundary. What it demarcates, according to this passage, are the “things towards the telos.” These are the means to the craft’s end, i.e. the goods belonging to various practicable kinds into which the means fall. As we saw from the earlier I.8 passage, the end specifically demarcates these means in terms of goodness (“true wealth”) and badness.

In addition to the textual evidence found in the EE, Protrepticus, and Politics,\footnote{NE VI.1/EE V.1, 1138b21-25 might provide further evidence that the telos of good instances of a kind is also a horos of that kind. It is controversial whether the skopos referred to at 1138b22 is the same as the horos of mean states referred to at 1138b23. Supposing it is (as, e.g. Tuozzo 1995, 138 and Kenny 2016, 181 claim), this would be another place where Aristotle calls a skopos/telos a horos, where the skopos/telos in question seems to be the telos of the good instances of the kind the horos is of.} the idea that the telos of good instances of a kind demarcates those good instances from the bad instances within the kind makes sense conceptually. Recall from Chapter One that a telos is a cause of the goodness of the things under it. Goods are good in virtue of standing in a “for the sake of” relation to their telos. This thought can be extended to account for badness as follows: failing to stand in a “for the sake of” relation to that telos results in failing to be good, or in being bad. The doctor’s administration of 50 milligrams of some medicine is good because her action, the administration of this amount of medicine, is for the sake of health. By contrast, the quack’s administration of 100 milligrams of the same medicine, or of a homeopathic “remedy,” is bad because it fails to be for the sake of health. Within the practicable kind administering this drug, what distinguishes the
good instances of this kind from the bad instances of this kind is what the good instances of this kind are for the sake of, i.e. their telos.

c. The Horos as the Boundary Itself?

Some scholars would balk at my view that ‘horos’ in EE VIII.3 means “boundary marker” or “limit setter,” and, consequently, that the telos of good instances of a kind plays the role of the horos. They would instead claim that the horos is the limit or boundary itself within which the correct or “mean” instances of a practicable kind falls, and beyond which bad such instances fall. The horos, in other words, is the specifications of the practicable kinds which render instances of that kind good. Take, for example, the practicable kind administering this medicine. According to this view, the horos would be the facts that it is 50 milligrams which one is to administer; that one is to do so every four hours; etc.

This interpretation of the horos is defended by those primarily focused on NE passages in which a horos features, and much of the evidence that commentators adduce for this interpretation comes from either undisputed NE passages or from the beginning of NE VI/EE V. Whatever its merits for making sense of these other passages, I do not think that this is a satisfactory interpretation of what the horos is in EE VIII.3. In particular, it is hard to see how this interpretation makes good on the thought expressed in [a1] that it is by reference to the horos that the doctor judges the healthy and unhealthy body. Why would the doctor refer to the facts that it is 50 milligrams of this medicine that she is to administer, and that she is to do so every four hours, and so on, to judge whether her patient’s body is healthy or unhealthy? It must be conceded that doctor could infer that her patient is unhealthy from the fact that she must administer 50 milligrams

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of this medicine (assuming that she would administer any amount of this medicine only to unhealthy patients). But surely it is not facts like these to which the doctor ordinarily makes reference in order to judge whether a patient is healthy or not. Indeed, this picture gets things backwards: in a usual case of doctoring, it is because of some antecedent judgment that the patient is unwell that the doctor determines that she is to administer 50 milligrams.

In EE VIII.3, then, the horos is not a boundary. It is that which demarcates a boundary in the way outlined by [Horos]. And what plays the role of the horos, I have argued, is a telos or skopos.

III. Two Horoi, and the Telē of External and Internal Goods

In the previous section, I argued that in EE VIII.3 Aristotle endorses

\[ \text{[Horos]: } x \text{ is the horos of practicable kind K just in case, and because, } x \text{ demarcates good } k'\text{'s from bad } k'\text{'s.} \]

I also argued that, on this understanding of what a horos is, the thing which plays the role of a horos of a practicable kind is the telos of the good instances of that kind.

In this section, I turn to two related questions. First, of which practicable kinds does Aristotle present a horos in the final lines of the EE? Secondly, given the connection between something being a horos of practicable kinds, and it being a telos of the good instances of those kinds, of which kinds of goods does Aristotle identify a telos?

My answer to the first question is that Aristotle presents two horoi which concern different practicable kinds. The first horos he presents is one that I have already discussed in some detail. This is the horos of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods. But Aristotle also presents a second horos, the “horos of the soul.” This, I shall argue, is a horos of the states and activities of the soul.
Consequently, the answer to my second question on a first pass is that in presenting these horoi, Aristotle thereby identifies the telos of the good choices and instances of possession of the natural goods and the telos of the good states and activities of the soul. This follows from the particular connection that horoi bear to telē which I argued for in the previous section. But I shall also argue that the telos of good choices and instances of possession of the natural goods is also the telos of the good instances of the natural goods themselves. In effect, then, Aristotle also identifies the telos of the goods external to the soul.

This point is significant. At the beginning of EE II, Aristotle divides all the practicable goods into goods external to the soul and goods of the soul (1218b32). On my reading of the EE’s final lines, Aristotle ends up identifying the telos of each of these two sets of goods. This fact does not by itself show that Aristotle is speaking of the skopos of unqualified goods at the conclusion of the EE. It would show this, however, in conjunction with the claim that the telos of the external goods is the same as the telos of the goods of the soul. Indeed, in the next section I shall argue that this is the case: the telos of both the goods external to the soul and the goods of the soul is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

a. Two Horoi

As we have seen, Aristotle claims that for the excellent person “it is necessary that there be some horos of both having and choice” of the natural goods (1249b1). Aristotle presents this horos at 1249b16-19: “Whatever choice and instance of possession of the natural goods will produce especially God’s contemplation, either of the body or of resources or of friends or of the other goods, this is best, and this horos is finest.” One horos that Aristotle presents, then, is that which
concerns the practicable kind *choices and instances of possession (or havings) of the natural goods*.

In the EE’s final lines, “choice” is paired with both “having” (1249b1) and “instance of possession” (1249b16). Additionally, “having” and “choice” are contrasted with avoiding the excess and deficiency of resources and pieces of good fortune (1249b1-3). Because of these pairings and contrasts, I take Aristotle in the concluding lines of the EE to have in mind a specific kind of choice, viz. the choice to pursue, and thereby acquire, the natural goods. The *horos* of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, then, is not a *horos* of, say, the choices about how to utilize these goods. The relevant domain of choices is much narrower. This is not to say that Aristotle presents no *horos* of using the natural goods. My claim is simply that the *horos* of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods is not this *horos*.

As Aristotle’s examples in 1249b16-19 make clear, the “natural goods” are things that are external to the soul: the body (and, presumably, qualities thereof), resources, friends, etc. Although these are called “natural goods,” I do not take Aristotle to mean that every token of the natural goods is itself a good. Aristotle does not, in other words, present a *horos* merely of all the choices and instances of possession of good amounts of money, good bodily states, good friends, etc. For although resources are a natural good, Aristotle allows that there can be excessive and deficient amounts of resources, and says that these are to be avoided (1249b2). Consequently, the set of choices and instances of possession that Aristotle has in mind includes choices and instances of possession of excessive and deficient amounts of money, bad bodily states, excessive and deficient amounts of friends, etc. This is why the *horos* of choices and havings concerns the

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160 Aristotle does say that the *horos* of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods “concerns actions and choices of the things naturally good but not naturally praiseworthy” (1249a24-25). This is consistent with my proposal, provided that the “actions” Aristotle refers to here are simply those that one will need to perform in order to acquire the natural goods.
avoidance of excess and deficiency of resources and of pieces of good fortune (1249b2-3). This horos demarcates within the set of choices and havings of all tokens of the natural goods the choices for excessive and deficient amounts of resources as bad choices to make.

The horos of the choices and instances of possessions of the natural goods is not the only horos Aristotle presents in the EE’s final lines. At 1249b21-22, Aristotle refers to a “horos of the soul.” This would seem to be the horos that Aristotle promised his readers in a passage in Bk. II:

And since an enumeration of states according to each passion has been taken up, both the excesses and deficiencies, and of the opposing states in accordance with which people are disposed in accordance with right reason (and what right reason is, and what horos it is necessary to look to to state the mean, we must examine later), it is clear that all the ethical virtues and vices are about the excesses and deficiencies of pleasures and pains, and that pleasures and pains arise from the aforementioned states and affections. (1222b4-11; emphasis added)

Aristotle says here that he will describe a horos that we must look to to state “the mean” (to meson). In EE II Aristotle develops a theory of virtue according to which ethical virtue concerns means and are themselves “mean states” (1220b34-35). In particular, ethical virtues are those states of the soul from which the best actions (erga) and passions (pathē) of the soul arise (1220a31-32). These actions and passions are “means” in that they fall on spectrum between their excessive and deficient counterparts. Similarly, the states from which these mean actions and passions issue are themselves “mean states” and stand in contrast to the excessive and deficient states responsible for the excessive and deficient actions and passions of the soul. The horos promised at 1222b4-11, then, will demarcate the good actions and passions of the soul from the bad. Indirectly, this horos

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161 Both Tuozzo 1995, 142-143 and Kenny 2016, 182-183 take Aristotle to present two distinct horoi, though they disagree about the way in which these horoi are distinct. Kenny takes the horos of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods to be a horos for virtuous activity that involves the use of natural goods, and the horos of the soul to be a horos for virtuous activity that doesn’t involve these goods. Tuozzo, by contrast, takes the first horos to be a horos for the “outer” aspects of virtuous activity generally, while the horos of the soul is a horos for the “inner” aspect of virtue.
will also demarcate the virtuous states themselves, since the virtues are states of the soul that
dispose individuals to produce the mean passions and actions. This *horos*, if anything, has a claim
to being called the “*horos* of the soul.”

1222b4-11 indicate that *horos* of the soul demarcates *ethically* virtuous and vicious actions,
passions, and states. Does it demarcate *all* good activities and states of the soul from bad ones?
Aristotle does not ever say this, but the most reasonable answer is “yes.” One reason to think this
is that Aristotle explicitly extends the excess-mean-deficiency model to some non-ethical states
and activities of the soul. *Phronēsis*, an intellectual virtue, is included on the chart of virtuous,
excessive, and deficient states of the soul in EE II.3.\(^{162}\) Additionally, in EE III.7 Aristotle
discusses several states of the soul that are means between extremes, but which are not virtues. Righteous
indignation, modesty, dignity, and wit are all praiseworthy mean states, but they are not virtues,
and their opposites are not vices, since they are “without decision” (1234a23-25). While he is not
explicit about what demarcates *phronēsis*, righteous indication, and so on from their corresponding
excessive and deficient vices, the application of the spectrum model to these states makes it
plausible that they too will be demarcated by the *horos* of the soul.

A second, more general reason to think that the *horos* of the soul demarcates all goods of
the soul is that the argument Aristotle uses to argue that the ethical virtues are concerned with
means actually entitles him to much a stronger conclusion. Aristotle argues that in *everything*
continuous and divisible there is excess, deficiency, and mean; change (*kinēsis*) is continuous; and
action (*praxis*) is change (1220b21-27). This line of thought would seem to imply that *any* action

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\(^{162}\) For a discussion of the way in which *phronēsis* can be a mean state, see Pearson 2007, 285-290. It should be noted
that it is unclear that Aristotle’s chart of virtues in EE II.3 is a chart specifically of character virtues. The chart no
doubt appears in the course of his discussion of character virtue. But Aristotle introduces the chart as an illustration
of the kind of mean state virtue, rather than specifically *character* virtue, is (1220b35). Consequently, the appearance
of *phronēsis* on this chart need not incline us to think that this virtue is considered to be a character virtue in the EE.
or passion which the soul undertakes admits of falling on a spectrum. By extension, this would imply that any state responsible for causing those actions and passions likewise falls on a corresponding spectrum of states. If so, the *horos* of the soul would plausibly be the thing which demarcates all the mean actions and mean states of the soul from their excessive and deficient counterparts.

*b. From Horoi to Telē*

If Aristotle presents the two *horoi* I have described, of which sets of goods does he thereby identify a *telos*?

On a first pass, the answer to this question is as follows. In identifying the *horos* of the states and activities of the soul, Aristotle identifies the *telos* of the soul’s good states and activities. And because states and activities are the only goods of the soul (1218b36-37), Aristotle identifies the *telos* of all goods of the soul. Similarly, in presenting the *horos* of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, Aristotle identifies the *telos* of the good choices and instances of possession of the natural goods. Both of these points follow from my earlier claim that the *horos* of a practicable kind is the *telos* of the good instances of that kind.

That Aristotle identifies the *telos* of good choices and havings of the natural goods, however, has an important implication. For in identifying this *telos*, Aristotle also identifies the *telos* of the good instances of the natural goods themselves. In other words, Aristotle identifies the *telos* of all the goods external to the soul as well.

To see that this is so, consider first that any good choice or instance of possession of the natural goods must be a choice or having of a natural good that is actually good. If a choice or having is instead a choice or having of something excessive or deficient, that choice or having
would not be good. A choice to pursue an excessive amount of money, or my possession of this excess, cannot be a good choice or instance of possession. One way to see this is to consider the fact that if \(x\) is the object of a good choice or instance of possession, \(x\) is worthy of choice, i.e. choiceworthy. But, thinks Aristotle, choiceworthiness tracks goodness: choiceworthiness on Aristotle’s view is a proprium of goodness.\(^{163}\)

Next, consider what grounds the fact that a good choice or instance of possession has the \textit{telos} it has. The fact that it has the \textit{telos} it has is explained, at least in part, by the fact that the good that is chosen or possessed itself has that very same \textit{telos}. Consider, for example, my good choice for a particular honor. Suppose my choice of this honor aims at \textit{eudaimonia}. In virtue of what does my choice at \textit{eudaimonia}? The answer to this question must be (at least in part) that the thing I’ve chosen, the honor itself, aims at \textit{eudaimonia}. It is otherwise hard to see how my choice would also aim at \textit{eudaimonia}. If I choose an honor that is not for the sake of \textit{eudaimonia}, but is instead for the sake of villainy, it would be right to say that my choice was not a good one, and that my choice does not have \textit{eudaimonia} as its \textit{telos}.

If this is right, then all good choices and instances of possession have the same \textit{telos} that the goods that are to be chosen and possessed themselves have. Put another way, one can read off from the \textit{telos} of the good choices and havings the \textit{telos} of the genuine external goods that are the object of those choices and havings.

It might be thought that this line of reasoning is insufficient to show that the \textit{telos} of the good choices and instances of possession is also the \textit{telos} of \textit{all} good instances of the natural goods, i.e. of \textit{all} goods external to the soul. Couldn’t there be some external goods that aren’t the object of a good choice or having? The answer to this question is “no.” As I noted earlier, in identifying

\[^{163}\textit{Top. V.6, 135b15-16.}\]
the good choices and havings via the horos of choices and havings, Aristotle identifies the goods that are choiceworthy. But every external good is this: there is no external practicable good that wouldn’t also be worthy of choice. Aristotle, then, really does identify the telos of all external goods in identifying the telos of the good choices and havings of the natural goods.

If this line of reasoning is correct, the final lines of the EE have a structure that nicely maps onto the exhaustive division of goods Aristotle presents at the beginning of EE II.1. As we saw in Chapter Two, Aristotle claims that “all goods are either external to or in the soul” (1218b32). On my reading, Aristotle identifies the telos of the first class of goods in his discussion of the horos of the choices and havings at 1249a21-b19. He identifies the telos of the second class of goods in his much briefer discussion of the horos of the soul at 1249b21-23. Since the II.1 division of goods is exhaustive, Aristotle identifies in the EE’s final lines a telos of every practicable good.

IV. God’s Contemplation as the Horoi

I have argued that Aristotle presents two horoi in the EE’s final lines, and that in doing so he has thereby identified the telos of goods external to the soul and the telos of the goods of the soul. In this section, I turn to the question of what these horoi and, hence, these telē are.

The answer to this question is to be found in the following passages:

Horos of Choice and Possession of Natural Goods (HCPNG): “Whatever choice and instance of possession of the natural goods will produce especially (malista) God’s\textsuperscript{164} contemplation…this is best, and this horos is finest.” (1249b16-19)

Horos of the Soul (HS): “This horos of the soul is best, viz. perceiving least of all the other part of the soul insofar as it is this sort of thing.” (1249b22-23)

\textsuperscript{164} I do not follow the OCT in reading theiou at 1249b17 or to en hēmin theion at 1249b20. The MSS unanimously read theou and ton theon, respectively, and good sense can be made of these readings. Similarly, there is no good reason to follow von Arnim’s 1924, 68 suggestion of nou and noun for theou and theon.
In the following two sections, I argue that Aristotle identifies both the *horos* of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods and the *horos* of the soul as a particular kind of virtuous activity. This activity is “God’s contemplation,” suitably qualified. In this section, I shall argue that Aristotle appears to identify God’s contemplation *simpliciter* as these *horoi*. In the next section, I shall argue that, despite this appearance, his position is more accurately that these *horoi* are God’s contemplation subject to certain qualifications, such as being performed by someone with *teleia* virtue, and being performed in a *teleia* lifetime.

The upshot of this is hopefully clear. If I am right, God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is both the *telos* of the goods external to the soul and the *telos* of the goods of the soul. Because of this, Aristotle really does identify the *telos* of all the practicable goods—*the skopos* of the unqualified goods—in the EE’s concluding lines.

*a. HCPNG*

In HCPNG Aristotle says that those choices and havings which produce especially τῆν τοῦ θεοῦ θεορίαν are the best choices and havings. For the moment, I shall translate τῆν τοῦ θεοῦ θεορίαν neutrally as “the contemplation of God.” Aristotle also says that “this *horos*” is finest. Given that the *horos* of choices and instances of possession is also a *telos*, the only plausible referent of ‘this *horos*’ is the contemplation of God. Nothing else in HCPNG can plausibly serve as a *telos*.

That the contemplation of God is the *horos* is confirmed by the fact that those choices and instances of possession of the natural goods are best which bear a particular relation to the contemplation of God, viz. that of “producing especially” this kind of contemplation. In Chapter Four, I shall argue that this especial production relation is a causal, “for the sake of” relation. In other words, these choices and instances of possession are distinguished as the best *in virtue of*
standing in some relation to the contemplation of God. The contemplation of God, then, does precisely the demarcating work that a *horos* does according to *Horos*.

It might be thought that in calling these choices and instances of possession the *best* rather than simply *good*, the contemplation of God does not distinguish good choices and instances of possession from bad ones. The contemplation of God, it may be objected, distinguishes merely the best choices and instances of possession from all the others. But by ‘best’ in HCPNG, I take Aristotle to have in mind the best of *all* choices and havings of the natural goods. So understood, the “best” such choices and instances of possession can be all the good ones.

What, more precisely, is this *horos*? To answer this question, I must tackle the vexing question of what “*tēn tou theou theōrian*” means (1249b17). There are two possible construals of this phrase. First, *tou theou* could be a subjective genitive: God is the thing that does the contemplating. Alternatively, it could be an objective genitive: God is the object contemplated. On the former construal, “God’s contemplation” would be an appropriate translation to make clear that the genitive is a subjective genitive. On the latter construal, we would have to accept the translation, “the contemplation of God.”

There are also two possible referents for ‘God’. ‘God’ in Aristotle can obviously refer to the Prime Mover, i.e. the God of *Metaphysics* Λ. But ‘God’ can, at least in the EE, also refer to the human intellect (*nous*). This second possible reference is evidenced by a difficult passage near the end of the previous chapter in the EE:

Someone could, however, raise the question whether luck is responsible for this very thing, viz. of desiring what one ought and when one ought. Or will it be responsible for all things in this way? For it will be responsible for thinking (*noēsai*) and for deliberating. For one did not deliberate having deliberated, and

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166 Needler 1926, 62-63; and Dirlmeier 1962, 498-503.
this, in turn, one deliberated, but there is some starting-point, and nor did one think
having thought prior to thinking, and this to infinity. Intellect (nous), then, is not a
starting-point of thinking, nor is counsel a starting-point for deliberating. What
other thing is there, then, except luck? Hence all things will be from luck.

Or is there some starting-point of which there is no other starting-point
beyond it (exô), and this on account of being of this sort is able to produce this sort
of thing? And this is the thing being sought, viz. what the starting-point in the soul
is of motion. Indeed, it is clear: just as in the whole God [is the starting-point
of motion], also in that thing [God would be the starting-point of motion]. For the
divine in us moves all things in a way. And reason (logos) is not the starting-point
of reason, but something greater [is the starting-point]. What then could be greater
than even (kai) knowledge except God? For virtue is a tool of the intellect.

In the first half of this passage, Aristotle considers an argument which apparently shows that luck
is responsible for our episodes of deliberation and thinking. This argument turns on the idea that
any episode of deliberation and any episode of thinking must have a starting-point. Because of
this, no episode of deliberation can be the final starting-point of another episode of deliberation
(since there must be a starting-point of this act of deliberation), and no episode of thinking can be
the final starting-point of thinking. Since acts of deliberation and of thinking cannot have
deliberation and thinking as their final starting-point, the faculties responsible for deliberation and
thinking, counsel and intellect, cannot be the final starting-point either. According to this
argument, the only other starting-point there could be of deliberation and thinking is luck. So luck
is deliberation and thinking’s final starting-point.

Aristotle’s response to this argument is to reject the inference at 1248a21 that because
thinking and deliberation cannot be caused by endless chains of thinking and deliberation, they
cannot be ultimately caused by a faculty, such as intellect or counsel. This is the force of his

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167 My translation here makes clear that Aristotle is asking what the starting-point of motion is, where it is understood
that this starting-point is in the soul. According to Gabbe 2012, 363-364 the phrase tēs hē tēs kinesis archē en tē(i)
psychē(i) is ambiguous between (i) what starting-point in the soul is of motion; and (ii) what is the starting-point of
motion in the soul. But the Greek cannot be construed to yield (ii).
168 I reject Spengel’s supplement, accepted in the OCT, of kai nou at 1248a28-29.
rhetorical question that begins the second paragraph at 1248a23-24. Aristotle points out that there could be something which on account of being of a certain sort (e.g. intellect, nous) is able to produce mental acts of a certain sort (e.g. thinking, noēsai) without itself needing any further starting-point. We needn’t have recourse to luck, then, to explain mental acts like thinking and deliberation.

In the rest of the second paragraph, Aristotle determines what the starting-point of all of our mental activity is. This starting-point is God, also called the “divine in us.” Aristotle does not say which faculty of the soul God is, but the most plausible candidate is the intellect. For one thing, this is the only familiar item in the Aristotelian soul that is plausibly described as greater than even knowledge (epistēmē). In NE X.7, intellect is said to be the greatest of things in us (1177a20). It is also plausibly conceived of as the starting-point of reason, equated with knowledge at 1248a27-28, in that the intellect is responsible for grasping the starting-points of knowledge (NE VI.6/EE V.6, 1141a3-8). For another thing, God’s being intellect explains why Aristotle responds to the argument in the first paragraph by claiming that there is a starting-point which “on account of being of this sort is able to produce this sort of thing.” This makes good sense if intellect is the starting-point for all of the soul’s motions. For among the soul’s motions are acts of the intellect, i.e. thinking, and Aristotle has just considered an argument which denies that intellect could serve as the starting-point for this type of mental act. It is hard to see, by contrast, why Aristotle would respond to the argument in the first paragraph with this point if God isn’t the intellect.

Commentators differ as to whether ‘God’ and ‘the divine in us’ refer to the same thing. Van der Eijk 1989, 30, n. 17; Shields 1994, 127; and Gabbe (ibid.) all deny this, but White 1992, 150, n.24 accepts it.
There are then, two possible referents for ‘God’ in the phrase ‘tēn tou theou theōrian’ and two possible construals of the phrase. This yields the following four possibilities for how to interpret this phrase:

(a) The Prime Mover’s contemplation
(b) the human intellect’s contemplation
(c) the contemplation of the Prime Mover
(d) the contemplation of the human intellect

The ‘of’ in (c) and (d) flags that the Prime Mover and the human intellect are the objects of contemplation.

Of these four possibilities, (a) and (d) can be quickly ruled out. Aristotle is surely not suggesting that the best choices are those which produce (a) the Prime Mover’s contemplation. The Prime Mover contemplates regardless of what we do, and we cannot affect its activity. And while (d) could be brought about through our choices, it would be an odd thing for our choices to aim at. Thinking about our own intellect is not a plausible ultimate aim of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods.

This leaves (b) and (c). On my view, the immediate context of HCPNG provides a strong reason to favor (b) over (c). Consequently, ‘tēn tou theou theōrian’ is best rendered as “God’s contemplation,” with ‘God’ being understood to refer to human intellect (nous).

In the lines leading up to HCPNG, Aristotle says that phronēsis commands for the sake of God (1249b14-15). One consequence of this is that phronēsis commands us to make choices and engage in instances of possession that are for the sake of God. It is these choices, the best ones,

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170 That the activity of nous is contemplation NE X.7 makes clear: “the activity of [intellect] in accordance with its proper virtue would be teleia eudaimonia. That this is contemplative (theōrētikē), has been said” (1177a16-18). Putting aside the Nicomachean view of eudaimonia espoused in this passage, the key point for my purposes is that the intellect’s activity is said to be contemplative.
that feature in HCPNG. These choices, however, are not actually described as “choices and instances of possession that are for the sake of God.” Instead, they are described as “choices and instances of possession [that] will especially produce the contemplation of God.”

This difference between the expected description of the best choices and the actual description Aristotle provides can be somewhat allayed. As I have suggested, and as I discuss later in Chapter Four, the “especial production” relation is a “for the sake of” relation. Effectively, then, Aristotle speaks of the choices and instances of possession that are for the sake of the contemplation of God in HCPNG.

Nevertheless, we are still left with the following oddity. The following descriptions ought both to apply to the same set of choices and instances of possession:

choices and instances of possession that are for the sake of God

choices and instances of possession that are for the sake of the contemplation of God

How could this be so?

This makes good sense if (b) is the right way to understand τῆν τοῦ θεοῦ θεωρίαν. So understood, there is no serious difference in the relata of the “for the sake of” relation between these two descriptions. God, i.e. the human intellect, in its full actuality just is the intellect actively contemplating. It is therefore appropriate to refer to the activated intellect either as “God” or as “God’s contemplation.” The alternative (c), however, presents a serious problem. There is a significant difference between the Prime Mover itself and thinking about the Prime Mover. Indeed, I do not see how the two descriptions could pick out the same choices and instances of possession on this interpretation. The first description refers to choices and instances of possession that are for the sake of the Prime Mover. The second refers to choices and instances of possession
that are for the sake of contemplating the Prime Mover. These are quite different choices and instances of possession.

*Tēn tou theou theōrian*, then, is God’s contemplation, with ‘God’ referring to the human intellect. It is this which Aristotle identifies as the *horos* of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods. Consequently, it is also the *telos* of the goods external to the soul.¹⁷¹

**b. HS**

Let us next turn to the *horos* of the soul (HS): “this *horos* of the soul is best, viz. perceiving least of all¹⁷² the other¹⁷³ part of the soul insofar as it is this sort of thing” (1249b22-23). Here, Aristotle identifies the thing that demarcates good states and activities of the soul from bad ones. This *horos* is not said to be God’s contemplation, at least straight out. But properly understood, “perceiving

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¹⁷¹ Some commentators (Rowe 1971b, 86; Woods 1992, 184; Buddensie 2011, 113-114) would point to Aristotle’s claim that God is “in need of nothing” at 1249b16 as a reason to favor (c) over (b). Their thought is that this claim at 1249b16 makes sense if the God in question is the Prime Mover, since the Prime Mover is completely self-sufficient and truly in need of nothing. But, say they, this doesn’t make sense if the God in question is the human intellect, since the human intellect is in need of all sorts of things in order to engage in contemplation.

This claim at 1249b16, however, can be made sense of even if the God in question is the human intellect. Importantly, this claim comes right after Aristotle has alluded to a twofold distinction of the “that for the sake of which,” a distinction that has been made elsewhere (1249b15), such as at DA II.4, 415b2, b20, and at Meta. Α.7, 1072b2. As is traditionally interpreted (and on the interpretation I favor), this distinction is a distinction between ends and beneficiaries. (But see Gelber 2018 for a contrasting view.) Ross 1936, 509 nicely illustrates this distinction as follows: health is the “that for the sake of which” of the medical art, in that it is the aim of the medical art; a patient is also the “that for the sake of which” of the medical art, in that she is the beneficiary of the medical art. As I understand 1249b16, then, in denying that God is in need of anything, Aristotle simply denies that God is the beneficiary of *phronēsis*’ commands. Instead, God is the “that for the sake of which” in that it is an end. But this can be true of the intellect, or of the intellect in its full actuality. The intellect is not the beneficiary of *phronēsis*’ commands; rather, the human being to whom the intellect belongs is the beneficiary.

¹⁷² I accept Zeller’s emendation of *to hēkista aisthanesthai* (reported in the OCT). This emendation is attractive since it has Aristotle saying what the *horos* of the soul is without resulting in asyndeton (as would result on the MSS readings). Many translators understand Aristotle to be stating a *horos* at 1249b22-23, though in some cases it is unclear which text they are reading. Inwood and Woolf 2013 are an exception, and translate the OCT text as, “And this applies to the soul, and it is the best limit for the soul when one is least aware of the irrational part of the soul as such.”

¹⁷³ Following the MSS, I read *allou* for the OCT’s *alogou*. Most translators and commentators accept the emendation, first proposed by Fritzscbe 1851. But Décarie 1978, 225, n.99; Buddensiek 2011, 105; Simpson 2013, 188; and Dalimier 2013, 334, n.70 are exceptions.
least of all the other part of the soul insofar as it is this sort of thing” is God’s contemplation, described in other words.

In speaking of the “other part” of the soul, HS naturally invites the question, “Other than what?” The answer is that this part is “other” than the theoretical part of the soul. Aristotle refers to the “theoretical (sc. part)” (to theōrētikon) of the soul not ten lines earlier at 1249b13. He additionally speaks of the activity of this part, viz. God’s contemplation, at 1249b17 and again at 1249b20-21. These points clearly make the theoretical part a salient part of the soul in the context of HS. Furthermore, Aristotle does not make any reference to any other part of the soul before speaking of the “other” part at 1249b22-23. The theoretical part, then, is the only salient part of the soul in this context. When Aristotle speaks of “the other part,” he is referring to the part of the soul that isn’t the theoretical part.174

Aristotle does not discuss the nature of the theoretical part in the EE, but the fact that he calls it the “theoretical part” is significant. Recall that near the beginning of NE VI/EE V, Aristotle divides that rational part of the soul into two further parts. One is responsible for scientific knowledge and is called “to epistēmonikon.” The other rational part, being responsible for practical matters, is called “to logistikon” (1139a12). Analogously, then, to theōrētikon would be the part of the soul responsible for theoretical activity. While there are no doubt cases where theorizing can be done within the practical or productive sciences, theoretical knowledge is more typically distinguished from practical and productive knowledge,175 and includes only properly scientific knowledge. Consequently, the contemplative part at issue in the EE’s final lines is the

174 Dalimier (ibid.) agrees.
175 In the EE: 1221b5, 1227b28-30; cf. the reference to theoretical philosophy at 1214a13. Also cf. NE/EE 1139a27-28; and Meta. 993b20-21; 1025b25-26; 1026b5; and 1064a16-18.
part concerned with theoretical knowledge, understood as a kind of knowledge contrasted with that found in the practical or productive arts.

Of course, the fact that this part is responsible for theoretical contemplation does not imply that it is responsible for only this form of cognition. Indeed, some commentators claim that *to theōrētikon* is the entire rational part of the soul, responsible for both theoretical and practical reasoning.\(^{176}\) Although it is referred to here under its “theoretical” guise, it is also responsible for practical cognition. But this view is implausible for a few different reasons.

First, if Aristotle really has the whole rational part of the soul in mind, he refers to it in a rather surprising way. The rational part as a whole was earlier called “the part which has reason,” introduced back in II.1 (1220a9). This is how Aristotle clearly and unambiguously refers to the whole rational part. It would be strange if, although he has this part in mind, and although he has clearer vocabulary which he used to refer to it earlier, he decides to introduce new vocabulary now, at the very end of the EE, to refer to this part.

Indeed (and this is my second point), given the similarity of vocabulary, it is much more plausible that *to theōrētikon* is a literally neutered way of referring to what Aristotle calls in DA the theoretical intellect (*ho theōrētikos nous*, 415a11-12; 433a15). But Aristotle notes that the theoretical intellect differs from the practical intellect, and that it is practical, not theoretical, intellect that is involved in bringing action about (433a9-20).

My final point depends on how we read some of the argument leading up to HCPNG. I will discuss this argument more in Chapter Five. As I read this argument, *to theōrētikon* and ‘God’ refer to the same thing at 1249b13-14. But I cannot see how Aristotle would find it sensible to refer to the part of the soul that engages in practical reasoning as ‘God’. Aristotle is insistent in

\(^{176}\) See, e.g., Verdenius 1971, 291-293; and Rowe 1971b, 86.
NE X.8 that the gods do not engage in any kind of practical activity (1178b7-23). They are unsullied by such vulgar affairs, and instead spend all of their time engaged in theoretical contemplation. Given this, how could a part of the soul connected to practical rationality deserve the name ‘God’ in Aristotle’s eyes?

The theoretical part, then, is responsible for theoretical contemplation and only this. And it is this part so understood to which the other part of the soul referred to at 1249b22-23 stands as other. On this reading, the other part of the soul will be the rest of the soul, i.e. all the parts of the soul that aren’t responsible for theoretical knowledge. This other part obviously include parts of the soul like the nutritive or the perceptual part. But it will also include the parts of the soul that are responsible for one’s practical and productive knowledge. Indeed, any part responsible for anything other than contemplation will be included in the “other” part.

On a first pass, then, the horos of the soul is to perceive least of all the soul’s non-theoretical part. This seems to be another way of referring to the soul’s contemplative activity. When contemplating, one is not focused on practical matters, bodily pleasures and pains, sense perceptions, etc. One is perceiving least of all the other part of the soul when reflecting on, say, scientific truths or definitions of natural kinds. Instead, one perceives mainly the theoretical or divine soul part, whose activity is responsible for one’s theoretical contemplation.

I say “on a first pass” because Aristotle’s description of the horos of the soul is not simply perceiving least of all the other part of the soul, but doing so insofar as the other part of the soul is “this sort of thing.” By “this sort of thing” I take Aristotle to mean “the other part of the soul,” or “the part other than the theoretical part.” The point of his qualification is this. In contemplating,

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177 Verdenius 1971, 292 cites 1226b25-26 as evidence that to theōrētikon is capable of deliberation. But Aristotle does not claim in these lines that the theoretical part simpliciter is deliberative. Rather, Aristotle’s claim is that “the part of the soul capable of contemplating a certain cause is deliberative.” But there is no evidence that to theōrētikon is “the part capable of contemplating a certain cause”.

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one might well need to utilize the other, non-theoretical part of one’s soul. Contemplating abstract principles of physics might rely, in part, on one’s ability to imagine certain things, and consequently involve the use of one’s imagination (\textit{phantasia}).\footnote{This is suggested by, e.g., DA III.7, 431b2; III.8, 432a7-9; and DM 449b31-32, at least to the extent that contemplating involves understanding (\textit{noe\i n}). For recent discussion of what passages such as these actually commit Aristotle to see Cohoe 2016. It is unnecessary for me to take a particular view about whether any kind of understanding can be achieved without the use of images. Provided that some instances of theoretical contemplation involve understanding that relies on one’s \textit{phantasia}, Aristotle recognizes that one must use the non-theoretical part of the soul in contemplating.} Similarly, in contemplating a geometric proof by means of a visual diagram, one’s sensory capacity for sight plays a vital role. Given that contemplation involves perceptions of this sort, Aristotle presumably does not wish to exclude these perceptions of the non-theoretical soul part in his description of the soul’s \textit{horos}. To flag that he does not mean to exclude these kinds of perceptions, Aristotle specifies that one is to perceive least of all the other part of the soul \textit{insofar as it is the other part}. He is, in other words, excluding specifically those perceptions of the non-theoretical part which are not integral to contemplation.

Despite the difference in description, then, the \textit{horos} of the soul proves to be God’s contemplation as well. HS therefore articulates precisely the same \textit{horos} for the states and activities of the soul that HCPNG does for the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods.

According to my argument in sections I-III of this chapter, this entails that the \textit{telos} of both the goods external to the soul and the \textit{telos} of goods of the soul is God’s contemplation. And given that all of the practicable goods are exhaustively divided into these external and internal goods, God’s contemplation is the \textit{telos} for all of the practicable goods there are. Aristotle, then, really has said what the \textit{skopos} of the unqualified goods—the \textit{telos} of the practicable goods—is in the EE’s final lines.
c. Serving God?

In between HCPNG and HS, Aristotle characterizes bad choices and instances of possession of the natural goods:

Criterion of Bad Choice or Possession (CBCP): “Whatever [choice and instance of possession of the natural goods] either on account of deficiency or on account of excess prevents serving God and contemplating, this is bad.” (1249b19-21).

One might think that CBCP poses a problem for my interpretation. In particular, it might be thought that CBCP implies that the horos of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods is both serving God and contemplating. After all, Aristotle seems to be suggesting that both serving God and contemplating demarcate bad such choices and havings. So understood, CBCP would be a “negative” formulation of the horos of choices and instances of possessions of the natural goods.

This interpretation faces two problems. First, Aristotle does not present CBCP as a statement that identifies a horos. He says only that the choices and instances of possession described in CBCP are bad. This contrasts with both HCPNG and HS, in which Aristotle explicitly identifies horoi. In this context, the fact that Aristotle does not claim that CBCP articulates a horos indicates that he doesn’t take himself to be identifying a horos in CBCP. Second, given that God’s contemplation is identified as the horos for the choice and instances of possession of natural goods in HCPNG, it is difficult to see how Aristotle can also maintain that this horos is both serving God and contemplating. He could do so only if serving God and contemplating were the same activity, since otherwise he would be presenting two different horoi for the choices and instances of
possession of the natural goods. But it would be strange for these to be the same activity. After all, contemplating is referred to in both HCPNG and CBCP. Why would the additional notion of serving God in CBCP be invoked to refer to what ‘God’s contemplation’ in HCPNG refers to when CBCP also contains the word ‘contemplating’?

I deny, then, that CBCP identifies a horos. Instead, this claim is simply a description of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods which are bad. Bad choices and havings can described as those that prevent serving God and contemplating without it being the case that what demarcates them as bad is both such service and contemplating. What must be shown is why it turns out that when God’s contemplation alone is the horos, choices and instances of possession that stymie the service of God are bad. But provided that this can be shown, CBCP is consistent with my reading of HCPNG.

To show this, I must clarify what serving God is. Unfortunately, Aristotle says almost nothing about serving God in his writings, and what he does say is unhelpful. When Aristotle argues in the Politics that elder citizens should be assigned the role of priesthood and offer service to the gods, he almost certainly has in mind things like sacrifices and worship (1329a30-34). While we could never rule out with certainty that this is what Aristotle has in mind in the EE’s final lines, it would be surprising if bad choices and havings turned out to be those that impeded either God’s contemplation or…religious sacrifice and worship, about which nothing has been said in the EE. It is also unlikely that serving God in this traditional sense would amount in Aristotle’s eyes to serving God understood as the human intellect.

179 Broadie 2003, 57, n. 12 seems to hold such a view. She takes the kai at 1249b20 epexegetically. It is odd, however, for Aristotle to introduce “serving God” in CBCP only to then immediately explain it in terms of contemplation. The introduction of this apparently distinct activity rather suggests that it is something additional to contemplating.
Commentators, then, are left to speculate about what serving God could be. Looking to the *Euthyphro*, Kenny argues that serving God is a matter of performing ethically virtuous activity. Broadie employs a similar *Euthyphro*-informed strategy. On her view, however, serving God is a matter of having the property in virtue of which one is loved by the gods. This property, as we learn from NE 1179a22-32 is contemplating. Thus, “piety towards god is, in its truest form, the disposition for intellectual activity engaged in as by the *sophos*, i.e. purely for love of the activity itself.” Finally, Jost, eschewing the *Euthyphro*, opts for a reading according to which serving God is the activity of caring for oneself as a contemplator. On Jost’s view, serving God amounts to making sure that one has sufficient leisure time and resources that one needs to contemplate, as well as ethically cultivating oneself.

I am sympathetic to Kenny and Broadie’s strategy of looking to the *Euthyphro* for guidance about what serving God is. The *Euthyphro* is the philosophical work that naturally comes to mind when thinking about piety in a philosophical context, and one that Aristotle’s readers would have been familiar with. Since we have almost nothing to go on from Aristotle himself, it makes sense to glean what we can from texts by other contemporary philosophers who discuss service to the gods in greater detail. But I depart from both Kenny and Broadie regarding the lesson we’re supposed to learn from looking to the *Euthyphro*. Indeed, the result of taking this strategy is basically Jost’s view.

In the *Euthyphro*, Euthyphro suggests that the service to the gods that constitutes piety is the kind of service that slaves provide when serving their masters (13d4-6). Socrates takes this

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180 Kenny 1992, 102 and 2016, 178. This reading is also endorsed by Buddensiek 2011, 115.
182 Jost 2014, 308-309.
183 ΣΩ. Εἶεν· ἀλλὰ τίς δὴ θεῶν θεραπεία εἴη ἂν ἢ ὁσιότης; ΕΥΘ. Ἡνπερ, ὦ Σωκράτες, οἱ δοῦλοι τοῦς δεσπότας θεραπεύουσιν.
to mean that piety consists in human beings assisting the gods in doing their bidding, who by means of this assistance accomplish many fine things. Now, Socrates’ own suggestion cannot be Aristotle’s view. But Euthyphro’s initial suggestion that serving the gods is the kind of service that a slave provides to his master is quite relevant to the EE’s final lines. For in these lines Aristotle says that human beings are supposed to live in relation to the “ruling thing,” just as a slave lives in relation to his master (1249b6-8), and that God is an archē, or ruling principle, for the human being (1249b14).184 Aristotle, then, can accept something like Euthyphro’s proposal that serving God is a matter of standing to God as a slave does to a master. But Aristotle must depart from Socrates’ suggestion about what this means. For, as Aristotle points out, God rules not by commanding, but rather by being a final cause. Interpreted with the Euthyphro in the background, serving God amounts to the idea that human beings should lead lives that are directed towards and focused on God’s contemplation.

This proposal for what it is to serve God leads to the following interpretation of CBCP. A choice or instance of possession which stymies one’s efforts to lead a life ruled by God in the way specified in EE VIII.3, or stymies God’s contemplation itself, is a bad choice. This makes sense given that the horos for the choices and instances of possessions of the natural goods is God’s contemplation. If the good choices and instances of possession are those which produce especially God’s contemplation, then choices and havings that stymie contemplation directly, or more generally prevent one from acting in ways that produce contemplation, are bad choices. But this does not entail that serving God is itself part of the horos of the choices and instances of possession. God’s contemplation all by itself makes it the case that those choices and havings which prevent serving God—i.e. acting in ways conducive to contemplation—are bad choices and havings.

184 I discuss these lines in detail in Chapter Five.
V. Teleia Life and Teleia Virtue

I have argued that Aristotle apparently identifies theoretical activity—“God’s contemplation”—as the $skopos$ of the unqualified goods, and, thereby, the $telos$ of the practicable goods. Of course, as we saw in Chapter One, Aristotle maintains that $eudaimonia$ is the $telos$ of the practicable goods. It would seem to follow, then, that Aristotle apparently identifies God’s contemplation as $eudaimonia$ in the EE.

This interpretive conclusion must be qualified. For Aristotle’s identifying $eudaimonia$ as God’s contemplation $simpliciter$ does not accord with the conclusion of the $ergon$ argument. As I argued in Chapter Two, the conclusion of this argument was that $eudaimonia$ belongs to the kind $activity$ of a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue. If Aristotle really does identify the $telos$ of practicable goods in the EE’s final lines, he ought to say that the $horos$ of the choices and havings of the natural goods, as well as the $horos$ of the soul, is God’s contemplation as performed in a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue.

It must be admitted that Aristotle does not add the needed qualifications to his statements of what these $horoi$ are. But it would be wrong to conclude from this that Aristotle does not intend for these qualifications to be understood $implicitly$ in his statements of the $horoi$. Accuracy might well demand for him to be explicit and add the necessary qualifications. But it is also respectable for him to be brief and not add all these qualifications in HCPNG and HS. Aristotle has stated clearly in EE II the kind to which $eudaimonia$ belongs. He can expect readers to fill in his account with the needed qualifications in EE VIII.3. There is no need for him to state the full description of the $horoi$. 

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Furthermore, the context of Aristotle’s statements of the horoi suggest that he has these qualifications in mind. When Aristotle begins his discussion of the horos of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, he says that there ought to be a horos for the excellent person (tō(i) spoudaiō(i), 1249a24). This person is the “fine and good” individual discussed earlier in VIII.3, i.e. the person with teleia virtue, “fineness and goodness.” The horos of choices and instances of possession, then, is specifically a horos for someone who, when they engage in God’s contemplation, will do so by exercising teleia virtue. Although Aristotle does not specify whom the horos of the soul is for, it is presumably likewise specifically for the fine and good individual. God’s contemplation when identified as the horoi for the excellent person will indeed be performed in accordance with teleia virtue.

A similar point can be made about the idea of God’s contemplation being performed in a teleia life. In the lines leading up to his statement of the two horoi, Aristotle speaks of living, or leading a life (zēn) in relation to one’s ruling element (1249b6-7). The horoi, then, are presented in a context in which Aristotle discusses how one ought to lead a life. One consequence of this is that God’s contemplation is the activity which ought to take a dominant, ruling role in one’s life plans. It is, as Aristotle characterizes eudaimonia in I.2, that thing around which one’s life is to be organized (1214b10-11). God’s contemplation, then, is conceived by Aristotle in the final lines as something achieved in a properly organized, suitably long life—a teleia life, however we are precisely to understand “teleia.”

More precisely, in the EE’s final lines Aristotle argues for

(Claim B) The telos of the practicable goods is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.
The “suitable qualification” here are, at the very least, those mentioned at the end of the *ergon* argument.\(^{185}\)

**VI. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that Aristotle argues for (Claim B) in the EE’s final lines. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, proves to be both the *horos* of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods and the *horos* of the soul. It follows from this that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the *telos* of the goods external to the soul and of the goods of the soul. But this, of course, means that it is the *telos* of all of the practicable goods.

This result, when combined with Aristotle’s earlier (Claim A), that *eudaimonia* is the *telos* of the practicable goods, yields the conclusion that *eudaimonia* is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Thus, at the very end of the EE, Aristotle has finally identified what *eudaimonia* is. “God’s contemplation, suitably qualified,” is certainly a contentful description of *eudaimonia*. It allows us to pick out *eudaimonia* from everything else in the world. Indeed, this might constitute a definition of *eudaimonia*, though I have not attempted to argue that Aristotle’s argument entitles him to a definition.

Two important questions remain outstanding. First, can God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, actually play the causal role *eudaimonia* plays according to Aristotle? Can it, for example, cause the other virtuous activities and the virtues that underlie them to be intrinsically good? If so, how? Second, why does Aristotle think that the two *horoi* that are the subject of the

\(^{185}\) What about the other necessary conditions I argued *eudaimonia* has in Chapter Two? (i) Just before Aristotle begins his discussion of the *horoi*, he says that the unqualified goods are pleasant, with pleasure arising only in action (1249a18-19). The contemplation of God is clearly both an unqualified good and an action, so it should be pleasant. But if it is pleasant, it is unimpeded according to the doctrine of NE VII/EE VI. (ii) It is obvious that the contemplation of God does not involve any choosing anything bad, and that it isn’t more choiceworthy that one not perform it. So the contemplation of God will also be a *teleia* use of virtue.
EE’s final lines should be identified as God’s contemplation, suitably qualified? Aristotle offers
an argument for this at 1249b6-16, but this argument has yet to be examined. These outstanding
questions are the topics of Chapter Four and Five.
Chapter Four: How God’s Contemplation, Suitably Qualified, Causes Goodness

In the previous three chapters I have argued that *eudaimonia* in the EE is God’s contemplation as performed in a *teleia* life in accordance with *teleia* virtue. In Chapters One and Two, I argued that *eudaimonia* is the *telos* of practicable goods (Claim A), and that this *telos* belongs to the kind *activity of a teleia life in accordance with teleia virtue*. I then argued in Chapter Three that the activity, so performed, which serves as the *telos* is God’s contemplation (Claim B). Since God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the *telos* of practicable goods, it is also *eudaimonia*.

As we saw earlier in EE I.8, the *telos* of practicable goods causes *goodness*. The *telos* of the practicable goods is that item which is responsible for the other practicable goods being good (1218b16-20). In arguing for (Claim B), then, Aristotle commits himself to thinking that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, plays this causal role. This striking axiological claim is the subject of the present chapter. If Aristotle’s Eudemian theory of *eudaimonia* is to be coherent, it needs to be the case that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, could plausibly serve as this cause.

The aim of this chapter, then, is to sketch the theory of value that (Claim B), along with other claims in the EE, commits Aristotle to. This is particularly welcome, since Aristotle never spells out why the other practicable goods are good in the EE. We must instead piece together his view from the clues he provides in the treatise. My contention is that, once the pieces are brought together, a reasonable axiology emerges.

That said, I take the results of this chapter to be more tentative than those of the previous three chapters. Little is said directly in the EE about the “for the sake of” relation. Indeed, it is a fair question of just how far Aristotle got in his own thinking about how goodness is caused by *eudaimonia* according to his Eudemian theory. The account I shall offer is my “best guess” as to
what he would say on the question of how it is that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, causes the goodness of the other practicable goods. What I am confident about is that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, plays the final causal role eudaimonia is said to play in EE I.8. How exactly it does so, as we shall see, is a somewhat speculative matter.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In section I I lay out four kinds of goodness that Aristotle distinguishes in EE VIII.3: goodness as an end, goodness not as an end, natural fineness, and non-natural fineness. I further clarify these forms of goodness in section II, where I argue that these different forms of goodness bear close connections to the properties of choiceworthiness and, in some cases, praiseworthiness. Next, in sections III and IV I turn to the shape of explanations which Aristotle can avail himself of for why goods exhibit these forms of goodness. The explanation must always involve the fact that the good in question stands in a “for the sake of” relation, understood as a production relation, to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Nevertheless, “for the sake of” relations of this kind can be instantiated in different ways, and this allows Aristotle to account for different forms of goodness. Additionally, in some cases the practicable good related to eudaimonia might itself have or lack some property that allows or disallows a certain form of goodness to be exhibited by it. Using these resources, I explain in sections V and VI how the four forms of goodness are caused by God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

I. The Explananda

a. Four Forms of Goodness

Aristotle distinguishes four kinds of goods in EE VIII.3. In doing so, he thereby implies a fourfold division of different kinds of goodness.

Three kinds of goods feature in the following passage:
Indeed, being good and being fine and good differ not only in virtue of their names but in virtue of themselves. For among all goods are ends, the very things which are choiceworthy for their own sake. And among these are fine things, as many which being [sc. choiceworthy] on account of themselves are, all of them, praiseworthy. (1248b16-20)

This passage opens Aristotle discussion of the difference between being good and being fine and good. These properties seem to be properties that people have, since he goes on after this passage to explain the difference between the good person and the fine and good person (1248b26-37). These properties not my concern. Rather, what is of interest are the different kinds of goods Aristotle invokes in the course of explaining the difference between someone being good and being fine and good. His invocation of these goods, in turn, provides some evidence that he recognizes different kinds of goodness.

At 1248b18-19, Aristotle notes that some goods are ends, which are things that are choiceworthy “for their own sake.” This implies that some things have the property of goodness as an end. This property bears some interesting connection to being choiceworthy for one’s own sake, which I shall discuss in the next section.

Of course, Aristotle says that the ends are among all goods, which suggests that there are other things which are good but which aren’t good as an end. For lack of a better term, these items have goodness not as an end. Nothing further is said about these goods or this kind of goodness in this passage.

Nothing in this passage suggests that the same thing can’t exhibit both forms of goodness, of course. The passage above implies only that there are some things which exhibit goodness as an end; and some things which exhibit merely goodness not as an end. This is consistent with there being things that exhibit both of these kinds of goodness.

186 I follow Rowe ms. in rejecting Bussemaker’s addition of kai at 1248b17, accepted by the OCT.
In the last lines of the passage, Aristotle refers to a third class of goods, the fine (kala) things. The fine things compose a subset of ends (toutōn, 1248b19). They are characterized by a difficult hosā clause: ὅσα δι’ αὑτὰ ὄντα πάντα ἐπαινετὰ ἐστίν. The chief difficulty with this clause is how to make sense of onta without any predicate.\textsuperscript{187}

Some have suggested that “being on account of themselves” (di’ hauta onta) amounts to existing on account of themselves.\textsuperscript{188} This is a natural thought, given the lack of a predicate for onta. But it is difficult to see how all of the things which Aristotle identifies as fine exist on account of themselves. A virtuous state, for example, depends on a soul for its existence. Others challenge the existence of onta itself and seclude it.\textsuperscript{189} But while one might be able to tell a plausible story of how onta got into the text, seclusion of a word found in all of the manuscripts should be the solution of last resort.

We should read onta but not understand it existentially. Instead, we should translate it as “being” and supply a predicate from the context. Participles of einai with an implicit predicate are not unheard of,\textsuperscript{190} and we must remember that this is an inelegant line. The best candidate for

\textsuperscript{187} Another problem with this clause is the presence of panta. It would be much better placed outside of the clause and coordinate with hosā. Indeed Spengel suggested moving panta to immediately after kala as one possible emendation for this line. Others have suggested to emend panta to panti (Ross) or to haireta (Spengel). It isn’t pretty, but perhaps panta can be kept as an inelegant way of emphasizing that all of the goods Aristotle has in mind are praiseworthy. One might capture the inelegant placement of panta as follows: “and among these are fine things, as many things as being on account of themselves are— all of them—praiseworthy.”

\textsuperscript{188} Décarie 1978; Cooper 1999, 271; Simpson 2013.

\textsuperscript{189} Verdenius 1971, 285, n.1 seems to be the first person to have suggested this: “As justice and temperance can hardly be imagined to exist for their own sakes, onta should be bracketed as a dittoigraphy.” Woods 1992, 199 follows Verdenius explicitly. Based on how they translate the hosā clause Dalimier 2011, Kenny 2011, and Inwood and Woolf 2013 likewise think that onta should be secluded.

\textsuperscript{190} An example occurs at Sophist 233c6-8:
ΞΕ. Πάντα ἄρα σοφοὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς φαίνονται.
ΘΕΑ. Τι μὴν;
ΞΕ. Οὐκ ὄντες γε.
EV: [Sophists], then, appear to their students wise in all things.
THEA: Of course.
EV: But they aren’t [sc. wise].

As Brown 1986 writes of this passage, “the reader has not understood the phrase ouk ontes ge unless he supplies sophoi, wise, from two lines before” (53).
what to supply is *haireta*. The phrase *di’ hauta* is a close alternative rendering of *hautōn heneka*, and since *haireta* is paired with *hautōn heneka* in the previous sentence, it’s natural that it would also be paired with *di’ hauta*.

Consequently, I translate 1248b19-20 as, “And among these are fine things, as many as being [sc. choiceworthy] on account of themselves are—all of them—praiseworthy.”¹⁹¹ Like all ends, the fine things are choiceworthy on account of themselves. What distinguishes fine things from other ends is their *praiseworthiness*.¹⁹²

In recognizing fine things as a distinct class of goods, Aristotle also implies that certain things exhibit *fineness*, a particular kind of goodness. Similar to goodness as an end, fineness bears an interesting connection to the properties of being choiceworthy on account of oneself and being praiseworthy.

In the passage above, Aristotle does not make or imply any distinctions among different forms of fineness. But as EE VIII.3 continues, such a distinction emerges. At 1248b36-37 Aristotle identifies the virtues and the *erga* from virtue as fine. A bit further on, however, he claims that “the things that are not fine by nature but are good by nature” are fine for the fine and

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¹⁹¹ Hat-tip to Brad Inwood for this suggested translation.
¹⁹² This translation leaves ambiguous whether fine things are simply praiseworthy or praiseworthy *on account of themselves*. I shall not settle this issue.

Cooper 1999, 272 n.28 claims that the idea of things being praised on account of themselves is “a non-Aristotelian, maybe nonsensical idea” on grounds of what Aristotle says at NE I.12, 1101b12-18. Cooper does not go into detail about this point, but what I think he has in mind is Aristotle’s view that we praise things on the basis of their standing in a relation to something good. Aristotle seems to have a similar view in the EE when he claims that other things are praised on account of *eudaimonia*, either by being referred to *eudaimonia* or by being a part of *eudaimonia* (II.1, 1219b12-13). If things are praised because they stand in some relation to a good thing, or to *eudaimonia* specifically, Cooper wonders, how can they be praiseworthy on their own account?

As I hope to show, Cooper’s thought is wrong in at least two ways. First, being X on account of oneself is not to be understood as being X independently of *any* relation to another thing. Indeed, I shall argue that to be choiceworthy on account of oneself is simply to be choiceworthy independently of whatever actual consequences one produces. If this is right, it is sensible that something can be at once praiseworthy on account of itself and praiseworthy in virtue of bearing some connection to *eudaimonia*. Second, I shall argue that being praiseworthy does not mean literally being worthy of just *epainos*. Aristotle maintains in the EE that *eudaimonia* is praiseworthy, but this, obviously, cannot be because it is worthy of *epainos*.
good person (1249a4-5). There appear, then, to be two kinds of fine things: some things are fine by nature, while others are fine not by nature. Consequently, there are two different kinds of fineness: *natural fineness*, and *non-natural fineness*.

In sum, Aristotle implies a fourfold distinction of different kinds of goodness in EE VIII.3. These forms of goodness are (i) goodness as an end; (ii) goodness not as an end; (iii) natural fineness; and (iv) non-natural fineness. According to what I have argued in the previous three chapters, something’s exhibiting any of these forms of goodness is to be explained by way of a final causal connection that the good in question bears to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

*b. What Will Remain Unexplained*

Although this taxonomy of kinds of goodness covers a substantial amount of goodness, I do not claim that it is exhaustive. Indeed, this is not Aristotle’s only taxonomy of goodness. As we saw in Chapter One of this dissertation, Aristotle maintains that goodness is as homonymous as being is (1217b25-26). An implication of this is that the goodness exhibited by a substance is a fundamentally different kind of goodness than that exhibited by, say, a quality or quantity. Consequently, Aristotle would also seem to recognize a tenfold division of different kinds of categorical goodness: substance-goodness, quality-goodness, etc.

A second division of goodness that Aristotle might recognize in the EE features explicitly in the NE. At NE 1104b30-31 Aristotle claims that there are three objects of choice, viz. the fine, the advantageous, and the pleasant. It is unclear whether these objects of choices are good *things* or forms of *goodness*. But in either case, this passage would imply that Aristotle recognizes fineness, advantageousness, and pleasantness as distinct forms of goodness. Although Aristotle does not draw this distinction among goods or forms of goodness in the EE, it is possibly at play
in a couple of different places in the treatise. Aristotle seems to use some such division when he 
distinguishes his three forms of friendship according to the different goods they’re based on 
(1236a7-15). Similarly, when he identifies *eudaimonia* as the best, finest, and most pleasant good 
at the very beginning of the EE, this might be a claim to the effect that *eudaimonia* is the superlative 
good in each of these three categories.\(^{193}\)

Neither of these alternative divisions of goodness obviously maps onto the division I have 
highlighted in EE VIII.3. Consequently, my account of how forms of goodness (i)-(iv) are caused 
does not necessarily show how *all* Aristotelian forms of goodness are caused. Nevertheless, the 
taxonomy I am focusing on is no doubt an important Eudemian taxonomy of goodness. If it can 
be shown that the different forms of goodness in this taxonomy can be explained according to the 
explanatory theory Aristotle offers in the EE, this offers some promise that the remaining forms 
of goodness can be so explained as well.

Another kind of goodness that I shall not account for is the goodness that agents can exhibit. 
As I mentioned earlier, the passage from which I draw the several different kinds of goodness of 
interest is a passage in which Aristotle is primarily concerned with explaining the difference 
between being a good agent and being a fine and good agent. While such kinds of goodness are 
conceptually connected to those exhibited by items and by actions, I shall not discuss what these 
connections are. This is because it is unclear that agents are among the goods whose goodness 
*eudaimonia* is the cause of. When Aristotle claims that *eudaimonia* is the cause of the goodness 
of other goods in I.8, he does not have the goodness of people in mind. People do not seem to be 
among the goods achievable in action.

\(^{193}\) As suggested by Cooper 1999, 266.
Finally, as I suggested in Chapter One, Aristotle might have an extremely fine-grained view of the homonymy of goodness, according to which goods that fall into different definable kinds also differ in respect of their goodness. If this is indeed Aristotle’s view, then there will be an incredible variety of forms of goodness to account for. I believe that the account of the fourfold division of goodness I shall offer here could be extended to explain these more fine-grained varieties. But I will not discuss this issue in what follows.

II. Goodness and Fineness

What more, if anything, can be said about what the different forms of goodness are as delineated by (i)-(iv)?

Aristotle never offers an account of goodness or of fineness that can safely be said to be his own. There are a number of definitions of goodness and fineness presented in the *Rhetoric* (1362a21-b2, 1366a33-36). But rhetoric for Aristotle is “the capacity to observe in each case the possibly persuasive thing” (1355b25-26). Definitions such as these are meant to serve as the basis for persuasive arguments presented by would-be rhetoricians, not necessarily true ones. We cannot infer from the fact that Aristotle offers a definition of *x* in the *Rhetoric* that it is his own definition of *x*. Since Aristotle doesn’t offer any definitions for goodness or fineness anywhere else, it doesn’t seem that we can hope for any illuminating definitions of these forms of goodness from him.

A different tack for achieving clarity is suggested by Aristotle’s characterization of ends as those things which are choiceworthy for their own sakes (1248b18-19), and his claim that naturally fine things are things which are choiceworthy on account of themselves and praiseworthy (1249b19-20). These characterizations intimate some interesting connections between (certain
kinds of) choiceworthiness and praiseworthiness, and (certain kinds of) goodness. Articulating what, more precisely, these connections are would shed some light on what the various forms of goodness (i)-(iv) are, even if this would fall short of hitting upon their definitions.

In this section, I shall offer an account of what these connections are. The connections can be thought of as having two important components: a necessary coextension claim, and a grounding claim. On Aristotle’s view, goodness is necessarily coextensive with choiceworthiness. In other words, \( x \) is good just in case \( x \) is choiceworthy. This, in turn, suggests the more fine-grained theses that goodness as an end is necessarily coextensive with choiceworthiness on account of oneself; and that goodness not as an end is necessarily coextensive with choiceworthiness on account of something else. Similarly, natural fineness is necessarily coextensive with choiceworthiness on account of oneself and praiseworthiness. (Aristotle doesn’t say enough about things which are non-naturally fine to attribute an interesting coextension thesis to him.) When it comes to grounding, in each case the respective form of goodness grounds the respective form of choiceworthiness or praiseworthiness. For example, it is because something is good as an end that it is choiceworthy for its own sake.

**a. Goodness and Choiceworthiness**

Let us begin with the connection between goodness and choiceworthiness in general. Two points support my claim that, for Aristotle, goodness and choiceworthiness are necessarily coextensive.

First, in a number of places Aristotle switches from speaking of goodness to speaking of choiceworthiness or vice-versa cavalierly, without any apparent need to explain this switch in terminology. Take, for example, 1214a30-33: “And being *eudaimōn* and living blessedly and well would be in three things most of all, things which seem to be the most choiceworthy. For some
people say that *phronēsis* is the greatest good, others virtue, and others pleasure.” Again, at 1218b32-34: “All goods, indeed, are either external to or in the soul, and of these the ones in the soul are more choiceworthy.” Consider also the following passage in the NE: “Indeed, with an argument of this sort Plato too refutes the view that pleasure is the good. For the pleasant life is more choiceworthy with *phronēsis* than without, and if the mixed thing is better (*kretton*), pleasure is not the good. For the good does not become more choiceworthy with anything being added to it” (1172b28-32). In each of these passages, Aristotle shifts effortlessly from calling something choiceworthy to calling it good, or vice-versa. It is hard to see how this is licit unless choiceworthiness and goodness were necessarily coextensive.

The second piece of evidence is Aristotle’s claim “the choiceworthy is a proprium (*idion*) of the good” (*Top.* V.6, 135b15-16). A proprium, according to Aristotle, “belongs to the thing [of which it is a proprium] alone and is counterpredicated with the thing. E.g. being receptive of literacy is a proprium of a human being. For if he is a human being, he is receptive of literacy, and if he is receptive of literacy, he is a human being” (102a18-22). Here, Aristotle illustrates counterpredication through necessary coextension: if A is counterpredicated with B, then if something is A, it’s B, and vice-versa. Since the choiceworthy is a proprium of the good, Aristotle must think that if something is choiceworthy, it’s good, and vice-versa.194

The fact that choiceworthiness is a proprium of goodness also indicates that goodness grounds choiceworthiness. Propria are grounded by what they are propria of.195 Thus, a human being is capable of literacy in virtue of the fact that she is a human being: her humanity is what

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194 One might worry that Aristotle’s claim that the choiceworthy is a proprium of the good is merely a claim he wheels out for purposes of illustrating a *topos* and not something that he himself endorses. I agree with Düring 1968 however, that many of Aristotle’s examples in the *Topics* are statements of his own views. Note that this claim is not introduced, as many other claims in the *Topics* are, by a distancing phrase such as *ho theis*.

195 This most clearly emerges from DA I.1. Aristotle notes that demonstration is the method for gaining knowledge about “the consequent propria” (*tòn kata sumbebēkos idión*, 402a15), where it is clear that they are consequent upon and explained by the things of which they are propria (cf. 402a8, b16-18).
explains this specific capacity. Similarly, something is choiceworthy because it is good. Indeed, Aristotle occasionally gives explanations of just this form. For example, “living is choiceworthy most of all for good people because (hoti) existing is good and pleasant for them” (1170b3-4). Here, goodness, as well as pleasure, another value, is invoked to explain why something is choiceworthy. Similarly, in Topics III Aristotle says that “being healthy is more choiceworthy than undergoing surgery. For the one is good without qualification, the other is good for someone, viz. the one who needs surgery….justice is more choiceworthy than the just person. For the one is good by nature, the other is the result of acquisition” (116b8-12; emphasis added). There is, by contrast, no instance where he explains why something is good in terms of choiceworthiness.

According to Aristotle, then, goodness and choiceworthiness in general are necessarily coextensive. In addition, goodness grounds choiceworthiness. With this general background view in mind, we can now state more precisely how something’s being good as an end relates to its being choiceworthy on account of itself. The preceding argument about goodness and choiceworthiness in general suggests that these two more specific forms of goodness and choiceworthiness are coextensive. This is confirmed by 1248b18-19: “For among all goods are ends, the very things which (ha auta) are choiceworthy for their own sake.” The relative clause provides necessary and sufficient conditions for being an end. This is the force of auta at 1248b19: ends are precisely those things which are choiceworthy on account of themselves.

The preceding argument also suggests that goodness as an end grounds choiceworthiness on account of oneself. Something is choiceworthy on account of itself because it is good as an end.

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196 Aristotle’s view, then contrasts with what is known today as the Fitting Attitudes analysis of goodness. According to the FA analysis, goodness is analyzed as being that of which it is fitting to have a pro attitude. See Brentano 1969 and Ewing 1948, 145-185 for classic statements and defense of the FA analysis; and Rabinowicz and Rossow-Rasmussen 2004, 394-400 for a brief but good discussion of the history of the FA analysis since Brentano.
Aristotle does not say in EE VIII.3 anything about the choiceworthiness of things that are good not as ends. Elsewhere, however, he draws a distinction between being choiceworthy on account of oneself and being choiceworthy on account of another thing.\textsuperscript{197} Since being choiceworthy on account of something else and being choiceworthy on account of oneself are a contrasting pair, it is reasonable that these different kinds of choiceworthiness would correspond to the two forms of goodness I identified from EE VIII.3. I suggest, then, that goodness not as an end is necessarily coextensive with being choiceworthy on account of another thing. Similarly, something is choiceworthy on account of another thing because it is good not as an end.

\textit{b. Fineness}

Let us then turn to natural fineness and its relationship with choiceworthiness and praiseworthiness.

Natural fineness is necessarily coextensive with being choiceworthy on account of oneself and being praiseworthy. The evidence for this is a passage we’ve already seen. “For among all goods are ends, the very things which are choiceworthy for their own sake. And among these are fine things, as many which being [sc. choiceworthy] on account of themselves are, all of them, praiseworthy” (1248b18-20). On a first pass, this passage might indicate either (a) that being choiceworthy on account of oneself and praiseworthy is a necessary and sufficient condition for being fine; or more weakly (b) that being choiceworthy on account of oneself and praiseworthy is merely a sufficient condition for being fine. But the former is to be preferred. As I suggested above, the relative clause at 1248b18-19 provides necessary and sufficient conditions for being an end. Given the parallelism between the relative clause at 1248b18-19 and the following one at 1248b19-20, we should think that the latter is also provides necessary and sufficient conditions for

\textsuperscript{197} See, e.g. NE I.7, 1097a30-31, a34-b6.
its antecedent, viz. the naturally fine things.\textsuperscript{198} $x$ is naturally fine, then, just in case $x$ is choiceworthy on account of itself and praiseworthy. In turn, natural fineness is necessarily coextensive with being choiceworthy on account of oneself and praiseworthy.\textsuperscript{199}

Unfortunately, Aristotle never clarifies the grounding relationships that obtain between these necessarily coextensive properties.\textsuperscript{200} On this point I can offer only tentative suggestions.

One implication of our earlier discussion about goodness and choiceworthiness was that natural fineness should ground choiceworthiness on account of oneself. This is because natural fineness is a kind of goodness, and goodness, I argued, grounds choiceworthiness.

The grounding relationship between natural fineness and praiseworthiness is a more difficult matter. Here is a speculative reason to think that natural fineness grounds praiseworthiness. Consider first the relationship between goodness and choiceworthiness. Choiceworthiness is the property something has when it is worthy of a particular kind of human act or attitude—in this case, that of choice. This particular kind of worthiness is had in virtue of being good. It is because something is good that it is worthy of being chosen. This fact suggests the following, more general pattern: properties of being worthy of certain kinds of human acts or attitudes are grounded by certain kinds of goodness. If this is right, praiseworthiness should

\textsuperscript{198} At 1248b19-20, Aristotle speaks only of fine things, rather than naturally fine things. He does not draw the distinction between the naturally fine things and the non-naturally fine things until 1249a4-5. But in doing so, I take him to indicate that all of the fine things he was talking about up until that point were, more precisely, \textit{naturally} fine things.

\textsuperscript{199} One might think that Aristotle does not characterize natural fineness in general at 1248b19-20 but rather natural fineness of ends, and means to keep open the possibility that there are some things which are both naturally fine but not ends. But (i) there don’t seem to be an examples of things that are both naturally fine and not an end; and (ii) after these lines Aristotle speaks simply of the fine things, or calls things simply fine, rather than “fine-as-ends” (1248b35-37). This suggests that he means to be discussing naturally fine things in general, rather than just naturally fine ends, at 1248b19-20.

\textsuperscript{200} In the course of his argument in \textit{Metaphysics} A.7 that the objects of intellect and desire are unmoved movers, Aristotle claims that “we desire (oregeometha) something because it seems fine rather than that it seems fine because we desire it” (1072a29). This passage seems to indicate that what is fine does not depend on what we desire, and, hence, on what we choose. Fineness is something already believed to be a property of the object prior to our desiring it. But this passage does not tell us how the property of being \textit{worthy} of choice relates to the property of fineness.
likewise be grounded by some form of goodness. This property too is a property of being worthy of a particular kind of human act or attitude, viz. praise. Based on this hypothesized pattern, then, natural fineness grounds praiseworthiness.

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While no definitions for any of the four forms of goodness are available, I have clarified what goodness as an end, goodness not as an end, and natural fineness are by way of the relationships they bear to properties of choiceworthiness and praiseworthiness.

This is useful in its own right. But these connections will also prove useful for determining how it is that the various forms of goodness are caused by eudaimonia. For example, the fact that goodness as an end is choiceworthy on its own account places constraints on the kind of “for the sake of” relation ends as such stand in to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Similarly, the fact that naturally fine things are praiseworthy will serve as the basis for my claim that naturally fine things are voluntary.

III. Some Observations about Aristotle’s Approach

In Chapter One, I discussed the form of explanation that Aristotle will use to explain why other practicable goods besides eudaimonia are good. Having now identified eudaimonia, i.e. the telos of practicable goods, as God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, we can now see that explanations of the practicable goods’ goodness will take the following form:

(a) \( x \) is for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

(\( \beta \)) The telos of practicable goods \( \approx_{\text{def}} \) God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

(\( \gamma \)) \( x \) is for the sake of the telos of practicable goods.
This syllogism differs from the form of explanation extracted from EE I.8 only in that the telos of practicable goods is now identified as a particular good, viz. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

Before explaining how syllogisms of this form explain goodness, I shall make two preliminary observations. The first concerns what must be true of the telos of practicable goods in order for explanations of this form to work. The second concerns the “flexibility” this syllogism-schema offers for explaining different forms of goodness.

a. The Goodness and Fineness of God’s Contemplation, Suitably Qualified

Recall from Chapter One that the telos of practicable goods is itself something good, and the other practicable goods are related to this good thing by way of a “for the sake of” relation. Because they are so related to this good thing, the goodness from this telos “transfers,” as it were, to the other practicable goods. Indeed, I argued, this is what makes the telos of practicable goods the best practicable good.

I did not discuss fineness in Chapter One. But the same story plausibly holds for fineness too. After all, in addition to eudaimonia being the best good, it is also the finest good (1214a7-8). Given how bestness is cashed out by Aristotle in EE I.8, eudaimonia’s being the finest good ought also to be cashed out in terms of the causal role it plays. The telos of practicable goods is something fine, and other practicable goods will be fine in virtue of bearing a “for the sake of” relation to it.

The telos of practicable goods, then, must be something good and fine if it is to play the causal role Aristotle claims it plays. Since Aristotle has identified God’s contemplation, suitably qualified as this telos, he must think that this activity is itself good and fine.
God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is obviously something good. In particular, it would seem to be good as an end. Surely if anything is good as an end, it is the good that has been identified as *eudaimonia*. Additionally, God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, won’t be good not as an end. If God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, were good not as an end, it would be choiceworthy on account of something else. It would consequently derive some of its goodness from another practicable good. But this is antithetical to the picture of *eudaimonia* developed in EE I.8. *Eudaimonia* is prior to all other practicable goods (1218b10-11). This implies, I argued, that *eudaimonia* being good does not depend on any other practicable good being good. But if some of *eudaimonia*’s goodness were derived from another practicable good, it would fail to be prior to that good.

God’s contemplation would also seem to be fine in that it is naturally fine. Aristotle claims that the virtues and the *erga* from virtue are naturally fine at 1248b36-37. Among these *erga* is *eudaimonia*. As we learned from the *ergon* argument, *eudaimonia* is an *ergon* of virtue, the best state of the soul (1219a27-28). Since God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, has been identified as *eudaimonia*, it must be naturally fine.

The suggestion that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is good is uncontroversial. But one might object that this activity can’t be naturally fine. As I argued in the previous section, in order for something to be naturally fine, it must be praiseworthy (*epaineton*). But Aristotle denies in II.1 both that *eudaimonia* is the object of praise (*epainos*) (1219b13-16) and that it is something praised (*epainetai*) (1219b11-12). *Eudaimonia* is instead the object of felicitation (*eudaimonismos*, 1219b14-16) and is that on account of which other things are praised (1219b12-13).
This objection raises the question of what it means to be praiseworthy in the sense in which naturally fine things are praiseworthy. If being praiseworthy means being worthy of praise (epainos), eudaimonia isn’t praiseworthy. But neither are any of the erga of virtue. They are the object of encomium. Since Aristotle clearly thinks that the erga of virtue are naturally fine and, hence, praiseworthy, praiseworthiness in the relevant sense cannot amount merely to being worthy of praise (epainos).

Alternatively, perhaps being praiseworthy amounts to being the proper object of any action of praising referred to by the verb ‘epainō’. Unlike the previous proposal, both erga of virtue and the virtues are praiseworthy in this sense, provided that praising something by way of encomium counts among the relevant actions of praising. But eudaimonia would still fail to be praiseworthy, since Aristotle denies that eudaimonia is praised (1219b11-12). On this view, felicitation doesn’t count as a way of praising something.

Yet, elsewhere Aristotle says or implies that eudaimonia is praised. In NE I.12, he says that “nobody praises (epainei) eudaimonia just as (kathaper) they praise the just, but they bless it as something more divine and better” (1101b25-27). The implication here is that eudaimonia is praised, just not in the same manner as the just. Similarly, in Pol. VII.3, Aristotle argues that “praising (epainein) inactivity more than action is not correct (alēthes). For eudaimonia is action, and, furthermore, the actions of the just and temperate people have the end of many fine things” (1325a31-34). The premise that eudaimonia is action supports Aristotle’s conclusion only if some premise like “eudaimonia is praised more than inaction” is assumed.

201 There is a good question here about how Aristotle can maintain both that eudaimonia is an ergon of virtue and the claim that felicitation (not encomium) is of the end (1219b16).
202 This view of the meaning of ‘epainō’ at 1219b12 is inspired by Szaif 2019, 161, n. 27. Szaif does not himself endorse or reject this view, but he does note that a number of translators are committed to such a sense of ‘epainō’ given how they translate 1219b12-13.
Since there is good reason to think that *eudaimonia* is naturally fine, and since Aristotle does use ‘*epainō*’ occasionally to refer to actions whose object is *eudaimonia*, I suggest the following. When Aristotle says in EE II.1 that *eudaimonia* is not praised, he means that it isn’t the object of either praise or encomium. But this is consistent with *eudaimonia* being an appropriate object of praising in a broader sense of ‘praising’, as is seen in NE I.12 and *Pol.* VII.3. This broader sense seems to amount to a more general notion of *commending*, which includes praising something by way of praise or encomium, but also by way of felicitation. It is this broader sense of praising that Aristotle has in mind when he says that the naturally fine things are praiseworthy. The naturally fine things, including *eudaimonia*, are worthy of commendation in a general sense.\(^{203}\)

*b. How to Explain Different Forms of Goodness*

On Aristotle’s view, the various practicable goods exhibit different forms of goodness. Some goods are naturally fine, while others aren’t; some goods will be good as ends, while others will be merely good not as an end. Given his explanatory framework, how can he account for these varieties of goodness?

Recall from Chapter One that (γ) is not itself the conclusion that this or that practicable good has any particular form of goodness. Instead, it is the simply the conclusion that this or that practicable good bears a particular relation to the *telos* of practicable goods. Aristotle’s view, I suggested, is that one can “read off” from this conclusion that this practicable good is good in the way(s) it is good.

\(^{203}\) In NE I.12, Aristotle distinguishes between things that are praiseworthy and things that are honorable, and makes clear that *eudaimonia* falls in the latter category. This distinction is nowhere to be found in the EE, however.
It is important to note that the conclusion of the syllogism from which one “reads off” the claim that this or that practicable good is good has the form $aRb$, where $a$ is the practicable good in question, $R$ is a “for the sake of” relation, and $b$ is the telos of practicable goods. $b$ is common to every conclusion. Each and every practicable good stands in a “for the sake of” relation to $b$. But while $b$ is fixed, $a$ and $R$ can vary. Variation in these two places allows for different kinds of goodness to be exhibited by the various practicable goods.

While it is true that all goodness must be explained by way of a “for the sake of” relation, there is no suggestion that precisely the same relation must feature in every explanation. Some goods might stand in the $R_1$ “for the sake of” relation, and consequently exhibit one form of goodness, while others might stand in the $R_2$ “for the sake of” relation, and thereby exhibit another form of goodness. Indeed, the same good might stand in both of these “for the sake of” relations, and consequently exhibit two different forms of goodness. If Aristotle recognizes different “for the sake of” relations he can explain different forms of goodness by appealing to them.

Another way different forms of goodness can emerge is by way of some difference in the practicable goods themselves—a difference, in other words, in $a$. Even if two practicable goods stand in precisely the same “for the sake of” relation to eudaimonia, they might nevertheless differ in goodness because one of them has some property which the other lacks. The having or lacking of certain, special qualities could result in certain forms of goodness being had or lacked.

I shall argue later, in sections V and VI, that differences both in the “for the sake of” relation and in the practicable goods themselves explain the varieties of goodness exhibited by the practicable goods. In particular, it is due to a difference in the “for the sake of” relation that some practicable goods are good as an end while others are good merely not as an end. While both of these forms of goodness are had in virtue of being productive of eudaimonia as an end, these
different forms of goodness emerge by way of being productive in different ways. Additionally among things that are good as ends, it is due to some difference among the practicable goods themselves that some are merely good as an end while others are fine. Goods that are naturally fine are voluntary, and goods that are non-naturally fine are related to the voluntary in an important sense, while goods that are merely good as ends aren’t.

IV. The “For the Sake Of” Relation

a. For the Sake Of as Production

A prominent feature of Aristotle’s explanations for why practicable goods are good is the fact that they stand in a “for the sake of” relation to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, and, hence, to the telos of practicable goods. In this section, I shall begin to clarify what, more precisely, this relation is.

On my view, the particular kind of “for the sake of” relation that the other practicable goods stand in to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is a production relation. The other practicable goods are for the sake of the telos of practicable goods in that they in some sense bring it about or contribute to its coming-to-be or existence. Let me say a few things by way of clarifying this proposal.

First, my proposal is a claim about the type of relation that all other practicable goods stand in in virtue of which they are good. Goods, however, can be productive of eudaimonia in various ways. Indeed, in the next section, I shall clarify two different production relations which fall under...
this type, viz. a “production for the most part” relation and an “actual production” relation. These different, more particular kinds of “for the sake of” relations give rise to different forms of goodness. Nevertheless, all of the relations which ground the goodness of the other practicable goods will be production relations of some kind.

Second, what makes the other practicable goods good is not simply that they produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. It is that they produce this as an end. This qualification is necessary because one thing can produce something else without being for the sake of that particular product. A doctor’s successful operation might produce both bodily health and pain. But the surgery the doctor performs is not for the sake of the pain. It is for the sake of health. If the “for the sake of” relation is to be understood in terms of production, then, it must be understood as production of something as an end.

Importantly, then, I am not proposing an analysis of the “for the sake of” relation in non-telic terms. My proposal is simply that the relevant “for the sake of” relation which grounds goodness is a production relation, viz. production of something as an end. Such production can be intuitively distinguished from producing something as a mere by-product (such as in my surgery example). It is a good question whether production of something as an end can be understood and analyzed into non-telic terms and, if so, what that analysis would be. But I shall not attempt such an analysis here.

Third, what it takes to “bring about” or “contribute to” the existence or coming to be of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, will remain vague. Of course, the clearest case of one thing bringing about the existence or coming to be of another is one in which a thing or action immediately brings about its end in its entirety. A shoemaker’s cobbling session straightforwardly results in a shoe. But many things bring about or contribute to their end’s coming to be or existing
neither immediately nor entirely. When I eat a healthy salad this evening, my end in eating it is a lifetime of bodily health. Sadly, however, this one event of eating a healthy salad does not by itself bring about my desired end. Rather, it is just one of many other actions and things that together bring about a lifetime of health. Similarly, one does not bring eudaimonia about simply by performing one ethically virtuous action. Nonetheless, an individual virtuous action is for the sake of eudaimonia in that it contributes to it coming to be or to maintaining its existence.

Having clarified my proposal, I shall now turn to defending it. I shall do so first by presenting some textual evidence for it, and then by arguing against two other proposals according to which not all “for the sake of” relations which make other goods good are production relations. After that, I shall argue that production relations of this sort can indeed explain why practicable goods have the different kinds of goodness discussed earlier. These points taken together constitute a strong case for my proposal.

b. NE I.6, 1096b26-29

Before looking at the EE, I shall consider first a passage in NE I.6. This passage indicates that my proposal is considered by Aristotle to be a “live option” for how other practicable goods relate to the chief good in the NE.

As in EE I.8, Aristotle argues in NE I.6 against the existence of the Platonic Idea of The Good. In rejecting the Platonic view that there is an Idea of The Good, and that this Idea causes the goodness of all other goods, he raises anew the question of why other practicable goods are good.

In the following passage Aristotle canvasses several answers to this question:

But how indeed are [goods] spoken of? For they are not like chance homonyms, at least. But are they so spoken of by being derived from one thing (aph’ henos einai)
or all of them contributing to one thing (pros hen hapanta suntielein), or rather in virtue of analogy? For as sight is in the body, intelligence is in the soul, and as one thing is in one, another is in another. (1096b26-29)

Aristotle advances three different options for how practicable goods are spoken of. On any of these pictures, there is one chief good which is responsible for the goodness of the other practicable goods. These options differ according to which relation(s) the other goods bear to this chief good. The other goods could be derived from some one good; they could contribute to some one good; or they could be good by bearing some analogy to the chief good. Aristotle does not settle the question in NE I.6 of which option is the right one. Indeed, pursuing this question is more appropriate to another branch of philosophy than the one he’s currently practicing (1096b30-31).  

The second option is relevant for our purposes. Some scholars interpret this option to be the view that all of the other practicable goods bear a “pros hen” or “focal meaning” relation to the chief good. When some things which are called by the same name, ‘F’, are so-called pros hen, then (i) there is some one thing that is basically F; and (ii) the other things are called ‘F’ in virtue of bearing certain kinds of relations to the basically F thing. One of Aristotle’s favorite examples of things that are spoken of pros hen are things that are called ‘healthy’ (Meta. Γ.2, 1003a33-b1). The basically healthy thing is bodily health. But other things are called ‘healthy’ in virtue of some relation they bear to bodily health. Some things are healthy in that they preserve health; others are healthy in that they are signs of health; and so on. Aristotle does not clarify

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205 Aristotle never addresses this question in NE, but this is not to say that he isn’t operating implicitly with one of these answers in mind. But there is debate about which answer he opts for, at least in the case of how theoretical contemplation relates to ethically virtuous activity. Charles 1999, 211-218 argues that Aristotle accepts the “analogy” option, while Lear 2004, 88-89 argues that ethically virtuous activity is focally related to theoretical contemplation.

206 Stewart 1892a, 86-87; Owen, “Logic and Metaphysics,” 182 in LSD; Lear 2004, 88; Charles 1999, 211. Additionally, each of these commentators takes Aristotle at 1096b26-29 to advance just two options, rather than three. The “derived from” and “contributes to” option are, on their views, the same option.
which relations result in something being called ‘F’. But his examples suggest that they are numerous.

According to a popular interpretation of the second option, then, the practicable goods are spoken of \textit{pros hen}. The chief good, \textit{eudaimonia}, is the basically good thing. The other practicable goods are called ‘good’ in virtue of standing in any number of the relevant, \textit{pros hen} relations in virtue of which the other goods are called ‘good.’

In fact, however, the second option is not simply the proposal that the practicable goods are spoken of \textit{pros hen}. It is true that he uses the phrase ‘\textit{pros hen}’ in the second option. But this phrase is paired with the verb ‘\textit{suntelein}’. His second option is that all of the other practicable goods are spoken of in virtue of specifically contributing to some one good, rather than in virtue of standing in any number of relations to some one good. Aristotle never uses the phrase ‘\textit{suntelein pros hen}’ in his discussions of focal meaning as a way of saying that other F things are called ‘F’ by way of standing in a menu of relations to the primary F thing. In using this phrase he instead has a fairly specific relation in mind, viz. contribution.

Aristotle does not often use ‘\textit{suntelein pros}’. But one place in the corpus does shed some light on its meaning. At the very beginning of the GA, Aristotle describes what he’s already discussed in \textit{De Partibus}, and what he plans to discuss in the GA itself:

\begin{quote}
Well then, concerning the other things there’s been discussion (for the account and that for the sake of which as end are the same, and the matter for animals is their parts…), but of parts there remains [to discuss] the parts that contribute to the generation of animals (\textit{ta pros tēn genesin suntelounta}), about which nothing has earlier been demarcated, and regarding the moving cause what its starting point is. (GA I.1, 715a7-9, 11-14)
\end{quote}

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\footnote{See Shields 1999, 110-126 for a recent attempt to offer a general account of what these relations can be.}

\footnote{Balme 1992, 127 notes that 715a1-18 “\textit{may be post-Aristotelian}” (emphasis added), but I see no strong reason to doubt that these lines are genuine.}
Aristotle first sets aside the topics of the final, formal, and material causes of animals as well as the parts associated with these causes. He then notes that what remains to discuss are the parts that contribute to the generation of animals. Given the context, these must be parts that efficiently cause animals. The sense of contribution here should consequently be one of giving rise to, or bringing about, the animal’s generation. For it is in bringing about the animal’s generation that these parts thereby serve as an animal’s efficient cause.\textsuperscript{209}

This GA passage indicates that Aristotle’s second option in NE I.6 1096b26-29 is not the idea that the other practicable goods are called “good” in virtue of being related to the chief good in any number of ways. Rather, his thought is that all of these other goods are so called in virtue of contributing to the highest good—in virtue of bringing it about, or giving rise to it.

My proposal for how all the other practicable goods obtain their goodness from the highest good in the EE, then, proves to be one of the options that Aristotle countenances in the NE for how the other practicable goods obtain their goodness.\textsuperscript{210} To be clear, I am not suggesting that this passage from NE I.6 provides any evidence that the second option is indeed what Aristotle plumps for in the EE. Nor does this passage provide any direct evidence that production relations constitute one type of “for the sake of” relation. Rather, I point to the NE merely to note that my proposed reading of the EE is in fact a version of something that Aristotle considers in the NE. I

\textsuperscript{209} It is an assumption of my argument that the \textit{peri hōn} clause at 715a13 is a non-restrictive relative clause. If it were restrictive, this would suggest that Aristotle has already discussed some other parts which contribute to an animal’s generation. But the one place in \textit{De Partibus} where Aristotle speaks of the parts that contribute to the generation of animals is a brief remark at the end of IV.4 (678a21-26), where Aristotle says that it remains to speak of these parts, but that he will postpone discussion of them until he speaks of generation. This strongly suggests that Aristotle hasn’t yet discussed the parts that contribute to the generation of animals prior to GA I.1, and, hence, that the clause at 713a13 is non-restrictive.

\textsuperscript{210} It might be thought that the second option in NE I.6 falls short of my proposal, since Aristotle does not say that the other goods are called good in virtue of contributing to the chief good as an end. I suspect, however, that Aristotle is just being terse in his description of all of the options for how the goods are spoken of in NE I.6.
am not, then, foisting on to him a view that would be conceptually alien to him. Rather, it is of a piece with an option that is ostensibly still alive in NE I.6.

c. EE I.8, 1218b16-22

Recall Aristotle’s argument for the claim that the telos is the cause of the goods under it:

And that the telos is the cause for the things under it teaching makes clear. For having defined the telos they show that each of the other things is good. For the “that for the sake of which” is the cause. E.g. since being healthy is this, it is necessary that this is the beneficial thing for it [i.e. health]. And the healthy thing is a cause of health as a moving cause (hōs kinēsan), and in this case (tote)\(^{211}\) is a cause of health existing but not of health being good. (1218b16-22)

As I suggested in Chapter One, the fact that the healthy thing is beneficial for health is an instance of the “for the sake of” relation: the healthy thing is for the sake of health in that it is beneficial for it. Aristotle presents an incomplete syllogism in which the middle term is a final cause. Consequently, the expected conclusion of his syllogism is that the healthy thing is for the sake of health.\(^{212}\) The stated conclusion of the syllogism, however, is that this is beneficial for health. If this conclusion conforms to what Aristotle ought to say, it is because the “being beneficial for” relation counts as a “for the sake of” relation.

Building on this suggestion, I shall now make two observations which, together, support my proposal that in the EE the “for the sake of” relations which the other practicable goods stand in to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, are production relations.

\(^{211}\) The MSS read tote, which the OCT accepts. Rowe ms. follows Richards 1915, 53 and reads tode. The MSS seems tolerable.

\(^{212}\) An example of the kind of syllogism we expected, based both on what Aristotle says here in EE I.8 and in APo. II.11 is:

(1) This diet is for the sake of such-and-such a balance of bodily humors.
(2) Health is such-and-such a balance of bodily humors.
(C) This diet is for the sake of health.
My first point concerns 1218b20-22. These lines flesh out how, more precisely, the healthy thing is beneficial to health. The healthy thing is an efficient cause of health. In other words, it brings health about, or contributes to its coming to be and existence. The healthy thing, then, stands in a “for the sake of” relation to health more precisely in that it is a productive cause of health. And since health is its end, Aristotle means more precisely that the healthy thing is productive of health as its end.

The second observation I wish to make is that 1218b16-22 is the one example Aristotle provides for how the goodness of a good is to be explained by its telos. The only example in the EE of how goodness is explained via a “for the sake of” relation is a case in which that relation is instantiated by an efficient causal relation in which something produces an end. Since this passage serves as the sole model for all explanations of the goodness of practicable goods, it naturally invites the idea that all such explanations will involve a “for the sake of” relation which is instantiated in a like manner. Indeed, Aristotle says nothing in the EE which cancels this expectation by, for example, presenting a second example of a final causal relation which isn’t a production relation.

Of course, one might insist that this is merely an artifact of the particular example that Aristotle uses, and that we are not meant to extrapolate from this one case that the “for the sake of relation” will be a production relation in every explanation for the goodness of practicable goods. There is no “knock-down” reply to this objection. But it is insufficient simply to assert that this isn’t one of the features we’re meant to extrapolate. What is needed is some other example in the EE of a “for the sake of” relation that isn’t a production relation but is nonetheless invoked to explain goodness. Without such an example, it is highly misleading for Aristotle to say what he does at 1218b16-22 but nevertheless not intend for us to think that all “for the sake of” relations
are productive in the EE. Since there seem to be no such examples, it is reasonable to take 1218b16-22 as a guide for how the explanations are supposed to go generally.

d. EE VIII.3, 1249b14-19

We find an application of the idea that the other practicable goods are for the sake of their end in that they produce it as an end in the concluding lines of the EE. Consider the following passage:

For God does not rule as a commander, but is that for the sake of which phronēsis commands. And “that for the sake of which” is twofold (and this has been distinguished in other works). And since that thing is in need of nothing, whatever choice, then, and instance of possession of the natural goods produces especially God’s contemplation, either of body or resources or friends or the other goods, this is best and this horos is finest. (1249b14-19)

1249b16-19, a passage I discussed in detail in Chapter Three, is a conclusion (oun) drawn from the lines that precede it. Aristotle first claims that God, i.e. human intellect, is that for the sake of which phronēsis commands. He then points out that there are two senses of “that for the sake of which,” and notes that God is not in need of anything. The implicit conclusion here seems to be that God is not the “that for the sake of which” in the sense of being a beneficiary, but rather in the sense of being the end or aim of phronēsis. Aristotle concludes from these claims that the

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213 One potential example is individual acts of God’s contemplation as performed by the virtuous individual (e.g. the contemplation she performs between 5 and 6pm last Wednesday). These acts are practicable goods which are distinct from eudaimonia, but also don’t seem to be productive of eudaimonia. Rather, it is more correct to say that they are a part of eudaimonia. This example might support the idea that Aristotle needs a mereological “for the sake of” relation. (Ackrill 1980 famously argued that there is such a relation in the NE.) But a prior question must be answered about this case before concluding that a different kind of “for the sake of” relation is needed: Are such individual acts of contemplation among the “other” practicable goods whose goodness is accounted for by “for the sake of” relations? If Aristotle does not include parts of eudaimonia among the “other goods,” then there is no pressure to find a mereological “for the sake of” relation in the EE. Since Aristotle nowhere discusses this issue, it is hard to say what his position on this matter is.

214 I read a full stop after allois at 1249b15. The epei clause at 1249b16 introduces a dependent clause which depends on the hētis clause that follows.

215 I follow the MSS and read te.

216 For further discussion of this, see Chapter Three 188, n. 171.
choices and instances of possession of the natural goods which produce especially God’s contemplation are the best choices and instances of possession.

It is not immediately clear why the desired conclusion, which is stated in terms of production, should follow from the premises, which speak only of phronēsis commanding for the sake of something. But my interpretive thesis about the “for the sake of” relation in the EE makes for a particularly elegant way to bridge this gap. Given my thesis, Aristotle’s argument would then be:

(1) The choices and instances of possession which phronēsis commands one to make are the best. [Implicit]

(2) Phronēsis commands for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. [1249b14-16]

Hence, (3) phronēsis commands one to make those choices and instances of possession of the natural goods which are for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. [Instance of (2)]

Thus, (4) the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods which are for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified are best. [Interim conclusion, from (1) and (3)]

(5) All other practicable goods besides eudaimonia are for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, by way of producing God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end. [Interpretive thesis]

Thus, (6) the choices and instances of possession which produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end are best. [1249b16-19, from (4) and (5)]

(Three points about how I am extracting this argument from the text. First, in (2) I speak of God’s contemplation, while Aristotle speaks only of God. Given that God’s contemplation features in the conclusion of the argument, I take Aristotle at 1249b14-16 to have in mind God understood as active, i.e. God engaging in contemplation. Second, instead of characterizing the relevant choices and instances of possession in the conclusion as those which produce God’s contemplation as an
end, Aristotle speaks of choices and instances of possession which produce especially God’s contemplation. I take this “especial production” relation to amount to producing something specifically as an end. Finally, the addition of “suitably qualified” is justified by the context of this passage. As I argued near the end of Chapter Three, Aristotle has in mind here God’s contemplation as performed by the spoudaios individual [1249a24], and as the activity around which one’s life is to be organized [1249b6-9].

If this is the argument that Aristotle has in mind, his line of reasoning relies on the claim that the “for the sake of” relations that the other practicable goods bear to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, are production relations. With premise (5), Aristotle makes use of the idea suggested in EE I.8: production of something as an end is the relevant type of “for the sake of” relation which connects practicable goods to their telos.

Of course, (5) is not the only possible claim that could bridge the gap between (4) and (6). For example, (6) would follow from (4) if Aristotle instead thought that (i) the “production of something as an end” relation is not an instance of the “for the sake of” relation; but (ii) nevertheless, if the relevant choices and instances of possession are for the sake of God’s contemplation, they produce this as an end. Aristotle could then employ this premise instead of (5) to reach his desired conclusion. But there is a significant cost to interpreting the argument along these alternative lines. (5) is something Aristotle has already suggested earlier in EE I.8. Consequently, the argument composed of (1)-(6) is well-evidenced: it involves only intuitive ideas, what is explicitly on the page, and, in the case of (5), previous results. This alternative premise, by contrast, is not suggested by anything Aristotle says elsewhere in the EE, is not found
on the page, and is not obvious. A similar argument can be made for any other alternative proposal one might make as to how Aristotle moves from (4) to (6).\textsuperscript{217}

e. Other Proposals?

While there hasn’t been much discussion about the “for the sake of” relation specifically in the EE, there has been a lively discussion about the Nicomachean conception of it. I shall now consider a couple of alternative interpretive proposals in the NE literature about the kind of “for the sake of” relations that some practicable goods bear to \textit{eudaimonia}. Whatever their merits as interpretive claims about the NE, I shall argue that they do not make good sense of the “for the sake of” relation in the EE. In doing so, I lend further plausibility to my own proposal for how the Eudemian “for the sake of” relation is instantiated. While my own proposal enjoys a fair amount of support, other, potentially promising accounts lack it.

The first proposal is one endorsed by Sarah Broadie\textsuperscript{218} and, more recently, by Susan Sauvé Meyer.\textsuperscript{219} According to this proposal, in some cases $x$ is for the sake of $y$ merely in that $x$ is \textit{to be pursued with regard to $y$}, rather than in that $x$ produces $y$ as an end. This proposal is paired with another idea, viz. that some goods are good “in themselves,” and not in virtue of any relationship they bear to \textit{eudaimonia}. Although these goods are independently valuable, the pursuit of such goods is nevertheless regulated by \textit{eudaimonia} in that we are to pursue them only to the extent that

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item It is worth pointing out that among the choices and instances of possession Aristotle has in mind here are \textit{virtuous} such choices and instances of possession. As we shall see in the next section, it is sometimes denied that the virtues and virtuous actions are for the sake of \textit{eudaimonia} in that they produce it. But on my interpretation of this argument, Aristotle indicates that a number of virtuous choices and instances of possession stand in a productive “for the sake of” relation to \textit{eudaimonia}. Several virtues are concerned with the choice and instances of possession of the natural goods. Liberality “concerns the possession (\textit{ktēsis}) and giving away of resources” (1231b28-29). Greatsouledness is “the best disposition concerning the choice (\textit{hairesis}) and use of honor and the other honorable goods” (1233a4-6). Magnificence “does not concern just any action or decision (\textit{prohairesis}), but that regarding expenditure” (1233a31-32). With (1)-(6), then, Aristotle embraces one of the more controversial implications of my interpretation.
\item 1991, 31-32.
\item 2011.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
our pursuit doesn’t get in the way of eudaimonia coming about.\textsuperscript{220} Such regulation, according to this view, is sufficient for the goods being regulated to be for the sake of the regulating good.

One apparent advantage of this view, at least in the eyes of those who endorse it, is that this allows things like ethically virtuous activity to be “intrinsically” valuable, or valuable “on account of itself” while nonetheless still standing in a “for the sake of” relation to the highest good. On such a view, liberal and courageous activity is valuable independently of how it relates to eudaimonia. There is something good and attractive about these activities all on their own, independent of anything like the consequences that stem from them. Nevertheless, they are for the sake of eudaimonia, since eudaimonia constrains the extent to which these other goods are to be enjoyed.

The problem with this picture as an interpretation of the “for the sake of” relation in the EE is that it fails to take seriously enough the idea that eudaimonia is the cause of goodness of the other practicable goods by way of a “for the sake of” relation.\textsuperscript{221} Once one concedes that liberal or courageous activity is valuable independently of eudaimonia, one concedes that their goodness is not grounded in a relation that it bears to eudaimonia. But, as I argued in Chapter One, eudaimonia is supposed to explain the goodness of all the other practicable goods.\textsuperscript{222}

\textsuperscript{220} As Broadie puts it: “Thus the central good functions sometimes as a constraint rather than a goal in the ordinary sense of a positively aimed for objective. I would stop doing what might adversely affect it, even if I was not doing that thing in order to obtain it” (31).

\textsuperscript{221} Lear 2004, 42-43 has made this point against Irwin, though it seems equally suited against Broadie and Meyer’s view. Meyer puts this objection quite nicely, though she thinks that it is not a problem for her view: The fundamental error that Richardson Lear finds in Broadie’s and Irwin’s proposals is that the final good, as they conceive it, fails to determine the norms internal to the subordinate pursuits. It merely limits their pursuit, but does not determine that they should be pursued in the first place (38–39, 42–43). Similarly, on the version of these proposals that I am advocating, our commitment to the kalon determines that we should limit our pursuit of pleasure (or honor, or dinner parties) in the light of the kalon, but it does not tell us that we should pursue these objectives in the first place. (2011, 57)

\textsuperscript{222} Meyer seems to respond to this worry at 2011, 57 (following Broadie 1991, 27) by claiming that ends like eudaimonia or to kalon make the other goods for their sake attractive to the person pursuing them. If goods like eudaimonia or to kalon could not possibly enter an agent’s life, the agent would not be interested in pursuing the goods subordinate to these ends. This thought, however, is a different claim for the idea that x is for the sake of y in that the
One might respond to this objection by giving up the idea that some goods are good independently of any relationship they bear to eudaimonia, while keeping the idea that the “for the sake of” relation can sometimes be instantiated by a regulation relation. But this response makes a mystery of why goods that stand in such a “for the sake of” relation are good. It is hard to see how a good’s merely being regulated by the chief good could be a sufficient ground for that good’s goodness. Regulation seems merely to impose limits beyond which one ought not to pursue some good. It does not make the goods worth pursuing in the first place. This is why the regulation picture is supplemented with the idea that certain goods are good independently of any relation they bear to eudaimonia. Certain goods just have their goodness all on their own. Once this idea is taken off the table, it becomes unclear why ethically virtuous activity is good at all.

A second view, one put forward by Gabriel Richardson Lear, avoids the problems that the regulation picture faces. Lear proposes that in some cases, $x$ is for the sake of $y$ in that $x$ approximates $y$. $y$ has certain features $F_1, F_2, \ldots$ which $x$ exhibits as well, albeit in an imitative fashion. Practical reasoning, for example, approximates theoretical reasoning in that it has truth as its ergon, just as theoretical reasoning does. But the truth practical reasoning aims at concerns things to be done, rather than things that don’t admit of being otherwise.\textsuperscript{223} Relatedly, the way one grasps truth is different in these different forms of reasoning: while truth is successfully grasped by understanding in the theoretical case, in the practical case truth is grasped by making the correct choice and performing the right action.\textsuperscript{224} In approximating theoretical reasoning in these ways, practical reasoning is thereby for the sake of theoretical reasoning.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item pursuit of $x$ is regulated by $y$, and it does not seem to follow from the thesis that the “for the sake of” relation can be instantiated by a regulation relation.
\item Lear 2004, 95.
\item Ibid., 103.
\end{itemize}

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Unlike the previous proposal, an approximation relation can, it seems, serve as the grounds on which another good is good.\textsuperscript{225} God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is something good. But if other things are relevantly like this activity, it stands to reason that they too would likewise be good. Indeed, Lear argues that ethically virtuous activity and practically wise activity are good in virtue of this kind of approximation relation in the NE. This type of relation, then, seems suitable for playing the role that the “for the sake of” relation plays in the EE.

But is there any reason to think that in the EE Aristotle avails himself of approximation relations as instantiations of the “for the sake of” relation? Lear offers two such reasons for thinking that he does in the NE. Neither of these holds for the case of the EE, however.

The first reason is that there are certain passages which, according to Lear, indicate that virtuous practical activity is for the sake of theoretical contemplation by way of approximating it.\textsuperscript{226} Lear cites two different places in the NE as evidence. In NE X.7, 1178a7 Aristotle says that human beings are \textit{malista} theoretical \textit{nous}. Following Dominic Scott’s proposal about how \textit{malista} works here, Lear draws from this passage that other kinds of rational capacities human being have, such as \textit{phronēsis}, are approximations of theoretical \textit{nous}. Consequently, the activities of these capacities are teleological approximations of contemplation, the activity of theoretical \textit{nous}. Secondly, Aristotle tells us in NE X.7-8 that human beings are to immortalize themselves as far as possible (1177b33). In the first instance, this means that human beings ought to engage in theoretical contemplation. But when this cannot be done, Aristotle seems to suggest, they should instead engage in practically virtuous activity. According to Lear, this is because the latter teleologically approximates the former. In performing such activity, one performs something like the contemplative activity, and hence immortalizes oneself, albeit to a lesser extent.

\textsuperscript{225} \textit{Ibid.}, 85-88.
\textsuperscript{226} \textit{Ibid.} 90-92.
I shall not take issue with the idea that that *phronēsis* and *sophia* bear similarities to each other (which is supported by Aristotle’s characterization of these virtues in NE VI/EE V). The question is whether in the EE there is any passage which suggests that *phronēsis* (and its activity) is a teleological approximation of *sophia* (and its activity). Notably, Lear supports her view with passages from NE X, a uniquely Nicomachean book. Indeed, the passages that Lear uses to support her view are unparalleled in the EE. There is no claim in the EE to the effect that human beings are most of all their theoretical *nous*. Nor, similarly, does Aristotle present a picture according to which we are to contemplate to the extent possible, and then secondarily engage in practically virtuous activity to immortalize ourselves. There is no textual pressure of the kind identified by Lear in the NE to introduce approximation as an alternative “for the sake of” relation in the EE.

The second reason Lear offers in favor of her view is that, among the possible instantiations of the “for the sake of” relation, the approximation relation offers the most satisfying explanation for why certain goods, such as virtuous practical activity, are good as ends. Indeed, a major motivation for Lear’s appeal to teleological approximation is that it offers a satisfying account of how things like ethically virtuous activity can be at once choiceworthy on account of themselves—or good as an end—and at the same time good for the sake of *eudaimonia*. Other options, such as production or parthood, fail to do the trick.

This argument raises the question of whether a satisfactory account of why the other practicable goods are good can be constructed simply using production relations. It is this question to which I must now turn. In the next two sections, I shall argue that Aristotle can indeed explain why the other practicable goods are good simply by way of production relations. If this is right,

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227 Note that Lear argues only that NE VI/EE V show that *phronēsis* is similar to theoretical wisdom. (She is explicit about the limits of her conclusion at 2004, 93.) It requires other, uniquely Nicomachean passages to make the further claim that *phronēsis* (and its activity) approximates *sophia* (and its activity) in the relevant, teleological sense.
this second argument of Lear’s does not provide any grounds for favoring Lear’s approximation proposal over mine in the EE.

V. Goodness

a. Goodness as an End: A Proposal

In this section and the next, I shall sketch Aristotle’s Eudemian account for why practicable goods exhibit the four forms of goodness I identified at the beginning of this chapter. I shall begin with the explanation of why other practicable goods are good as ends.

As I argued in the previous section, practicable goods besides eudaimonia are good as ends in virtue of standing in some kind of production relation to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. But what production relation is this more precisely?

Let us begin with a simple, crude proposal. We might think that all practicable goods which are good as ends should be treated uniformly. In other words, they all stand in the same productive relation in virtue of which they are good as ends. And, naturally enough, we might think that actual production is the relevant kind of production at issue. The simple, crude proposal, then, is that for all practicable goods besides eudaimonia, x is good as an end just in case x actually produces God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end.

This proposal is incorrect. First, it would entail that virtuous actions which fail to produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, due to circumstances outside the agent’s control aren’t good as ends. Consider two cases of donating money to the city’s coffers for the sake of promoting God’s contemplation. The cases are identical in all respects except the following. In one case, the donated money is stored in the coffers for a bit of time before eventually being used to bring some contemplation about. In the other case, someone steals the money and squanders it on base pleasures. Assume that such thefts are extremely rare in this city, and that the donors do not have
any foreknowledge of the theft. According to the proposal under consideration, the first case of
donation would be good as an end, while the second case would not be good as an end. But this
is implausible. While the first case is no doubt better in certain respects than the second, both of
these acts are virtuous. Consequently, both are good as ends.

Equally objectionable, this proposal also allows for certain vicious actions to be good as
ends. Suppose that an agent reasons that, given the particular circumstances in which he finds
himself, he can actually bring about God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, by committing an act
of adultery, or by letting his neighbor’s house burn down. Furthermore suppose that the agent is
correct that these actions will indeed promote God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. (This is
unusual. Adultery and failing to come to your neighbor’s aid do not generally result in promoting
eudaimonia. But no doubt, in odd enough circumstances, these kind of actions could in fact
produce eudaimonia.) He then performs these actions with this end in mind. In these cases, the
vicious actions actually promote God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end. If the
proposal under consideration were right, these actions would good as ends. But these are vicious
actions, and, consequently, aren’t good in this way.

The simple, crude proposal is inadequate in another way as well. In my counterexamples
above, I focused on actions or events. There is a clear sense in which actions or events can be said
to bring about some result. But these are not the only kinds of items that are good as ends. Things
such as money, honor, health, and dispositions of the soul—things besides actions and events—
can also be good as ends. It is unclear, however, that items which aren’t actions or events bring
results about, strictly speaking. This or that use of money, not money per se, brings about
eudaimonia.
A passage from the *Rhetoric* about different ways in which something is said to be productive is responsive to the problems that the crude proposal faces:

Productive things are spoken of in three ways: some as being healthy is productive of health, others as bread is productive of health, and others as exercising is productive of health, since it produces health for the most part. (*Rh*. I.6, 1362a31-34)

In this passage, Aristotle takes a more sophisticated approach to how goods are productive. Two features of this passage are worth noting. First, Aristotle distinguishes the case of actions and events being productive (exercise) from non-actions or non-events being productive (bread).\(^{228}\) I shall return to this point shortly. Second, the way in which exercise is productive of health is that it produces health “for the most part” (*hōs epi to polu*).

In speaking of exercise as producing health “for the most part,” Aristotle makes use of a notion found in other places in his ethical and scientific works. When Aristotle says that B holds of A “for the most part,” he often means that B will hold of A unless something impedes, or that B will hold of A “under normal circumstances.”\(^{229}\) The best reason to think this is that things that happen in accordance with nature (*kata phusin*) happen “for the most part,”\(^{230}\) and things that happen in accordance with nature are things that happen unless something impedes.\(^{231}\) (As Aristotle says at the end of *Phys*. II.8, in physical matters events always arise in the same way

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\(^{228}\) Something like this way of understanding the second and third distinctions dates back at least as far as Majoragius: “Quae extrinsecus adhibentur [i.e. the second and third divisions] aut sunt tanquam instrumenta, aut sunt actiones; instrumenta, ut cibaria...actiones, ut exercitatio corporis, et deambulatio” (quoted by Cope 1877, 100). Cope himself (100) and Grimaldi 1980, 125 instead understand the distinction to be between things that are necessary for the production of health and things that are helpful but not necessary (Grimaldi) or are “probable conditions” for health (Cope).

\(^{229}\) There is controversy as to whether this is the only kind of case Aristotle has in mind when he predicates something of a subject “for the most part.” According to Ferejohn 1991, 120-121 all *hōs epi to polu* statements are causal generalizations, i.e. *ceteris paribus* laws. But both Irwin 2000, 106-108 and Henry 2015 argue that some cases of *hōs epi to polu* predication do not express causal *ceteris paribus* statements. Since Aristotle seems to have in mind a *ceteris paribus* statement in the *Rhetoric* I.6 passage, I can remain neutral on the question of whether he always has such statements in mind when saying that something holds “for the most part.”

\(^{230}\) See Judson 1991, 82, n.23 for a roundup of passages supporting this.

unless something impedes (199b25-26).) For example, in GA IV.8, Aristotle claims that by nature
(kata phusin, 777a13) female animals do not menstruate or conceive when they produce milk, nor
produce milk when they menstruate or conceive. Exceptions to these patterns happen only if
something “forceful” occurs (777a18-19), i.e. something which interrupts the normal, natural
processes of lactation and menstruation. Provided that no impediment arises, it will be true that if
a female animal menstruates or conceives, she won’t produce milk, and vice-versa. But
impediments can and, in abnormal circumstances, do arise. Consequently, it isn’t always the case
that when a female animal conceives, she doesn’t produce milk. This is so only “for the most
part.”

This interpretation of B holding of A for the most part makes excellent sense of the way in
which exercise produces health. Certainly not every instance of exercise contributes to one’s
health. But in those case in which a genuine case of exercise fails to produce health, this is
plausibly due to the fact that something has impeded: a ligament was torn, one’s stomach begins
to cramp, etc. Provided nothing impedes, however, each case of exercise will produce health.

Applying this to actions and events, I propose that these are good as ends in that they
produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end for the most part. This more nuanced
proposal avoids the implausible implications of the crude proposal. On this view, both the act of
donation in which the money remains in the city’s coffers and the act in which it is stolen produce
God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, for the most part: by and large, these actions bring about
their ultimate goal. In the case in which the money is stolen, the act of donating was impeded in
its production of God’s contemplation as an end. As I constructed this case, however, such theft
is an abnormal circumstance. Although the second case of donation does not actually produce

232 I say a “genuine case of exercise” to rule out cases of cases of what might be called “exercise” but are actually just
harmful to the body by nature.
eudaimonia, it is such that, had it not been impeded, it would have produced God’s contemplation. Because of this, it still counts as an action that is good as an end. Similarly, vicious actions that happen actually to produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, in some circumstances nevertheless fail to be good as ends. This is because it is not true that under normal circumstances such actions produce eudaimonia. Neither committing adultery nor failing to come to a neighbor’s aid usually brings about God’s contemplation, though we can imagine odd scenarios in which this occurs.

Production for the most part, then, nicely accounts for why actions and events are good as ends. But what explains why other things are good as ends? As I noted, in the Rhetoric I.6 passage Aristotle distinguishes the case of bread producing health from exercise producing health. He doesn’t elaborate on the way in which bread produces health, and does not explain why these two cases ought to be distinguished. There is, however, an intuitive difference between the two. Exercise is an event that occurs to bring health about. Bread is something that could be used in such an event in order to bring health about, but is not itself a productive event or action. If we are inclined to say that bread produces health, it is because it features in an event or action that produces health. Although bread is productive of health, it is productive in a different way.

Generalizing from these observations, I propose the following:

[Proposal-End]: For all other practicable goods besides eudaimonia, x is good as an end just in case, and because, (i) x is an action/event which produces God’s

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233 Notice that this proposal also captures intuitions we have about other variants of this case. Suppose it were the case that money in the city’s coffers was routinely stolen or often mismanaged. It is then no longer clear that under normal circumstances, donating to the city’s coffers produces God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. And it also seems no longer clear that such acts of donation are virtuous. They may instead be cases of folly.

234 Such acts would likely wrack one with guilt, which would impede one’s ability to contemplate. Additionally, one’s relations with one’s neighbors or spouse would be often be significantly damaged by such acts. To the extent that having good relations with one’s family or neighbors supports a lifetime of theoretical contemplation, these vicious acts would compromise things beneficial for eudaimonia.

235 Strictly, bread brings health about only when it is in the body, suffering various action-passion pairs (cf. GC 324b1-3).
Virtuous actions, and potentially also things like choices (if these are to be considered as events that occur in the soul) fall under clause (i). The notion of an “event” or “action” here should be understood broadly to encompass states of affairs such as possessing something. Thus, if having such-and-such a public honor brings about some time to contemplate, having the public honor would be good as an end under clause (i). Similarly, refraining from doing something counts as an “action” in this broad sense.

Things external to the soul, such as the condition of one’s body or honors, as well as states of the soul which are used by being activated fall under clause (ii). Of course, not just any honor, bodily condition, or state of the soul will do. Since the actions/events which make use of things that are good as ends are actions which produce God’s contemplation as an end for the most part, the things at issue in clause (ii) must be suitable for such actions. Excessive and deficient amounts of money, for example, cannot be used in acts of donation that satisfy clause (i). Consequently, excessive and deficient amounts of money won’t be good as ends.

Nevertheless, the scope of things that are good as ends according to [Proposal-End] is quite wide. Many items can be used in actions or events which produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end for the most part. Similarly, the set of actions/events that produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end unless something impedes is potentially vast. This set would include ethically virtuous actions, of course. But it seems that actions which stem from craft could be good as ends too. Suppose, for example, that certain money-making actions are such

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236 This implication of my reading is similar to what Kraut says of his own understanding of things which are choiceworthy for their own sakes (1991, 300-304). He too accepts the idea that craft activities and their products are choiceworthy for their own sakes. The reason they are choiceworthy for their own sakes on his view is different, however: while I claim that it is because they stand in a certain kind of productivity relation, on his view it is because of features such as being a rational activity, or having an internal order.
that they reliably produce God’s contemplation as an end by way of, say, producing money which affords one various resources and time required for contemplation. Such actions would produce God’s contemplation as an end for the most part, and hence be good as an end.

These implications are potentially surprising. But nothing that Aristotle says suggests that these implications are objectionable.

\textit{b. Goodness as an End and Choiceworthiness on Account of Oneself}

In section II I argued that if something is good as an end, it is choiceworthy on account of itself. This thought, I suggested, gives us some grip on what goodness as an end is. Consequently, it can help us assess whether putative explanations for why things are good as ends are in fact good explanations.

I shall now argue that [Proposal-End] is consistent with the thought that things which are good as ends are also choiceworthy on account of themselves. That this is so corroborates [Proposal-End].

Aristotle does not elaborate in the uniquely Eudemian books on what it is for something to be choiceworthy on account of itself. But elsewhere he suggests that a good being choiceworthy on account of itself amounts to it being such that it is worthy of choice even if it produces no valuable consequences. Thus, in NE I.7 Aristotle says that “honor, pleasure, \textit{nous}, and every virtue we choose on account of themselves (for with nothing resulting we would choose each of these things), but we also choose them for the sake of \textit{eudaimonia}, supposing that we will be \textit{eudaimōn} through them” (1097b2-5). Similarly, in NE VI/EE V, \textit{sophia} and \textit{phronēsis} are said to be choiceworthy in virtue of themselves even if neither of them produced anything (1144a1-3).
Again, at *Rhetoric* 1362b26-27 Aristotle claims that living is choiceworthy on account of itself “even if no other good thing should follow.”

*Prima facie*, these passages are in tension with [Proposal-End]. Aristotle’s point, it seems, is that goods which are choiceworthy on account of themselves are choiceworthy in this way independently of any consequences that arise from them. But according to [Proposal-End] all goods other than *eudaimonia* are good as ends in virtue of a production relation. If they failed to stand in this production relation to *eudaimonia*, they would fail to be good as ends, and, hence, choiceworthy on account of themselves.

On closer inspection, however, these passages are consistent with my proposal. They claim only that a good being choiceworthy on account of itself amounts to it being choiceworthy even if it does not actually produce any good consequences. But goods can still be good as ends even if they fail actually to produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, or any other good consequence. They still are good as ends provided that they produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end under normal circumstances. Goods such as the virtues, life, or virtuous actions, then, are choiceworthy on account of themselves even if they fail to actually produce anything good.

Aristotle does not detail the kind of production relation he has in mind when he says that we would choose things like *nous* or honor even if they didn’t produce anything. But actual production relations are the most plausible relation at issue.

To see why, consider that there seem to be three plausible candidates for the kind of production relation Aristotle might have in mind here. It could be either (i) the “production for the most part” relation; (ii) a general production relation of any kind; or (iii) the “actual production” relation. Suppose, then, that Aristotle had (i) in mind. On this view, he would be claiming that $x$
is choiceworthy for its own sake just in case \( x \) is choiceworthy even if \( x \) doesn’t produce anything good as an end for the most part. But this can’t be his view. This interpretation falls victim to the problems the crude proposal faced. Vicious actions that are intuitively not choiceworthy for their own sakes, such as adultery or failing to aid, turn out to be choiceworthy in this way. These actions do not for the most part produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified (or any other good for that matter) as an end. But, under certain circumstances, they actually produce this. Consequently, these actions would be choiceworthy even though they don’t produce anything good for the most part.

Alternatively, perhaps Aristotle’s point in the passages above is to deny that there is any productive connection whatsoever between other goods and goods that are choiceworthy for their own sake (insofar as they are choiceworthy in this way). On this view, Aristotle’s claim is that \( x \) is choiceworthy for its own sake just in case \( x \) is choiceworthy even if it bears no kind of production relation whatsoever to another good. But this can’t be right either. This interpretation rules out certain goods that Aristotle considers to be choiceworthy for their own sake. Among the goods that Aristotle considers to be choiceworthy in this way is wealth (\( ploutos \), NE VII.4/EE VI.4, 1147b29-31).\(^{237}\) But it is hard to see how wealth could be choiceworthy on account of itself according to the reading under consideration. Why on earth would wealth be choiceworthy at all if it didn’t bear some kind of production relation to other goods?

Aristotle, then, cannot plausibly have in mind either the “production for the most part” relation or a general production relation when he says that things are choiceworthy on account of themselves in that they are choiceworthy even if they don’t produce any consequences. Since the only other plausible option for what he has in mind is the “actual production” relation, he must

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\(^{237}\) Not all accept the idea that wealth is choiceworthy “on account of itself” in the sense this phrase is used in NE I.7. See, e.g. Lorenz 2009, 78.
mean that \( x \) is choiceworthy for its own sake just in case \( x \) is choiceworthy even if it doesn’t actually produce any good consequences. And indeed, this interpretation yields the right results. On this reading, vicious actions fail to be choiceworthy for their own sake, and things like wealth prove to be choiceworthy for their own sake.

This reading also coheres with Aristotle’s Eudemian approach for explaining goodness. In the EE, all forms of goodness are to be accounted for by way of a production relation. My interpretation allows for this. To be choiceworthy on account of oneself is not to be choiceworthy independently of any production relations, nor independently of the production relations that make something good as an end. Thus, goodness as an end is explained in precisely the way Aristotle claims it will be.

Finally, this interpretation gives Aristotle a conception of being choiceworthy on account of oneself that is worthy of the title. Some courses of action really are just a complete waste of time, and some items really do simply take up space, if nothing good actually results from them. But many other things and actions are worth pursuing and having even if nothing actually “pans out” from them. This latter form of choiceworthiness is what Aristotle has in mind when he speaks of things being choiceworthy on account of themselves. And it is a form of choiceworthiness that goods can have in virtue of other, non-actual production relations that they bear to \textit{eudaimonia}.\textsuperscript{238}

\textit{c. Goodness Not as an End}

Let us now turn to the second kind of goodness, goodness not as an end. In virtue of what are practicable goods good not as ends?

\textsuperscript{238} See Kagan 1998, 283-285, for a contemporary defense of the idea that something can be intrinsically good in virtue of non-actual production relations. Kagan himself goes further than I claim Aristotle does in thinking that it could well be that items which actually produce good consequences—such as the pen that Abraham Lincoln used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation—are thereby intrinsically good.
As I argued in section IV, this form of goodness too is grounded in some kind of production relation to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end. Furthermore, this production relation must be a distinct relation from the one that makes goods good as ends, since goodness not as an end is a distinct form of goodness.

In section II I claimed that goods that are good not as ends are goods which are choiceworthy on account of another thing. NE I.7 once again proves helpful in unpacking what it means to be choiceworthy on account of something else. Consider once more the following passage:

Honor, pleasure, *nous*, and every virtue we choose on account of themselves (for with nothing resulting we would choose each of these things), but we also choose them for the sake of *eudaimonia*, supposing that we will be *eudaimōn* through them. But nobody chooses *eudaimonia* for the sake of these things, nor generally on account of another thing. (1097b1-6)

As I argued in the previous subsection, when Aristotle says that we would choose these things with nothing following, he means that we would choose them without anything actually following. He then contrasts this first way of being choiceworthy with a second way in which we choose these things, viz. “for the sake of *eudaimonia*.” Given that this second way of being choiceworthy contrasts with the first way of being choiceworthy, the second way in which these things are choiceworthy is that they are choiceworthy because they *actually produce eudaimonia*. Aristotle then notes that nobody chooses *eudaimonia* for the sake of these things, nor generally on account of another thing. In other words, *eudaimonia* fails to be choiceworthy in the second way in which goods like honor, pleasure, and so on are choiceworthy. This second way of being choiceworthy is labeled choiceworthy “on account of another thing” at the very end of the passage. Consequently, goods such as honor, pleasure, etc. are *choiceworthy on account of another thing* in that they actually produce *eudaimonia*. 

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If this is right, being choiceworthy on account of another thing, and, hence, being good not as an end, is tied to actual production. More precisely:

[Proposal-Not End]: For all other practicable goods besides eudaimonia, \( x \) is good not as an end just in case, and because, (i) \( x \) is an action/event which actually produces God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end; or (ii) \( x \) is something which can be used in such an action/event.

Something being good not as an end is completely a matter of whether it actually promotes eudaimonia. Goods that are good solely not as an end are complete wastes of time, or are squandered entirely, if they fail actually to bring eudaimonia about.

One implication of [Proposal-Not End] is that anything which is good as an end is also good not as an end if it actually produces God’s contemplation as an end. This result is not unwelcome. Quite a number of things can be good both as an end and not as an end.

We might wonder, however, whether there is anything that is good merely not as an end. Such goods would be those which do not for the most part produce God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end but which, on some occasion, actually do so.

Non-excellent artifacts would seem to be examples of things that are good merely not as an end. Excellent artifacts will be good as ends: these artifacts, after all, are artifacts which are suitable for the actions/events that are good as ends. Non-excellent artifacts, by contrast, fail to be suitable for such actions/events, and are consequently “excessive” or “deficient” in some way. Nevertheless, it is possible that under some circumstances they could actually produce eudaimonia as an end. A poorly-made scalpel will not, under normal circumstances, bring about God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, by way of bringing about health to the patient in some surgery. But if it were the only scalpel around, and if the surgeon intended to use the scalpel for the sake of health and, ultimately, the patient’s eudaimonia, and if it did, in fact, bring about health in the surgery, that scalpel would be a good scalpel (at least on that occasion). It would not be good as
an end, of course, but it would still be good to the extent that it actually produced God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

Some actions and events too could plausibly be good merely not as an end. Return to the vicious actions of adultery or letting a neighbor’s house burn down with the intention to promote God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. These actions are clearly not choiceworthy as an end. Nevertheless, it seems right that under certain circumstances, they could be good not as ends. This, of course, does not make them worthy of choice all things considered, and it is consistent with them being good not as an end that one should nevertheless not choose them. But there does seem to be something more valuable about these vicious actions than vicious actions which have no redeeming features at all.

VI. Fineness

a. Natural Fineness

To round out my interpretation of Aristotle’s account, I shall now turn to explaining why certain practicable goods are fine. I shall first explain Aristotle’s Eudemian account of why certain goods are naturally fine, and then move on to explaining non-natural fineness.

Recall that natural fineness is a kind of goodness as an end. It is goodness as an end plus some other property, X, which Aristotle sadly fails to enlighten us about. Despite this handicap, we do know something about natural fineness: natural fineness is coextensive with and grounds being choiceworthy on account of oneself and praiseworthy.

In the previous section, I argued that [Proposal-End] specifies the “for the sake of” relation that grounds goodness as an end. Since natural fineness is a type of goodness as an end, we already have a partial explanation as to why things are naturally fine. Naturally fine things stand in the
relevant production relations articulated by [Proposal-End]. What remains to be explained is why naturally fine things are, additionally, X.

Since we don’t know what X is, we cannot tackle this question directly. We do know, however, that X is responsible for a good’s being praiseworthy. Our best bet, then, is to determine what is so special about fine things such that they are praiseworthy. In doing so, we will also plausibly hit upon what makes the naturally good things fine.²³⁹

Praiseworthiness, and the feature X that grounds it, can be accounted for in one of two ways. First, it might be that fine things stand in some different production relation, R*, to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Since fine things as such are good as ends, R* would have to be such that the production relations stated in [Proposal-End] obtain. But R* needn’t be those precise relations themselves. On this view, what differentiates the naturally fine things from the merely good as end things is that the latter stand in just the relations mentioned by [Proposal-End], while fine things stand in some “super-relation” which is meant to account for the additional X-ness and praiseworthiness of these fine things.

Nothing speaks against this proposal in principle. But it is unclear what evidence there is for such a relation.

Alternatively, the difference between the naturally fine goods and the goods that are good merely as an end can be accounted for by some difference between the goods themselves. While both kinds of goods stand in precisely the same production relations to the telos of practicable

²³⁹ Strictly this approach will result in one of two things: either (i) we hit upon a property which, along with being productive for the most of part of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified as an end, grounds something’s fineness. This fineness in turn grounds the thing’s praiseworthiness. Or (ii) we hit upon X itself. In this case, we still figure out what explains something’s praiseworthiness, but we do not hit upon the property that makes something fine. Rather, we hit upon a property that is part of what fineness is.

I think it’s quite hard to say which of these two possibilities obtains.
goods, there is something special about fine things such that they are fine, while goods that are good as ends but not fine are not special in this way. This proposal seems more promising.

In EE II.6, Aristotle connects being subject to praise and blame and being voluntary:

And since virtue and vice and the *erga* from them are, some of them, praiseworthy, and others blameworthy (for blame and praise are given not on account of things obtaining (*huparchonta*) from necessity or fortune or nature, but on account of as many things which we ourselves are responsible for. For of as many things which another person is responsible for, that person has the blame and praise) it is clear that virtue and vice concern the actions for which one is responsible (*aitios*) and of which one is a starting-point. It remains, then, to take up of what sorts of actions one is responsible for and a starting-point of. Indeed, we all agree, as many things as are voluntary, and especially (*kai*) those in accordance with the decision (*prohairesis*) of each, that person is responsible, but as many things as are involuntary, that person is not responsible. And with regards to all things which he has decided, it is clear that he also does them voluntarily. It is clear, then, that virtue and vice would be of voluntary things. (1223a9-20)

Aristotle argues here that virtue and vice concern (*peri*), or are “of,” voluntary things. But in the course of this argument, he also commits himself to the view that the things subject to praise and blame, and the voluntary things are coextensive.

To see why, consider first that Aristotle says that praise and blame are given to whatever (*hosôn*, 1223a12) we ourselves are responsible for; and that whatever stems from something other than we ourselves isn’t subject to praise and blame. In other words,

[A] *x* is subject to praise and blame just in case a human being is herself responsible for *x*.

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240 Wolt 2019, 143-144 argues that the conclusion of the argument is that virtue and vice are among the voluntary things, i.e. are themselves voluntary. I don’t disagree that Aristotle thinks that, or even that some of the claims of his argument here could be adduced to show this. But I do disagree that this is the explicit conclusion of the argument. At 1223a14-15, Aristotle says that virtue and vice concern actions for which one is responsible and of which one is a starting point. He then tackles the question of what sort these actions are at 1223a15-19. He concludes that they are voluntary. The obvious conclusion to draw from this is not that virtue and vice are themselves voluntary, but rather that virtue and vice concern the voluntary.

241 I follow Woods 1992, 22 in reading *hosôn* to have the unexpressed antecedent of *panta* (as it often does).
Aristotle also makes a claim at 1223a16-18 about when a human being is responsible for something.\footnote{Cf. Heinaman 1986, 130; and 1988b, 255 along with 277, n.8.}

[B] A human being is herself responsible for \( x \) just in case \( x \) is voluntary.

Although at 1223a16-18 Aristotle singles out the case of things that are in accordance with \textit{prohairesis}, this does not exhaust the set of things that a human being is herself responsible for. Rather, Aristotle has in mind the wider set of things that are voluntary, of which things in accordance with \textit{prohairesis} are a proper subset.\footnote{Cf. 1226b34-36.}

From [A] and [B] follows

[C] \( x \) is subject to praise and blame just in case \( x \) is voluntary.\footnote{It should be noted while that Aristotle focuses both in this argument and in Bk. II more generally on the topic of when \textit{actions} are subject to praise and blame, [A]-[C] themselves are not restricted just to actions. Other things, such as states of the soul, can be voluntary too.}

[C] can serve as the basis for an account of why things are naturally fine. Although [C] is just a biconditional claim, it is plausible to think that voluntariness is what explains something’s being subject to praise or blame. Praise and blame (in the general sense of commendability discussed earlier) are forms of appraisal reserved just for the voluntary. They are distinctive kinds of evaluation conferred only onto voluntary things. Although the weather and human action can both be good and bad, it is fitting only to praise and blame the latter. This is because while human action is voluntary, the weather is the product of natural causes that no agent has voluntary control over. Conversely, upon knowing that an action is voluntary, we are now in a position to sensibly apply standards of praise and blame to it.

If this is right, Aristotle can avail himself of the following view:

[Proposal-NF] For all other practicable goods besides \textit{eudaimonia}, \( x \) is naturally fine just in case, and because, [(i) \( x \) is an action/event which produces God’s
contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end under normal circumstances; or (ii) \( x \) is something which can be used in such an action/event]; and (iii) \( x \) is voluntary.\(^{245}\) Clauses (i) and (ii) are the same as in [Proposal-End]. These clauses account for why naturally fine goods are good as ends. The additional clause (iii) accounts for the part of natural fineness, \( X \), that isn’t accounted for by (i) and (ii), i.e. the part connected with praiseworthiness.

In addition to having intuitive force, [Proposal-NF] nicely accounts for why Aristotle identifies certain things as naturally fine and others not as naturally fine. Recall that Aristotle takes virtuous actions to be naturally fine, but denies that the \( \text{erga} \) from things like health are naturally fine, specifically on grounds that these things are not praiseworthy (1248b21-26). Both of these points are accounted for by [Proposal-NF]. Agents decide to perform virtuous actions. Consequently, these actions are voluntary. And since they are additionally good as ends, the virtuous actions exhibit natural fineness. By contrast, bodily processes such as digestion or growth—the \( \text{erga} \) of health—aren’t voluntary. One can, of course, voluntarily do certain things which affect digestion or growth. If one fasted, one wouldn’t digest anything, and perhaps one’s growth would be impeded too. But having control over whether and what one eats is not yet to make digestion and growth voluntary. These processes are natural, and their starting-point is not in the “human being herself.”\(^{246}\) Because of this, the \( \text{erga} \) of health fail to be praiseworthy and, consequently, naturally fine.

In addition to accounting for the fineness (or lack thereof) of \( \text{erga} \), [Proposal-NF] also accounts for why states of the soul, such as the virtues, have natural fineness, while states of the body, such as bodily health, lack it.

\(^{245}\) I add the brackets to make clear that the logical structure of this claim is (A or B) and C, rather than A or (B and C).

\(^{246}\) For discussion of the starting-point being in the human being herself, see Müller 2015.
Unlike in the NE, Aristotle does not dedicate much time in the EE to the question of whether virtue and vice are voluntary. But he does offer the following brief argument on this topic:

Indeed, if someone, it being up to him to do the fine things and refrain from doing the shameful things, does the opposite, it is clear that this human being is not excellent. Hence vice and virtue are voluntary. For there is no necessity to do the wicked things. (1228a5-9)

Here, Aristotle infers the voluntariness of virtue and vice from the fact that when someone performs a vicious action, it was in his power not to do it—he is under no necessity to perform the vicious action. Although Aristotle does not address the case of performing a virtuous action, he presumably thinks that performing a virtuous act is similarly non-necessitated. In effect, this seems to be an inference from the voluntariness of virtuous and vicious actions to the voluntariness of the states from which they issue. It is unclear how exactly this inference goes through. Perhaps the voluntariness of virtuous and vicious actions implies the voluntariness of virtue and vice because one voluntarily brings about this state through repeated virtuous action. Alternatively, perhaps the point is simply that a voluntary action must have a voluntary origin, i.e. a voluntary state, from which it issues.247 Regardless, the important point is that Aristotle claims that virtue and vice are voluntary. And since virtue is voluntary, virtue is something subject to praise or blame. Consequently, under [Proposal-NF] virtue is naturally fine.

Health, by contrast, fails to be naturally fine for the same reason that its erga fail to be: health isn’t praiseworthy (1248b23). Since health is good as an end, it fails to be praiseworthy presumably because it fails to be subject to praise and blame and, hence, voluntary. Aristotle does not address the question of whether health is voluntary in the EE. But a plausible case can be made that it isn’t. It’s simply not the case that we ourselves are the starting-points of our bodily conditions. While we can affect our bodily states to some extent, and indeed stave off disease and

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247 On this passage, and similar issues in the NE, see Woods 1992, 156 and Ackrill 1997b.
weakness through things like good diet and exercise, we cannot simply choose to be healthy, or anything like that. Indeed, even the best health regimens and cures do not guarantee health. Health is much too subject to things outside of our control, such as the natural constitution of our bodies, the natural interactions between the elements, etc. Plausibly, then, bodily states such as health aren’t voluntary.\footnote{Aristotle seems to have a different attitude about the voluntariness of bodily vices. At NE III.5, 1114a21-31 Aristotle argues that some bodily vices are voluntary. This is plausible: while no regimen or cure guarantees health, it seems like our choices and actions can really bring about sickness or other bodily vices (e.g. drinking poison, intentional bodily harm, etc.).}

To be clear, Aristotle nowhere claims [Proposal-NF]. But this proposal is consistent with what he says about naturally fine things and also accounts for the examples Aristotle offers. It is furthermore congenial to the explanatory framework Aristotle commits himself to in the EE. Owing to the lack of explicit evidence, it is perhaps too strong to say that this \textit{is} his view of why goods are naturally fine in the EE. But he has at least laid the groundwork for such a view.

\textit{b. Non-Natural Fineness}

Aristotle says little about the fourth form of goodness in EE VIII.3, non-natural fineness. Unlike in the case of natural fineness, Aristotle does not tell us what non-natural fineness is necessarily coextensive with, or what it grounds.

The most revealing passage about non-natural fineness is the following:

\begin{quote}
And not only these things [i.e. the naturally fine things], but the things not fine by nature but good by nature are fine for them [i.e. the fine and good people]. For they are fine whenever that for the sake of which people act and choose them is fine. That is why the naturally good things are fine for the fine and good person. (1249a4-7)
\end{quote}

This passage reveals two important things about non-natural fineness. First, non-natural fineness is a property that natural goods have. As I argued in Chapter Three, these are the goods that are...
external to the soul. Only external goods, then, enjoy non-natural fineness. Second, this passage also reveals why certain goods have non-natural fineness. The natural goods are fine when they are used in actions or choices which are themselves for the sake of something fine. That is why (\textit{dio}, 1249a7) the natural goods are fine.

Now, it would be surprising if non-natural fineness weren’t a form of goodness as an end.\textsuperscript{249} On the assumption that it is, I propose the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [\textbf{Proposal-NNF-1}]: For all natural goods, \(x\) is non-naturally fine just in case, and because, (i) \(x\) can be used in an action/event which produces God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end under normal circumstances; and (ii) \(x\) is in fact used in an action or choice which is for the sake of something fine.
\end{itemize}

This proposal is structurally similar to [Proposal-NF] in that non-natural fineness of goods is explained by what makes them good as ends \textit{plus} some other feature that they exhibit. The main way in which this claim differs from [Proposal-NF], of course, is that the additional property lies not in the fact that these goods are voluntary, but in the fact that they are used in actions or choices of a certain character.

\textbf{[Proposal-NNF-1]} hews fairly close to what Aristotle says about the non-naturally fine goods. There does, however, seem to be a way of construing clause (ii) which would yield a particularly elegant account of non-natural fineness. According to clause (ii), the non-naturally fine things are used in an action or choice that is for the sake of something fine. Suppose it were the case that these actions and choices were themselves naturally fine. If this were right, \textbf{[Proposal-NNF-1]} would amount to the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [\textbf{Proposal-NNF-2}]: For all natural goods, \(x\) is non-naturally fine just in case, and because, (i) \(x\) can be used in an action/event which produces God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end under normal circumstances; and (ii*) \(x\) is in fact used in an action or choice which is naturally fine.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{249} But I don’t think that being good as an end simply falls out of being a natural good. To be a natural good is to be an external good. But it is unclear whether Aristotle includes only goods as ends among the natural goods, or whether he also includes within this class goods that are good merely not as ends.
So understood, non-natural fineness would be parasitic upon natural fineness. The natural goods become non-naturally fine when they are relevantly connected to something naturally fine.

My suggestion that the actions and choices described in (ii) are themselves naturally fine is speculative, of course. But three points are worth considering on my suggestion’s behalf. First, the actions and choices singled out by clause (ii) are for the sake of something fine. This something could be any old fine thing; just as well, however, it could be a reference to *eudaimonia*. Secondly, these actions and choices bear a “for the sake of” relation to the fine thing they are for the sake of. One candidate for what this relation is is, of course, the “production for the most part” relation. Finally, clause (ii) speaks of actions and choices. Actions and choices are voluntary. Taking all of these points together, clause (ii) could well refer to choices and actions which are for the most part productive of *eudaimonia* as an end and voluntary. In other words, they are actions and choices which satisfy the conditions for being naturally fine according to [Proposal-NF].

It is hard to say with any certainty that [Proposal-NNF-2] is a faithful interpretation of [Proposal-NFF-1]. But the elegant connection of non-naturally fine items to naturally fine actions and choices seems Aristotelian in spirit and is at least permitted by the text. As with [Proposal-NF], I will not insist that this is in fact Aristotle’s Eudemian view of non-natural fineness. Rather, it is a promising guess as to what his view might end up being if one were to piece together parts of his theory that he himself seems not to have connected.

**VII. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have sketched the axiology that (Claim B) commits Aristotle to, at least as far as it is evidenced by the EE. In doing this, I hope to have made the case that this axiology is coherent. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, can plausibly cause the goodness of the other practicable
goods, including forms of goodness as an end. If this is right, then God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, can indeed play the causal role eudaimonia is meant to play according to EE I.8. The results of this chapter, then, corroborate the account of eudaimonia I’ve argued for in Chapters One through Three.

In the final chapter, I shall turn directly to the question of why Aristotle thinks that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the telos of the practicable goods. This question has been partially answered in Chapter Three. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the horos of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, as well as the horos for the states and activities of the soul. I argued that it follows from this that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the telos of the practicable goods. I did not explain, however, why Aristotle identifies God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as these horoi in the first place. It is to his argument for this claim that we must now turn.
I accomplished two things in the previous four chapters. First, I argued in Chapters One through Three that in the EE Aristotle identifies God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as eudaimonia. Second, in Chapter Four I argued that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, can indeed play the final causal role that eudaimonia plays. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, can plausibly cause the goodness of the other practicable goods.

Recall that in Chapter Three I argued that in the EE’s final lines Aristotle argues for

(Claim B) The telos of the practicable goods is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

In particular, I argued that Aristotle argues that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the horos of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, as well as the horos of the states and activities of the soul. These claims entitled him, I suggested, to the further claim that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the telos of both goods external to the soul and goods of the soul. I did not, however, discuss Aristotle’s reasoning for identifying God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as these horoi.

Such a discussion is the task of the present chapter. Aristotle offers an argument at 1249b6-19 for why God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, demarcates good choices and instances of possession of the natural goods from bad ones. Additionally, he suggests at 1249b21 that this same line of reasoning also explains why it demarcates good states and activities of the soul from bad ones. My aim in this chapter is to offer an interpretation of this argument.

As far as this argument goes, there is good news and bad news. The good news is that Aristotle does indeed seem to offer a valid argument for identifying God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as the aforementioned horoi. Some premises must be supplied, of course, and there is controversy about what, exactly, these supplements should be. But, as I hope to show, there is a
clear line of thought by which Aristotle justifies his identifications. The bad news is that it is unclear, at the end of the day, why Aristotle holds some of the premises he does. Some of these deficiencies can be remedied by appealing to material in NE VI/EE V, one of the so-called common books. But it is a controversial matter whether these books are genuinely Eudemian. And even allowing this material in, as we shall see, some things remain unexplained, such as why *phronēsis* is for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

I. Translation and Argument Sketch

I shall begin with a translation of the relevant passage:

Indeed, it is necessary just as in the other cases to live in relation to the ruling thing, and in relation to the state in accordance with the activity of the ruling thing, as a slave ought to live in relation to [the state in accordance with the activity] of his master. And each thing ought to live in relation to the ruling principle appropriate to each. And since the human being too is naturally composed of a ruling thing and a ruled thing, each too ought to live in relation to their ruling principle. But the ruling principle is twofold. For in one way medicine is the ruling principle, and in another way health is. And the former is for the sake of the latter. And it holds in this way in the case of the theoretical [part]. For God does not rule as a commander, but is that for the sake of which *phronēsis* commands. And “that for the sake of which” is twofold (and this has been distinguished in other works). Since that thing (*keinos*) is in need of nothing, whatever choice, then, and instance of possession of the natural goods produces especially God’s contemplation, either of body or resources or friends or the other goods, this is best and this *horos* is finest.

(1249b6-19)

Before we dive into the argument, I need to address two issues at the outset.

First, it is clear that in this argument Aristotle is identifying the *horos* which he claims at 1249b1 ought to exist for the excellent person. In saying that this *horos* is finest at the end of this passage, Aristotle implies that he has identified the *horos*. Conspicuously, however, there is no

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250 I follow the MSS and read *heautōn*.
251 I read a full stop after *allois* at 1249b15. The *epei* clause at 1249b16 introduces a dependent clause which depends on the *hētis* clause that follows.
252 I follow the MSS and read *te*. 189
mention whatsoever of a *horos* in the argument itself. It is consequently unclear how this argument is meant to result in an identification of this *horos*, let alone the claim that this *horos* is finest.

This issue is resolved as follows. The argument at 1249b6-19 is not meant merely to show that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the *horos* of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, or that this *horos* is finest. Aristotle also concludes from this argument that a certain kind of choice and instance of possession is best, i.e. good. This conclusion seems more directly relevant to what Aristotle says in the argument. After all, *phronēsis*, the virtue concerned with hitting upon correct choices, features prominently in the argument. The argument, in other words, *directly* supports Aristotle’s claim that the good choices and instances of possession of the natural goods are the ones which stand in a final causal relation (viz. the especial production relation) to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. But given this interim conclusion, Aristotle can then conclude that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the *horos* of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods. Indeed, he can conclude that this *horos* is finest.

That God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the *horos* of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods if the interim conclusion is true is something we’ve seen already in Chapter Three. This *horos*, recall, is what demarcates the good choices of this kind from the bad ones. According to the interim conclusion, the good choices of this kind stand in a final causal relationship to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. It is precisely this relation, as we saw from Chapter One, that causes goodness. A further result of this, I suggested in Chapter Three, is that choices and instances of possession of the natural goods which fail to stand in such a relation

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253 On the idea that the best choices and instances of possession are the good such choices and instances of possession, see Chapter Three, 113.
254 Recall from Chapter Four that the “especial production” relation is a final causal relation.
are bad. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, then, does the demarcating work that a *horos*
does.

Why, however, should this *horos* be the finest? I understand this claim as follows. There
are many *horoi* that demarcate *at least some* choices and instances of possession of the natural
goods. Take bodily health as an example. A number of choices and instances of possession of the
natural goods are for the sake of health, such as the choice to buy vitamins or a first-aid kit. Similarly, a number of choices are detrimental to health and might well impede it, such as the
choice to forgo these items. Beyond these cases, however, health does not do any demarcating
work. For example, health does not ordinarily enter in the question of whether one should choose
this or that honor, or this or that amount of money. What distinguishes God’s contemplation,
suitably qualified, from other *horoi* is that this good demarcates *all* choices and instances of
possession of the natural goods. Since God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, plays this
preeminent demarcating role among all *horoi* that concern choices and instances of possession,
Aristotle identifies this *horos* as the finest. Being “finest” is a commendation conferred on this
particular *horos* in virtue of the fact that it alone marks out all of the good choices and instances
of possession that Aristotle has in mind.

Despite the fact that the word ‘*horos*’ fails to appear anywhere in the argument, it is clear
that the argument is meant to show that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the *horos* of
the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, and that this *horos* is finest. Aristotle
thinks, not unreasonably, that from the fact that such choices and instances of possession stand in
an especial production relation to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, he can conclude that

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255 Recall from Chapter One that Aristotle seems to think of health as a genuine cause of goodness. It is, however, a
cause of goodness for a more restricted set of practicable goods than is the *telos* of the practicable goods.
“this horos is finest,” i.e. that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the relevant horos and that it is finest. In what follows, I shall call this thought of Aristotle’s “Assumption 1.”

This interpretation, however, raises a second issue. Although the argument at 1249b6-19 does seem more obviously connected to the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, there is nothing in the argument itself that seems to address the goodness of such choices and instances of possession. ‘Good’, ‘best’, and the like do not appear anywhere in the argument either. Consequently, it is unclear how this argument entitles Aristotle to draw any evaluative conclusions about such choices and instances of possession.

This issue is resolved by noting that the argument is not devoid of normative language altogether. Aristotle speaks of certain states of affairs as being “necessary” (dei, 1249b6), and claims that things ought (deoi, 1249b11) to live in relation to their appropriate ruling principles. As we shall see, the argument above runs smoothly if we understand this deontic language to amount to, or at least imply, claims about what is good. In particular, I shall assume that, at least in this passage, x ought to φ just in case it is good for x to φ. Call this “Assumption 2.”

With these two assumptions on the table, I can now sketch the argument:

(1) Each living thing that has a ruler ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle (1249b8-9). [Premise]

(2) The human being is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled thing. (1249b9-10). [Premise]

(3) If something is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled thing, it has a ruler. [Premise]

So, (4) the human being has a ruler. [Premises (2) and (3)]

So, (5) the human being ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle (1249b10-11). [Premises (1) and (4)]
(6) For a human being, an instantiation of living in relation to one’s appropriate ruling principle is choosing and possessing the natural goods so as to produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified (1249b11-16). [Premise]

So, (7) the human being ought to choose and possess the natural goods so as to produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. [Premises (5) and (6)]

So, (8) the choices and instances of possession regarding the natural goods which produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, are good for the human being. [Premise (7) and Assumption 2]

Thus, (9) “this horos is finest,” i.e. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the horos of such choices and instances of possession, and this is the finest. [Premise (8) and Assumption 1].

I shall now explain why Aristotle holds the premises of this argument, and what basis they have in the text above.

II. The Premises Explained

(1) Each living thing that has a ruler ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle.

This claim is stated at 1249b8-9 almost verbatim. The only addition I have made is to specify the domain of “each” as living things that have a ruler (to archon). As we shall see shortly, this addition is justified by the context of 1249b8-9.

Premise (1) is the third of three claims made at 1249b6-9. On my reading, Aristotle makes three increasingly precise claims in these lines. They are joined by kai’s at 1249b7 and b8 which indicate increased precision:

(a) Each living thing that has a ruler ought to live in relation to its ruler.

(b) Each living thing that has a ruler ought to live in relation to the active state of its ruler.

(c) Each living thing that has a ruler ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle.
(b) is a more precise claim than (a) because it makes a more precise claim regarding what each living thing is to live in relation to. Living things that have rulers aren’t simply to live in relation to *to archon*; more precisely they’re to live in relation to *tēn hexin kata tēn energeian tēn tou archontos*, or the **active state** of the ruler. Some state, or perhaps some set of states, is designated as “the” state of the ruler within a context, and the subordinate is supposed to live in relation to that state in its activated form. (c), I suggest, is more precise than (b) in that it reconceives the relevant active state of the ruler as an appropriate ruling principle (*archē*) for the subordinate. The relevant active state of the ruler plays a fundamental, determining role as to how the subordinate ought to live. It is, furthermore, an appropriate ruling principle for the subordinate to live their life in relation to.

The text from which (a) and (b) are taken lacks a grammatical subject. The text from which (c) is derived does have a grammatical subject, *hekaston*. In each case we can ask, for each what are these claims true? A natural suggestion is that Aristotle has in mind each living thing that has a ruler. Clearly, he must have in mind *at most* things that both live and have a ruler, since he says that each thing ought to live in relation to its ruler. But it also seems like he has *at least* these things in mind, since he doesn’t suggest that he has a more specific subset in mind.

Why does Aristotle hold premise (1)? Unfortunately, this claim is nowhere defended in the EE. We can, however, find a justification for this claim in *Pol. I.5*, in Aristotle’s justification for natural slavery. Here, Aristotle considers a number of different ruling-ruled pairs: soul and body; *nous* and appetite; human beings and animals; male and female. In each case, Aristotle says

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256 Verdenius 1971, 287 cites NE 1099a6 for an example of *kat’ energeian* clearly picking up the “active” option for how something can be.

257 One might think that the phrase ‘*en tois allois*’ at 1249b6-7 indicates that Aristotle has a more specific subset in mind. This would be true if “the others” are other living things that have rulers. 1249b6-9, then, would be focused on just the human case, though what he says here about human beings also holds true in the other cases, such as horses, cows, etc. But the phrase needn’t be taken in this way. Broadie 2010, 19 for example, takes “the others” to be other activities besides living. Cf. Inwood and Woolf 2013.
that it is better for the subordinate party to be ruled. As he says of the soul-body and *nous*-appetite pairs, “it is clear that it is in accordance with nature and beneficial for the body to be ruled by the soul, and for the affective part to be ruled by *nous*, i.e. the part that has reason. But equality or the reverse would be harmful for all” (1254b6-9). The same point holds true in the case of living things, such as the human beings and animals, as well as male and female (1254b10-14). Aristotle then extends this pattern to natural slaves, claiming that their slavery is beneficial for them (1254b19-20).

What Aristotle seems to be suggesting is that, among living things, it is better for the subordinate that they live as something ruled rather than not so living. If we accept Assumption 2, that what is good for *x* to do is also what *x* ought to do, we can then see in *Pol*. I.5 a justification for the crude version of premise (1), viz. (a) above: each living thing ought to live in relation to its ruler, since each thing will be benefitted in doing so.

Why will the ruled party benefit by living according to the commands of the ruler? Common to all of the examples is the idea that the ruled party benefits the ruler in some way by abiding by the ruler’s commands. In return, the subordinate party accrues some benefit. Domesticated animals, for example, help their owners in various ways. Beasts of burden plow the fields. Cows and chickens provide milk and eggs. As Aristotle notes in *Pol*. I.5, the ruled animals receive the good of safety from their being ruled. A slave is similarly used to accomplish “the necessaries” (1254b25). Aristotle is not explicit here about what benefits accrue to them in return, but it is not hard to imagine. Presumably the subordinate obtains these goods, or obtains them as easily as they do, from their rulers *only if* they are ruled. The farmer won’t provide safety to

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258 On the potential benefits that accrue to slaves from slavery, see Smith 1983, 115-116; Schofield 1990, 15-16; Kraut 2002, 295-301; and Heath 2008, 265-7. Such benefits include security, of course, but also an opportunity for the natural slave to engage in virtuous activity of the sort they’re capable of.
wild oxen, nor to chickens that no longer produce eggs. Since the subordinate party receives a benefit in being ruled that they would not otherwise receive, they are benefited by being ruled.

As we saw, in EE VIII.3 Aristotle’s claim is the more precise (c), rather than (a). The subordinate ought to live in relation to the appropriate ruling principle—the relevant active state—of the ruler. A couple of ideas are at play here. First, Aristotle seems to be suggesting that, more precisely, the subordinate’s living is directed to an activity that the ruler engages in. It is unclear what precisely warrants this point. But it is noteworthy that in the various examples in Pol. I.5 the ruler in each case is an entity that does something. Aristotle seems to have in mind rulers with certain activities that they aim to perform. The subordinate, then, directs their activity towards helping the ruler perform that activity.

Second, the ruling principle must be an activity that is appropriate for the subordinate. Again, no guidance is given here by Aristotle as to why this should be so, but the thought is intuitive. Suppose that the owner of certain domesticated animals knows how to cultivate vegetables. This activity, then, is the activation of his horticultural craft-knowledge. Moreover, it is appropriate for certain beasts of burden, such as oxen, to live in relation to this activity. Their bodies are particularly well-suited for the hard work of ploughing the fields, an important step in growing vegetables. Consequently, they would do well to live in relation to this particular activity of the ruler, since in this way the oxen provide a benefit to the ruler which will be compensated by his good care of the oxen. The oxen, then, ought to live in relation to the farmer’s activity of growing vegetables. For a chicken, by contrast, the horticultural activity would be an inappropriate ruling activity. Chickens are not well-suited for ploughing the fields or for doing anything else that might aid the farmer in his horticultural activity. Were they to live in relation to the horticultural activity of the ruler, they would do a bad job, fail to benefit the ruler, and so not
receive a good in return. The appropriate state for chickens to live in relation to, then, would be different.

(2) The human being is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled thing. Aristotle claims that the human being is composed of a ruler and a ruled thing at 1249b9-10. Unfortunately, he does not say what the ruling and ruled parts of the human composite are.

Two possibilities are worth considering. On the view I favor, the ruler and ruled parts of the human being are, respectively, the soul and the body. Like premise (1), this also finds support from Pol. I.5. There, Aristotle says that “wherever there is a combination of elements (hosa...ek pleionōn sunestēke), continuous or discontinuous, and something in common results, in all cases the ruler and the ruled appear (en hapasin emphainetai to archon kai to archomenon); and living creatures acquire this feature from nature as a whole” (Saunders trans., 1254a28-32). Aristotle then points out that creatures are a composite of soul and body, with the soul ruling by nature and the body being ruled by nature (1254a34-36). Since human beings are living creatures, it follows that they too are composites of soul and body, with the soul as ruler and the body as what is ruled. And indeed, Aristotle makes clear that he considers the human being to be such a composite (1254a36-39).

Some commentators opt for an alternative view.259 On their view, the ruler is the rational part of the soul, while the ruled thing is the irrational but obedient part of the soul responsible for the passions and emotions.

There is good evidence that Aristotle considers these parts of the soul to be a ruling-ruled pair. This pair is also mentioned in Pol. I.5. Nous holds a “political or kingly” rule over desire,

259 Rowe 1971b, 86; Verdenius 1971, 285.
or the affective part of the soul (1254b5-9). A similar thought can be found in the EE itself. In EE II.1, Aristotle says that the rational part issues commands, while the irrational part obeys and listens (1219b29-31; cf. 1220a8-11). Much later, in EE VIII.1, he notes that the virtue of the ruling thing, i.e. *phronēsis*, makes use of the virtue of the ruled thing, i.e. ethical virtue (1246b11-12). It is uncertain whether Aristotle has precisely the same distinction of soul parts in mind in all these passages. But there is a clear pattern: the human soul comprises a ruling and a ruled part.

The problems for this alternative view arise when we consider that it is the *human being* that is composed of a ruler and ruled thing at 1249b9-10. There are a couple ways of understanding this claim on this alternative interpretation, both of which, I contend, are less plausible than the option I have laid out.

One might say that the human being, i.e. the body-soul composite, is non-exhaustively composed by the ruling and ruled parts of the soul. Certainly, we can make sense of this claim. Classical Extensional Mereology would allow that if the ruler and ruled thing in question are parts of the soul, and the soul is a part of the human being, then the ruler and ruled thing are parts of the human being.\(^{260}\) That said, it is questionable whether Aristotle would put the point in the way he does at 1249b9-10. While there is good evidence that Aristotle would say that the human being is composed of body and soul, there is no parallel of him claiming that the human being is composed of these two soul parts. When we have parallels for one construal of the claim, and no parallels for the other, we should favor the first unless there is some special reason to do otherwise. Yet, there seems to be so special reason in this case.

\(^{260}\) That said, I am unaware of any place where he refers to either the rational or the affective part of the soul as parts of the human being. When they are introduced in EE II, they are introduced as parts of the soul (1219b28).
Because of the oddity of this interpretation, one might instead insist that by ‘human being’, Aristotle refers merely to the human soul. But this too is implausible. Aristotle is more than capable of referring to the human soul if he wished by these very terms. But he instead refers to the human being.

The strength of evidence, then, for the view that the ruler and ruled thing are the soul and body, along with the oddities of the alternative reading, lead me to favor the former view.

As I have stated (2), I have added the word ‘exhaustively’ to Aristotle’s claim. This is certainly a permissible reading of 1249b9-10. Often when we say that A is composed of B and C, we mean that A is exhaustively composed of B and C. But this does seem like an implicature that can be cancelled. Consequently, Aristotle technically needn’t be claiming that the human being is exhaustively composed by a ruler and ruled thing. My reason for adding ‘exhaustively’, then, is not simply on the basis of what is said at 1249b9-10. Rather, as we shall see going forward, Aristotle’s argument runs smoothly if we suppose that he is making an exhaustiveness claim in (2). Premise (3), in particular, is plausible as stated, but would be implausible if ‘exhaustively’ were omitted.

(3) If something is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled thing, it has a ruler.

So, (4) the human being has a ruler.

So, (5) the human being ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle.

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262 At Meta. H.3, 1043b3-4, Aristotle entertains the possibility that the soul is called ‘human being’. But he does not, as far as I can tell, accept that this is a legitimate way of referring to the soul.
Premises (3) and (4) are implicit in the argument. Unlike the first two premises, which have textual backing, Aristotle does not say anything explicit to suggest these claims. Why, then, should we think that Aristotle claims (3) and (4)?

These premises become attractive supplements when we consider what Aristotle has so far said along with where he wishes to go in his argument. Premise (1) tells us that living things that have rulers ought to live in relation to their appropriate ruling principle. Premise (2) then makes an observation about what the human being, a living thing, is composed of. Premise (5), stated at 1249b10-11, tells us that the human being ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle. Clearly, if Aristotle means to conclude (5) by way of (1) and (2), he needs some further claims. In particular, he needs the claim that the human being has a ruler (4). And if he is to claim (4), he needs some claim to the effect that if something is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled thing, it itself has a ruler, i.e. premise (3). Premises (3) and (4), then, seem like the simplest premises to supply in order for Aristotle to conclude (5).

My interpretation here relies on a particular reading of 1249b10-11. Aristotle literally says that “each too ought to live in relation to their ruling principle.” I have taken ‘each’ (hekaston) to refer to each human being. It is then on the basis of this that I read (3) and (4) into Aristotle’s argument. But this is not the only possible referent for ‘each’. Some commentators instead take ‘each’ to refer to the ruling and ruled parts of the human being mentioned at 1249b10.263 Aristotle’s claim at 1249b10-11, then, is not (5) but

(5*) The ruling and ruled part of the human being ought to live in relation to their appropriate ruling principle.

If (5*) is on the table, it might be thought that (3) and (4) aren’t needed. Instead, Aristotle applies (1) directly to the parts of the human being mentioned in (2). He can then, it seems, conclude (5*)

263 Verdenius 1971, 287; Broadie 2010, 19.
without supplying (3) and (4). Indeed, one might think it a merit of this interpretation that we
don’t need to supply anything beyond what is stated on the page.

This alternative reading suffers from two major defects, however. First, Aristotle says at 1249b10-11 that each ought to \textit{live} in relation to its ruling principle. It is clear that human beings, i.e. body-soul composites, are capable of living. But it is unclear that the ruling and ruled parts of the human being, i.e. the body and soul, themselves live. The soul, for example, is that \textit{by which} we live (DA 414a11). Again, “living is the being for living things, and the cause and starting-point of this is the soul” (415b13-14). The soul is the \textit{cause} of life; it does not itself seem to live. We should be skeptical as to whether Aristotle could conclude of both the ruling and ruled parts that they ought to live.\footnote{264}

Second, as stated, (5*) is not validly inferred from what precedes. Premise (1) says that each living thing \textit{which has a ruler} ought to live in relation to its ruling principle. Clearly the ruled part of a human being has a ruler. But what of the ruling part? Nothing has been said to suggest that the ruling part itself has a ruler. Even if we put the worry about living to one side, Aristotle is not entitled to infer that the ruling part of the soul ought to live in relation to its ruling principle.

I can imagine two possible responses to this second worry. The first response is this. My objection identifies a lacuna in the argument. But lacunae can be filled. We need only grant Aristotle some premise like, “The soul has a ruler.” Once this is supplied, the argument is valid.

This response does rescue the argument. But it does so at the cost of some of the initial attraction of this interpretation. For we are now supplying premises that are not represented on the page. More importantly, however, is there any reason to think that Aristotle believes what needs to be supplied? As I shall argue shortly, I see a good justification for (3), my favored lacuna-

\footnote{264 A similar worry arises if one thinks that the ruling and ruled parts at issue here are the authoritative and obedient parts of the soul. Cf. Woods 1992, 181.}
filler. By contrast, I see no reason why Aristotle would think that the ruler itself has a further ruler 
(*to archon*), and I do not see what this ruler would be.

The second possible response to this argument avoids this issue. It does not require that 
the soul have a ruler for the argument to work. According to this response, we should revisit 
premise (1). Recall that 1249b8-9, the text from which premise (1) derives, reads simply, “Each 
thing ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle.” While this claim requires that 
each thing in the relevant domain be capable of living, it doesn’t strictly require that each of these 
living things have a ruler. Premise (1) should instead be

(1*) Each living thing ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle.

Granting that the ruling part of the soul is a living thing, (5*) can be validly inferred from (1*) and 
(2).265

(1*), however, doesn’t make sufficiently good sense of the context in which we find 
1249b8-9. Recall that these lines were the last of three claims in a progression. Claims (a) and 
(b) are clearly claims about ruled things, i.e. things that have rulers. It’s the ruled thing that’s 
supposed to live in relation to the ruler, and more precisely in relation to the active state of the 
ruler. Aristotle’s go-to example of this is the slave-master relationship. Given this, it would be 
misleading for him to then switch at 1249b8-9 to talking about each thing regardless of whether it 
has a ruler or not. Restricting the domain at 1249b8-9 to living things that have rulers makes 
excellent sense of 1249b6-9 as a whole. The reading needed for premise (1*) does not.

For these reasons, (5), rather than (5*) is the better reading of 1249b10-11, and (3) and (4) 
are reasonable supplement for Aristotle’s argument for (5) to go through.

As I noted in the layout of Aristotle’s argument, premises (4) and (5) are simply the results of earlier premises. Premise (3), by contrast, is a claim in need in justification. What, then, can be said in defense of the idea that if something is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled parts, it itself has a ruler?

This claim is plausible when it comes to groups of people, which is where the language of ruling and ruled has a natural home. Consider a kingdom. The monarch is the ruler of each of their subjects, and the kingdom is composed of both these subjects and their monarch. But it seems like another thing can be said too: the monarch rules the kingdom, i.e. the whole. Similarly, consider the leader of a company. To whom do we look to determine who leads it? It seems sufficient to note that there is some one person who is in charge of everyone else at the company. Once you know that, you can say that that person runs the company, i.e. the whole composed of the company’s leader and their workers. Again, an army has a ruler: it is the general or group of generals who is ultimately in charge of all of the other soldiers.

There are hints that Aristotle thinks about the leadership of groups along these lines. At the beginning of the Politics, Aristotle notes that “every household is ruled in a kingly way by the eldest member. Hence also are the colonies [i.e. the villages, 1252b16-17] on account of their similarity” (1252b20-22). Aristotle here notes that the eldest member rules households and villages. But these are in some sense wholes for Aristotle, and it is the patriarch who rules the individual members of the household and villages as well. A household is made up of a father, along with his spouse, children, and slaves. But the father rules over all of these people. Thus, Aristotle quotes Homer approvingly, who says that “each man lays down the law over his wife and children” (1252b22-23). Similarly, in Pol. I.3 Aristotle notes that the household consists of master-slave, husband-wife, and father-children relationships, and because of this the craft of
household management similarly consists of corresponding parts. Like my other corporation examples, it turns out that the thing which rules the subordinate parts of the household is also properly said to be the ruler of the household itself.

It is worth noting that this line of thought actually justifies something stronger than (3). (3) says simply that if something is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled, then the whole has a ruler. But on the line of thought I have rehearsed, we can furthermore identify what that ruler is. The ruler of the whole is the ruler that rules over the subordinate part(s) of the whole. Thus, the queen rules both the kingdom and her subjects, and the CEO both the company and her employees.

It should also be noted that in all the cases I mentioned, the fact that the whole has a ruler is justified by the fact that the whole is exhaustively composed of a ruler and ruled. The broader claim that if something is (not necessarily exhaustively) composed of a ruler and ruled, the whole has a ruler, seems wrong. A group of people could form an anarchist commune which lacks a ruler. Nonetheless, there might be ruling-ruled relationship among certain parts of this whole, such as the relationship that the anarchist parents have to their budding anarchist children. In such a community, some parts of the community (parents) rule other parts (their children). But it doesn’t follow that the commune has a ruler.

Premise (3), of course, must apply to things other than groups. In particular, it must apply to the human being. Indeed, as we saw earlier, Aristotle is happy to speak of rulers and ruled things outside of the context of groups: thus, one part of the soul rules another. Indeed, ruling and ruled emerge with anything made of continuous or discontinuous parts! Cashing out this language of ruling when applied to things like soul parts or parts of creatures is a tricky matter, and I won’t attempt to do it here. Rather, I shall simply claim that if Aristotle is happy to accept (3) when the wholes at issue are groups of people, and if he is happy to extend the language of ruling and being
ruled to things besides these groups, it would make sense for him to also accept (3) for the case of
the individual human being. The extension of ruling to the parts of the human being brings along
with it the various conceptual truths about ruling and being ruled that we observed in the case of
group governance.

Armed with premise (3), Aristotle can conclude premises (4) and (5). Since the human
being is a composite of ruler and ruled—indeed, a composite exhausted by parts that are either
ruler or ruled—it follows that the human being has a ruler. Consequently, by premise (1) the
human being ought to live in relation to its appropriate ruling principle. Indeed, the line of
reasoning I offered on Aristotle’s behalf entitles him to a bit more. Since the soul rules the body,
the soul will also be the ruler of the human being. The human being, then, ought to live in relation
to the appropriate active state of its soul. As we shall see, Aristotle pursues this line of thought in
the rest of the argument.266

(6) For a human being, an instantiation of living in relation to one’s appropriate ruling principle
is choosing and possessing the natural goods so as to produce especially God’s contemplation,
suitably qualified.

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266 Now seeing how the argument unfolds, one might wish to challenge the inference of (5) from (1) and (4). Recall
the cases that motivated premise (1): things like tame animals and their owners, or slaves and their masters. In each
case, the subordinate thing which benefits from being ruled is disjoint from the ruler. The ruler and ruled are
completely separate entities. Thus, one might think, premise (1) should instead be
(1**) Each living thing that has a ruler and whose ruler is not a proper part of oneself ought to live
in relation to its appropriate ruling principle (1249b8-9).
The human being, however, does not fall under the relevant domain in premise (1**). The human being’s ruler, I
have suggested, is a proper part of the human being, the subordinate. The ruler of the human being is its own soul.
Since the subordinate human being contains its ruler as a proper part, we cannot apply premise (1**) to (4) to yield
(5).

More would need to be said for this to be a real objection, however. Aristotle certainly doesn’t add the
qualification found in (1**), so all else being equal (1) should be favored. For an objection to be mounted, some
reason needs to be offered for why the qualification in (1**) is necessary.
Premise (6) is not a claim that Aristotle explicitly states. The reason to attribute (6) to Aristotle is that (6) is the most economical bridge between premises (5) and (7) which is supported by what is literally said by Aristotle at 1249b11-16. Premise (5) says that human beings ought to live in relation to their ruling principle, while premise (7) says that human beings ought to make choices and engage in instances of possession of a certain kind. Clearly, what is needed to connect premises (5) and (7) is some claim to the effect that living in relation to one’s ruling principle involves (at least in part) making the relevant choices and engaging in the relevant instances of possession. (6) is precisely this connecting tissue.

Officially, much of 1249b11-16 outlines the structure of the human being’s ruling principle. Indeed, perhaps it would be better to say ruling principles. For Aristotle first claims that the human being’s ruling principle is twofold, by which he seems to mean that there are in fact two ruling principles. This dichotomy is justified by an appeal to the examples of medicine and health. Medicine is a ruling principle in one way, while health is a ruling principle in another way. Aristotle does not elaborate on the way in which medicine is a ruling principle. When it comes to health, he justifies the fact that it’s a ruling principle in some other way on the grounds that medicine is for its sake. That said, when Aristotle turns to his case of interest he contrasts God with something that rules “in a commanding way.” This strongly suggests that medicine is a ruling principle in virtue of a commanding role it plays—specifically, issuing commands for the sake of health.267

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267 One might think that the fact that medicine and health are archai speaks against my earlier thought that the archē in question in Premise (1) is an active state of the ruling thing (to archon). For there does not seem to be a ruling thing of which both medicine and health are active states: The archai Aristotle presumably has in mind are the medical craft in the doctor’s soul and the health of the patient. I don’t think this is a problem for my reading, however. Aristotle can consistently hold that (i) when it comes to the doctor as such, his ruling principles are not both housed in some one ruling thing; but (ii) when it comes to living things as such, their ruling principles are both housed in some one ruling thing.
The distinction between these two ways of being a ruling principle seems to track an intuitive distinction in two ways something can determine what one ought to do. It is right to say that my goals in some sense determine what I am to do. Or, to use the language of ruling, it is right to say that they “govern” my actions. I act in ways that are responsive to achieving them: success in my actions is constituted by achieving my goals; failure is constituted by my failing to achieve them. But, importantly, my goals do not literally prescribe what I am to do. A goal does not *command*. What is needed for a command is some different ruling principle which actually says what is to be done. In both of the cases mentioned here in EE VIII.3, the commander is a rational capacity—medical expertise, practical wisdom. These capacities of the soul, when activated, indicate to the rational agent what is to be done. A doctor’s medical expertise does, more or less, command her to prescribe this or check that. Since these capacities are telling the agent what to do, they too have a claim to be a ruling principle.

After drawing his twofold distinction among ruling principles, Aristotle then applies the distinction to his case of interest by way of the following argument: “And it holds in this way in the case of the theoretical [part]. For God does not rule as a commander, but is that for the sake of which *phronēsis* commands” (1249b13-15). As I understand this argument, when Aristotle claims that “it holds thus regarding the theoretical part,” he means that the theoretical part is a ruling principle in the second of two ways, i.e. in the way that health is a ruling principle. This is justified on the grounds that God, i.e. the theoretical part, does not rule in a commanding way, but is that for the sake of which *phronēsis* issues commands. Given the twofold distinction among ruling principles just canvassed at 1249b11-13, the upshot of this is supposed to be that God/the

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theoretical part is a ruling principle in the “for the sake of” way. This argument would also seem to imply that phronēsis is a ruling principle in the way that medicine is, viz. as a commander.

It should be noted that, in keeping with my interpretation of premise (1), the ruling principles ought to be active states of the ruling thing. In this case, they ought to be active states of the soul. Strictly, then, when Aristotle identifies phronēsis and God/the theoretical part as the two archai, he has in mind more specifically phronēsis, as active, and God’s contemplation. Furthermore, as I argued in Chapter Three, we should understand Aristotle to have in mind the various qualifications eudaimonia is subject to when speaking of “God’s contemplation.” Most precisely, the two ruling principles are phronēsis, as active, and God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

The final move in support of (6) that Aristotle makes explicitly is to clarify the kind of “for the sake of” principle God is (again, considered in its virtuous, active state). Aristotle alludes to a distinction drawn elsewhere between two kinds of “for the sake of” things. Traditionally, this distinction is a distinction between the “for the sake of” in the sense of a goal aimed at, and the “for the sake of” in the sense of a beneficiary. When I shovel snow in front of my neighbor’s driveway, I am acting for the sake of two things. I shovel snow both for the sake of his driveway being clean (my goal) and for the sake of him (the beneficiary of my action). The clause, “and since that thing is in need of nothing…” is meant to make clear that God is “that for the sake of which” as a goal, not as a beneficiary. There is no need that God, in its virtuous active state, has, and so it isn’t benefitted by phronēsis’ commands. (The beneficiary is rather the human being, if

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269 There is an asymmetry in how Aristotle refers to these two ruling principles on my view. Phronēsis is a virtuous state of the soul, and so phronēsis, considered as active, is straightforwardly an active state of the soul. God’s contemplation is also an active state. But God, or to theōrētikon, is not a virtue. Strictly, the relevant state will be the virtuous condition of to theōrētikon.

270 127-129.

271 See Chapter Three 118, n. 171 for further discussion about this point.
anything.) In truth, the idea that God, in its active state, is a goal rather than a beneficiary was probably clear enough given the example of health as the “that for the sake of which” kind of ruling principle. But Aristotle sees the need to make this explicit.

We are now in a position to see how 1249b11-16 support premise (6). *Phronēsis*, the commanding principle, will “tell” a human being to do all sorts of things for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, the “for the sake of” principle. Since God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the “for the sake of” in the sense of being a goal, *phronēsis* will tell the human being more specifically to do things that bring about God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, as an end.272 Among the things that *phronēsis* will tell the human being to do is to choose and possess certain natural goods. Thus, if the human being actually lives in relation to *phronēsis* and God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, i.e. if he is actually governed by them and “obeys” them, he will make these choices and come to possess the natural goods in the way that *phronēsis* prescribes.

If this is Aristotle’s idea, he is relying on several thoughts that are not defended in the argument I am discussing. First, *phronēsis* as an active state and God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, must be the human being’s ruling principles. Second, they need to stand in a specific relationship to one another: *phronēsis* needs to be for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Finally it needs to be the case that *phronēsis* is responsible for telling a human being what choices to make regarding the natural goods, and which natural goods to possess.

The uniquely Eudemian books go some way to support these claims. Consider first the question of what the human being’s ruling principles are. Notably, the two ruling principles Aristotle identifies in support of (6) are rational active states. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is obviously rational. *Phronēsis* too is a rational state of the soul (1218b13-15).273

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272 See Chapter Four for defense of this understanding of “for the sake of.”
273 I understand the implicit noun *epistēmēn* in the phrase *hupo tēn kurian pasōn*. 

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particular, it “has an account for why one acts thus” (1247a14). Given that Aristotle is after *appropriate* ruling principles for the human being, the fact that he identifies two rational activities as a human being’s ruling principles makes sense. After the *ergon* argument in Bk. II, Aristotle turns to the topic of virtue. He restricts his attention to human virtue, which turns out to be virtue of the rational and irrational but obedient parts of the soul (1219a27-32). The motivation for this restriction is that he is interested in discussing only those virtues that are particular (*idion*) to human beings (1219a36-38). This suggests that human beings are particularly suited for supporting (and engaging in) rational activity. Just as the ox is particularly well-suited for the farmer’s horticultural activity, the human being is particularly well-suited for bringing about (and, indeed, engaging in) rational activity.

The EE-only books also support the idea that *phronēsis* issues commands about what natural goods to choose and possess. Perhaps the best evidence for this is found in II.3. There *phronēsis* is characterized as the mean between the extremes of *panourgia* and simplicity. Being *panourgos* is, apparently, a matter of being pleonectic in every way and from every source, while being simple is a matter of not being pleonectic even from sources which one ought (1221a36-38). *Phronēsis*, then, would seem to be a matter of “outdoing” in just the right measure. The “outdoing” in question must no doubt involve choices about what money to have, what friends to possess, etc.

The uniquely Eudemian material is, however, limited in certain ways. Although there is some reason to think that the human being’s ruling principles will be active rational states, nothing in the uniquely Eudemian books supports the idea that these ruling principles will be, specifically, God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, and active *phronēsis*. There are many other rational states of the soul. Nor does anything in these books clearly support the idea that *phronēsis* is for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.
There is another place in Aristotle’s ethical works where he discusses the nature of the rational part of the soul, as well as *phronēsis* and its relationship to a virtue responsible for theoretical contemplation: NE VI/EE V. I shall first describe what relevant material can be gleaned from this book. Then I shall briefly discuss the question of what use NE VI/EE V can be for working out Aristotle’s views regarding *phronēsis* and the rational part of the soul more generally in the uniquely Eudemian books.

One question we still have is this. Given that the ruling principles of the human being will be rational active states, what special claim do *phronēsis* and God’s contemplation have to being these states? Now, near the beginning of NE VI/EE V (1139a6-12), Aristotle distinguishes between two parts of the properly rational part of the human soul: the *epistēmonikon* and the *logistikon*. This division corresponds to a division among “things whose starting points do not admit of being otherwise,” and “things which admit of being otherwise.” The *epistēmonikon* is concerned with thinking about the former, while the *logistikon* is concerned with thinking about the latter.

That said, as Aristotle continues to characterize these parts, another important difference emerges between them. In a broad way these parts have the same *ergon*, or “characteristic work,” viz. truth (1139b13). But the particular kinds of truth at issue are different. The *epistēmonikon* is concerned simply with truth and falsity; the *logistikon’s ergon*, however, is “practical truth,” which amounts to “truth standing in agreement with correct desire” (1139a30-31). The precise meaning of this is controversial, but the details needn’t concern us. The important thing for my purposes is that the *ergon* of the *logistikon*, practical truth, is different in kind from what the *epistēmonikon’s*

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274 For recent, contrasting interpretations of this idea, see Olfert 2014 and Charles 2018.
ergon is. It differs in that practical truth bears some important connection to desires, while theoretical truth (for lack of a better word) doesn’t.

Now, Aristotle draws this distinction because he is interested in determining the virtue of both the epistēmonikon and the logistikon. “Virtue is in relation to one’s particular ergon” (1139a16-17). Consequently, he needs to figure out what each part does before he can figure out what the best state of each is. Having done so, he goes on to argue in NE VI/EE V that phronēsis is the virtue of the logistikon, while sophia is the virtue of the epistēmonikon.

This brief sketch of NE VI/EE V helps us answer our question as follows. In NE VI/EE V, Aristotle recognizes a basic twofold division between two types of rational activity, i.e. the attainment of two different types of truth. Phronēsis as active and God’s contemplation (which I shall assume is the activity of sophia) are the virtuous performances of these two different activities. Consequently, these activities have a particular claim to being the human being’s ruling principles over other kinds of rational activity.

What about our other outstanding question: why is phronēsis for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified? Interestingly, Aristotle seems to repeat some version of this claim in NE VI/EE V. Near the end of the book Aristotle considers a series of puzzles one might raise about sophia and phronēsis. The third puzzle is that “it would seem strange if, although being worse than sophia, [phronēsis] is more authoritative than it. For the producing [science] rules and commands concerning each thing” (1143b33-35). Here Aristotle identifies a tension between something’s being worse than another thing and its ruling over that thing—as appears to be the case for phronēsis and sophia. This appearance is deceptive, however, as Aristotle makes clear in his solution to the puzzle: “Yet, truly, nor is [phronēsis] superior to sophia nor to the better part, just as neither is medicine superior to health. For it does not make use of this, but sees to it that it
comes about. It commands for the sake of that, then, not to it” (1145a7-9). *Phronēsis* is not authoritative over *sophia*. Instead, it commands for *sophia*’s sake, and aims to bring *sophia* about.

It is unclear here whether Aristotle is conceiving of *phronēsis* and *sophia* as active or is just considering the states themselves in these passages. In either case, Aristotle would be either directly or indirectly claiming that *phronēsis* as active is for the sake of *sophia* as active, i.e. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. So NE VI/EE V either repeats the very claim from EE VIII.3 we’re interested in or makes a nearby claim that implies our claim of interest. In any event, this claim is just asserted in NE VI/EE V. Aristotle offers no argument to think that *phronēsis* is for the sake of *sophia*.

On my view, it is here where Aristotle’s line of reasoning in EE VIII.3 proves dissatisfying. No reason is adduced either in the uniquely Eudemian books nor in the common books for the crucial claim that *phronēsis*, as active, is for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. This, and related claims in the neighborhood, go undefended. Nor is it an obvious claim that requires no defense. Surely, some of Aristotle’s opponents, such as those who think that *eudaimonia* is pleasure or ethically virtuous activity, don’t think that the goal of *phronēsis* is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

I do, however, see a potential line of defense on Aristotle’s behalf that is Eudemian in spirit. In both the statement of the puzzle and its solution in NE VI/EE V, Aristotle makes comparative evaluative judgments about *phronēsis* and *sophia*, as well as the part of the soul to which *sophia* belongs. The idea seems to be that *sophia* is better than *phronēsis*. But the parts to which these virtues belong differ in kind, as do their objects; so too, I suggested, do the *erga* of their virtues. If this is right, a special case of a problem I discussed in Chapter One emerges: how is it that two things can be compared in terms of goodness, despite the fact that they aren’t of the
same kind (and so manifest merely homonymous properties of goodness)? My answer in Chapter One was ultimately that Aristotle recognizes a kind of betterness in which $x$ is better than $y$ just in case $x$ is causally prior to $y$ in terms of goodness. The particular way in which $x$ is causally prior to $y$, I further suggested, is by way of being a final cause for $y$. Given this framework, we can see how Aristotle is entitled to claim that $phronēsis$ is for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Provided that $sophia$ is better than $phronēsis$, and provided that they differ in kind, it follows that $phronēsis$ in its active guise is for the sake of $sophia$ as active, i.e. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

Aristotle does say a bit in defense of the idea that $phronēsis$ is inferior to $sophia$. In NE VI/EE V.7 Aristotle argues that $phronēsis$ is not the best ($spoudaiotatēn$) on grounds that it does not concern the best objects in the cosmos (1141a20-22). By contrast, $sophia$ is a body of knowledge that concerns the most honorable things (1141a18-20; 1141b2-3). If the goodness of a body of knowledge is determined by the object it concerns, then $sophia$ is better than $phronēsis$. One might also appeal to Aristotle’s point in NE X.8 that the gods who live the best life lead lives that contain no practically virtuous activity, only theoretical contemplation (1178b7-23). This chapter is, of course, distinctly Nicomachean, but this particular argument doesn’t seem incompatible with anything suggested in the EE. There are, then, lines of thought that Aristotle could use to defend the claim that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is better than $phronēsis$ as active. If so, this might be sufficient to secure the claim that $phronēsis$ is for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, given the Eudemian background theory of how comparatives in homonymous contexts work.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{275} 30-35.}\]
In turning to NE VI/EE V for evidence about *phronēsis*, I have assumed that the intellectual virtue *phronēsis* that features in this common book is the same *phronēsis* as is discussed in the uniquely Eudemian books. To my mind, the strongest piece of evidence in favor of thinking that the two *phronēsis*’s are in fact the same are the apparent cross-references to passages in NE VI/EE V at EE I.8, 1218b13-16 and EE III.7, 1234a28-30. Whether or not this is good evidence that NE VI/EE V belongs to the EE, it does seem like good evidence that this common book is meant to inform us about *phronēsis* in the uniquely Eudemian books.

This view has been challenged in different ways by several commentators. I myself do not find these arguments persuasive, but an evaluation of these arguments would take us too far afield. The key point is this: it seems plausible that NE VI/EE V is indeed talking about the *phronēsis* of the EE. But if it isn’t, nothing fundamental is taken away from my account of Aristotle’s argument in EE VIII.3. What would be taken away is some of the justification for some of his moves there. But the argument itself, and my account of it, remains intact.

So, (7) the human being ought to choose and possess the natural goods so as to produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

So, (8) the choices and instances of possession regarding the natural goods which produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, are good for the human being.

Thus, (9) “this horos is finest,” i.e. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the horos of such choices and instances of possession, and this is the finest.

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276 For discussion of these and other cross-references, see Kenny 2016, 50-59.
277 Jaeger 1948, 228-246; Rowe 1971b; Frede 2019; Wolt (forthcoming).
The remaining premises of the argument and its conclusion are all inferred from previous premises or from our assumptions made at the outset. Thus, if they are controversial, it must be because of something further upstream in the argument.

Premise (7) is the consequence of the premise we’ve just examined, along with the idea from earlier in the argument that the human being ought to live in relation to its ruling principle. Premise (6) tells us what, in part, living in relation to one’s ruling principle involves for a human being, while premise (5) is a normative premise saying that one ought to so live. Premise (8) is an application of Assumption 2, according to which \( x \) ought to \( \varphi \) just in case \( \varphi' \)ing is good for \( x \), to premise (7). Finally, the conclusion (9) is an application of Assumption 1 to premise (8). Aristotle has argued that choices which stand in a “for the sake of” relation to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified are good. Since this is the relation responsible for the goodness of these choices, Aristotle can conclude that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is what demarcates these choices as good choices. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, then, is their horos. Furthermore, this horos is “finest” in that it demarcates all of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods.

III. The Argument for the Horos of the Soul

As I argued earlier in Chapter Three, Aristotle presents a second horos at the very end of the EE, a horos of the soul. This too, I argued, is identified as God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. Similar to his claim about the horos of choices and instances of possession of the natural goods being finest, Aristotle claims that “this horos of the soul is best” (1249b21-22).

Aristotle does not state an independent argument to justify his idea that the horos of the soul is God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, or that this horos is best. But I believe that we are
given a hint as to what Aristotle’s justification for this claim is in the cryptic remark that “this holds in the case of the soul” (1249b21). This enigmatic claim can surely be understood to mean that this line of justification—i.e. the argument that I’ve just examined—can, mutatis mutandis, apply to the case of the soul. This, I believe, is an attractive way to understand this claim, since, on this reading, Aristotle would be flagging the justification for his identification of the horos of the soul. Without such a flag, we are left without any sense as to why Aristotle identifies the horos of the soul as God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, or why this is best.

Now, obviously, Aristotle cannot be justifying his claims about the horos of the soul by precisely the same argument I’ve just discussed. Something has to change. I suggest that the argument Aristotle in mind begins with (1)-(5) as stated, along with the following modified claims:

(6*) For a human being, an instantiation of living in relation to one’s appropriate ruling principle is having the soul states and performing the soul activities so as to produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. [Premise]

So, (7*) the human being ought to have the soul states and perform the soul activities so as to produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified. [Premises (5) and (6*)]

So, (8*) the soul states and soul activities which produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, are good for the human being. [Premise (7*) and Assumption 2]

Thus, (9*) “this horos is best,” i.e. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the horos of soul states and soul activities, and this is the best. [Premise (8) and Assumption 1]

These modified claims are quite similar to their original. Their only difference lies in the fact that instead of being about choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, they are about states and activities of the soul.

The key claim in need of justification in this modified argument is (6*). Why should Aristotle think that yet another instantiation of living in relation to one’s appropriate ruling
principle is to have the soul states and perform the soul activities that produce especially God’s contemplation, suitably qualified?

The most helpful passage to defend this is one I discussed earlier in Chapter Three:

And since an enumeration of states according to each passion has been taken up, both the excesses and deficiencies, and of the opposing states in accordance with which people are disposed in accordance with right reason (and what right reason is, and what horos it is necessary to look to to state the mean, we must examine later), it is clear that all the ethical virtues and vices are about the excesses and deficiencies of pleasures and pains, and that pleasures and pains arise from the aforementioned states and affections. (1222b4-11)

In Chapter Three, I argued that the horos referred to here is the horos of the soul. But this passage is useful in another way. Aristotle says here that the virtuous states—the states opposed to the excessive and deficient states—are such that people who have them are disposed “in accordance with right reason” (kata ton orthon logon). “Right reason” is a tricky term here: it might simply refer to phronēsis; alternatively, it might be what phronēsis grasps. In any case, this passage supports the idea that the virtuous states of the soul mentioned here are states of the soul that one has when living in relation to one’s ruling principles.

Aristotle elsewhere makes the same point about the “mean” (to meson) itself—i.e. the action or passion that arises from a mean state. The mean is similarly in accordance with right reason (1222a8-10; cf. 1220b26-28).

In what way are the means and the mean states that undergird them “in accordance with right reason,” such that undergoing them or possessing them counts as living in relation to one’s ruling principles? Take the means themselves first. There are two cases worth considering. First, a mean might be the product of deliberate choice. My coming to possess the right amount of money would be a mean; so too would be my generous donation, or my heroic action on the
battlefield. These actions are the result of deliberation, which, if done correctly, is an instance of phronēsis commanding me to do something. Since phronēsis commands for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, these various actions will be for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

Other means, such as correct feelings or affections, are not the result of deliberation. It is not the result of practical reasoning to, say, enjoy an act of generosity or to feel anger. But this is consistent with the thought that feeling the correct feelings or affections still counts as living in relation to one’s ruling principles. For although phronēsis is the commanding ruling principle for a human being, it does not follow that every instance of living in relation to this ruling principle must be a case of following one of its commands. Aristotle presumably has in mind a broader sense of living in relation to this ruling principle. Affections, or feelings of pleasure and pain, then, would be felt in relation to one’s ruling principles in that they are such as to allow for the smooth performance of actions that are for the sake of God’s contemplation, suitably qualified; or to help one “see” the correct thing to do.

States of the soul, similarly, are not immediate objects of the commands of phronēsis. Phronēsis does not command one to be in a virtuous state. Instead, possessing these conditions of the soul count as living in relation to phronēsis in that they are the dispositions one has to perform actions that bring about God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, and to feel in the appropriate ways to bring this about.

Undergoing the various virtuous actions and passions of the soul, and having the virtuous states of the soul, then, likewise counts as living in relation to one’s ruling principles. Indeed, in keeping with my suggestion in Chapter Three, I suggest that Aristotle more generally thinks that any good action and passion of the soul, and any good state of the soul, should so count. If this is
right, Aristotle is then entitled to (6*) and to his conclusion that this horos, viz. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the best.

IV. Conclusion

Recall that after Chapter Three two important questions were left outstanding. The first, addressed in Chapter Four, was whether God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, could play the causal role that the telos of practicable goods plays. The second question was why God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the horos of the choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, and the horos of the soul. This second question was the subject of the present chapter.

I have now laid out Aristotle’s reasoning for why God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, is the horoi he identifies at the end of the EE. God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, demarcates the good choices and instances of possession of the natural goods, and the good states and activities of the soul, because it is one of two “ruling principles” for the human being. In particular, it is the “ruling principle” in the sense of being a goal for phronēsis, the commanding ruling principle. Aristotle’s reason for thinking that God’s contemplation, suitably qualified, plays this role is unclear. I suggested one avenue for how he might justify this, though the evidence for this line of thought rested in part on texts found in NE VI/EE V. As far as the uniquely Eudemian books go, however, the bedrock of this argument seems to be an assumed relationship that phronēsis bears to God’s contemplation, suitably qualified.

Perhaps this is a partially dissatisfying answer to the second question. So be it. I do not think that this dissatisfaction is evidence against my interpretation. Rather, it is evidence that Aristotle’s position on the EE is not fully defended to the extent we might like.
But whatever our attitude to how well Aristotle has defended Intellectualism, I hope to have made the case in this dissertation that there is a coherent, attractive Intellectualist reading of the EE. Aristotle first identifies *eudaimonia* as the *telos* of the practicable goods (Chapter One). He then clarifies an important kind to which *eudaimonia* belong (Chapter Two) before locating *eudaimonia* within this kind as God’s contemplation, suitably qualified (Chapter Three, Chapter Five). Importantly, this activity can indeed play the role of the *telos* of the practicable goods (Chapter Four). I submit, then, that we should believe that Aristotle is an Intellectualist in the EE.
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