

It lies beyond the scope of the present paper to consider whether Plato himself believed or wished his audience to believe that Socrates managed to refute Thrasymachus's position, either in Bk I or elsewhere in the *Republic*.

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Aristotle, egoism and the virtuous person's point of view*

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According to the traditional interpretation, Aristotle's ethics, and ancient virtue ethics more generally, is fundamentally grounded in self-interest, and so in some sense egoistic. Most contemporary ethical theorists regard egoism as morally repellent, and so dismiss Aristotle's approach. But recent traditional interpreters have argued that Aristotle's egoism is not vulnerable to this criticism. Indeed, they claim that Aristotle's egoism actually accommodates morality. For, they say, Aristotle's view is that an agent's best interests are *partially constituted* by acting morally, so that the virtuous person sees morality as essential to her happiness. (Call this 'the Constitutive Thesis'.)

In this paper, I argue that the Constitutive Thesis is unpersuasive, both from a theoretical standpoint and (for similar reasons) as an interpretation of Aristotle.¹ It is unpersuasive because it is much more demanding in both

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¹ I do not consider all interpretations of Aristotle that have been, or might be offered. Innumerable readings have been put forward over the years, and a survey of all of them is far beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I focus on the views of T.H. Irwin and John McDowell. These are arguably the two major contemporary positions amongst those who believe that the question of self-interest makes sense, and is a live one, for Aristotle. Of course, another prominent set of interpreters

respects than several nonegoist alternatives. My argument builds on an objection originally offered by John McDowell. McDowell claimed (1) that the Constitutive Thesis requires that there are independent standards of self-interest that can be agreed upon in advance by all parties to the dispute, both virtuous and nonvirtuous; and (2) that there are no such standards. I argue that McDowell is mistaken. The orthodox position requires much less than McDowell claims if it makes an appeal to the distinctiveness of the virtuous person's point of view. However, unfortunately for traditionalists, the price of this point of view defence is high. First, to be even remotely plausible, the revised orthodox view must be almost frighteningly complex. Second, once this complexity is exposed, the orthodox view is much less plausible than its major rivals, in particular those which appeal directly to moral reasons.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first explains the orthodox position and the Constitutive Thesis. The second introduces McDowell's criticism and the point of view defence. The third section explains the costs of this reply. The fourth considers several ways of meeting these costs, finding each unsatisfactory. Finally, the fifth section considers two ways in which the orthodox position might be weakened in order to avoid some of the problems, but argues that both should be rejected.

1. Egoism, inclusivism and altruistic action

Generally speaking, a position is egoistic if it subscribes to the claim that each person does or must or should do whatever promotes some

denies questions about the relative roles of self-interest and morality make sense for Aristotle, usually because they take our concept of morality to have emerged only in the Modern period). Though this position is of considerable interest, it does not fall within the scope of this paper. (The position is put forward by Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', a seminal paper. See also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; and Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*).

benefit for herself.² But the particular form of egoism of interest here is a thesis about the rational justification of action:³ namely, that each person ought to do whatever promotes some benefit for herself *because* it promotes some benefit for herself.⁴ Let us call this view 'Justificatory Egoism'. According to Justificatory Egoism, an agent has a basic justificatory reason for acting in a given way if and only if acting in such a way promotes some benefit for that agent.

Now, Justificatory Egoism conflicts with two facts about our moral experience. First, it seems immensely plausible that in ordinary life good people sometimes perform altruistic actions: that is, actions which involve the sacrifice of their own interests, and which are genuinely done for the sake of others. Second, such behavior seems, at least at first glance, to be entirely reasonable. Given these facts, it seems unlikely that an egoistic account of altruistic action can be correct. Furthermore, since the facts have a

² For an excellent discussion of some relevant issues see Kraut, *Aristotle*.

³ This question is importantly different from the question of what motivates an agent in acting virtuously. (For example, it would presumably be possible for an agent to perform the actions she would be rationally justified in performing but do them because they also happen to be most in her interest. Then her motivating reason for acting as she does would be different from her justifying reason.) These questions are closely connected on some theories of ethics and moral psychology, and practically inseparable within those with a Humean flavour. But these are matters of great philosophical controversy which will not be addressed here. I try to avoid the issue entirely in this paper, by presupposing nothing about the connection between justifying and motivating reasons. My assumption is that such a connection is something that must be specified and argued for independently. (For the distinction between motivating and justifying reasons see Brink, *Moral Realism*, 42.)

⁴ For example, egoism may be offered as an empirical, conceptual, or normative theory of human behavior. (As an empirical or conceptual thesis, it is usually referred to as 'psychological egoism'; as a normative thesis, it is usually called 'rational egoism'.) Various versions of each thesis have been attributed to the ancients. The thesis with which we shall be primarily concerned is a kind of normative thesis.

high epistemic status, they create a general presumption against Justificatory Egoism. This presumption constitutes a burden of proof that all versions of Justificatory Egoism must address, including eudaimonistic versions.

Traditional interpreters of Aristotle claim that Aristotle's commitment to *eudaimonia* should be interpreted as a commitment to a version of Justificatory Egoism. On this view, Aristotle's appeal to *eudaimonia* is simply an appeal to what benefits an agent, and so to that agent's interests. Given this, Aristotle's essential claim is that an agent's being virtuous promotes that agent's interests. And it is the appeal to interests that explains *eudaimonia*'s foundational role in Aristotelian virtue ethics.⁵

The general presumption against Justificatory Egoism has two implications for this account of Aristotle's eudaimonism.⁶ First, the presumption applies directly. If eudaimonism is egoistic, being morally virtuous is justified only if it promotes the agent's own interests. In other words, being just or generous, and being virtuous more generally, is rationally defensible only insofar as having such character-traits contributes to the satisfaction of one's own interests. On this view, altruistic actions are justified only if they are authorized by virtues justified in this way. Hence, to be plausible as an ethical theory, the orthodox interpretation must address the general presumption. Second, a related textual presumption applies when eudaimonism is attributed to Aristotle. For most commentators, including most orthodox interpreters, agree that there is strong textual evidence that Aristotle's moral virtues authorize altruistic

⁵ For example, T.H. Irwin, a prominent orthodox interpreter, claims that Aristotle is committed to the view that 'the good that is realized in a happy life must be relative to the interests of the particular agent'. And by this, he seems to mean that Aristotle advocates the happy life because this is the life that is in the agent's interests. See Irwin, 'Prudence'.

⁶ The presumption need not carry over if the ancients have a very different understanding of the moral virtues than we do, as some believe is the case. Still, most of the writers considered here do not take this view.

actions. Hence, the orthodox interpretation must offer an account of eudaimonism which explain how this can be so.

The most popular way to deal with both presumptions is to offer a more detailed account of the connection between self-interest and moral virtue by endorsing a constitutive account of *eudaimonia*, and of the value of moral virtue. According to the constitutive account, Aristotle is an egoist of an especially sophisticated kind.⁷ he argues that '[the] genuine moral virtues are parts of the agent's good, not merely causally effective instrumental means to it'.⁸ On this view, it is not the case that an agent should be virtuous because this is the best way to secure some other good the agent values that is otherwise independent of virtue; rather, virtue is valuable to the agent for its own sake, as it is itself one of the goods that the agent ought to seek to secure for herself. The virtues make a constitutive, not merely instrumental, contribution to the agent's overall good.

Now, the introduction of this sophistication does not amount to a rejection of egoism. Instead, 'It implies only that [eudaimonists] require us to change our conception of what our interest consists in, not simply our view of what will be causally effective in securing our interest, as we previously understood it' (Irwin, 'Prudence', 286). The idea, then, is this. Aristotle does maintain that morality must ultimately be justified in terms of the agent's own interests. However, he also believes that the moral virtues are themselves constitutive parts of the agent's good, and so at least partly constitutive of her interests. Hence, the possession of the moral virtues, and the performance of whatever altruistic actions this entails, is to

⁷ The textual debate centers on Aristotle's account of friendship, in *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk 9, especially chs. 8-9. (Other relevant passages include 1106a15-24; 1140a25-8.) In addition to items mentioned above, an extensive literature includes: Annas, 'Plato and Aristotle on Friendship', and 'Self-Love in Aristotle'; Kahn, 'Aristotle and Altruism'; Kraut, 'Comments on Annas'; and Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles*. (In this volume Adriane Rini's contribution also discusses friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics* Bks 8-9. [Ed.]

⁸ Irwin, 'Prudence', 286. See also Ackrill, 'Aristotle on Eudaimonia'.

be justified in terms of an appropriately expanded understanding of the agent's interests. Let us call this position, 'Expanded Interests Eudaimonism' (EIE).

2. McDowell's criticism

In a seminal article, 'The Role of Eudaimonia in Aristotle's Ethics', John McDowell claims that there is a deep problem with the justificatory structure proposed by the orthodox interpreters. Egoists are committed to justifying the best life on the grounds that it is the most desirable in terms of self-interest. However, McDowell claims that, in disputes about which life is best, this will commit the defender of orthodoxy to saying that:

The requisite idea of the most desirable life must involve canons of desirability acceptable to all parties in the disputes, and intelligible, in advance of adopting one of the disputed theses, to someone wondering what sort of life he should lead.⁹

Hence McDowell claims that Expanded Interests Eudaimonism depends on there being criteria for assessing whether a life is in a person's interest that are prior to, and independent of, a particular view about what constitutes 'living as a good person would'.¹⁰ He goes on to claim that there are no such independent canons of desirability, so that the orthodox view must fail.

In order to resist McDowell's argument, the orthodox interpreter might deny that she needs any canons at all. However, this option is unattractive, for two reasons. First, it would frustrate the attempt to find a nonvacuous

⁹ McDowell, 'Role of Eudaimonia', 368.

¹⁰ He also believes that the orthodox interpreter will claim (i) that such criteria will need to be constructed out of desires; and (ii) that this will be done by grounding those desires in an account of human nature that is similarly prior and independently identifiable.

theoretical grounding for the virtues. If there are no standards, one would have equal reason to call just any account of what one should (or does) do 'prudential'.¹¹ This is unattractive because it suggests that Aristotelian virtue ethics merely adds theoretical veneer to whatever set of moral claims one antecedently favoured, and so is intolerably conservative. Second, the claim that there are simply no standards or canons to determine whether or not a conception of the good life is really in our interests comes into serious conflict with our commonsense intuitions about self-interest. For surely there are at least some standards for the application of the term 'self-interest' to which any account of something recognizable as prudential must conform; and surely those standards exclude some possible views.

These objections make it reasonable to rule out the 'no standards' view.¹² A better strategy for the orthodox interpreter to employ against McDowell's criticism would be to accept the need for standards of some kind, but argue that such standards do exist and do justify the orthodox view. How might one defend this position? The first possibility would be simply to use commonsense standards of prudence to offer an argument for the virtuous life on egoistic grounds. There is something to be said for this strategy. (For example, Brad Hooker has recently argued that an agent does seem to have reason based on his own good to be virtuous because being virtuous counts as some kind of positive achievement.¹³) Nevertheless, overall it seems unlikely to work. First, reasons thus identified are

¹¹ Standards or canons are not the only possible rational groundings. For example, one might also appeal to paradigms, exemplars or prototypes. (I thank Derek Browne for this point.) I assume here that McDowell intends 'standards' in a broad sense, to include other possibilities of this sort.

¹² It is perhaps worth making clear that the need for standards does not rule out desire-satisfaction views of the good life. For example, someone who says that the good life for a person is the life in which her actual desires are satisfied is offering a standard.

¹³ Hooker, 'Moral Virtue'. See also Sumner, 'Is Virtue its Own Reward?'.

unlikely to have the status that we normally associate with moral reasons.¹⁴ Second, the idea that moral virtue is an achievement presumably comes simply from our commonsense attitudes about the worth of virtue. But these attitudes are usually called into question by egoists, who tend to regard them as deeply mysterious. Hence, it is unlikely to be enough for an egoist to rest her defense of moral virtue on these grounds. More needs to be said (as Socrates finds out in the *Republic*).

A more promising strategy for the orthodox interpreter is to attempt to take the sting out of McDowell's requirement by rejecting McDowell's characterization of the kind of standards required, and arguing for a more moderate version. This strategy is promising because McDowell's requirement does indeed seem too extreme. In particular, it is not clear why the orthodox interpreter must accept canons of desirability that are independent in the strong sense that McDowell demands. McDowell demands that the canons are (1) acceptable to all parties in the dispute; and (2) intelligible in advance of adopting one of the disputed theses to someone wondering what sort of life she should lead. But these demands seem too strong, for two reasons.

First, the claim that the canons need to be acceptable to all parties is ambiguous. On the most reasonable interpretation, it means only that the canons are ultimately acceptable. Unfortunately, not much follows from this. It seems to require at most only that the canons are true or rationally favored in some sense, so that all parties will in principle be able to accept them. But this does not entail that the canons can be recognized as true from just any perspective. In particular, since acceptability may be a function of existing beliefs, and so dependent to some extent on a person's perspective, some people may have false beliefs which prevent them from endorsing the correct canons.

¹⁴ There are several worries here. Hooker ('Moral Virtue') is primarily concerned with the relative importance of moral reasons *vis-a-vis* other reasons; Sumner ('Is Virtue its Own Reward?') considers whether the positive contribution of virtue to self-interest would be merely contingent.

Second, similar reasons cast doubt on the need for advance intelligibility from all perspectives. Since intelligibility is a function of existing beliefs, and so dependent to some extent on a person's perspective, some people may have false beliefs which prevent them even from understanding the correct canons.

These problems for McDowell's requirements suggest that the orthodox interpreter should claim that it is possible to recognize the correctness of the appropriate canons of prudence from the unique, particularly-favored perspective of the virtuous person, but not from the perspective of the nonvirtuous person. The idea would be that the virtuous person has a privileged conception of self-interest and that this conception fully justifies her virtue, but that either the conception itself, or the justification, or both, are available to her only after her conception of her interests has been transformed by rational reflection.¹⁵ The nonvirtuous person, lacking this transformation in her perspective, and so the appropriate canons, would be unable to recognize that the canons are true. Call this 'the Point of View Defence' (PVD).

The Point of View Defence has several advantages for the orthodox view. First, it fits well with Expanded Interests Eudaimonism. For on that view, of course, the agent's understanding of her own interests changes as she becomes virtuous. All that the Point of View Defence needs to add is the claim that it changes so much as to become partially or wholly unrecognizable as such to the nonvirtuous person. Second, it fits well with, and goes some way towards accommodating, the emphasis placed by eudaimonists on the transformation undergone by the nonvirtuous person's point of view when she becomes virtuous.¹⁶ For the Point of View Defence claims that the virtuous person's (correct) account of prudence is so

¹⁵ One will want to refine this claim to accommodate the fact that for Aristotle the continent and incontinent people also have some, albeit imperfect, grasp of right action. But I leave these sophistications aside here.

¹⁶ This characteristic of ancient eudaimonism is emphasized by Julia Annas as a criticism of the traditional view in Annas, 'Prudence and Morality'.

transformed that it need not even be fully recognizable as an account of prudence to the nonvirtuous person.

3. Challenging the point of view defence

Still, the Point of View Defence is not the end of the story. Though it makes it easier for the orthodox interpreter to resist McDowell's criticisms, it makes it harder both to defend Expanded Interests Eudaimonism as a philosophical position, and to show that it is really Aristotle's position. The basic point is the same in both cases. EIE offers an egoistic justification of virtue. But to be persuasive, either in theory or as a historical interpretation, the proponent of EIE must do more than *simply claim* that the virtuous person has a transformed and expanded conception of self-interest which justifies her conception of the good life. It must show that this is in fact the case. And this, we shall see in a moment, is no easy task.

The basic point can be made more vivid by identifying a contrast position. Expanded Interests Eudaimonism must distinguish itself from a nonegoistic alternative which has many of the same features. In particular, it must distinguish itself from any alternative which claims that because the commonsense conception of one's interests is transformed in light of virtue, the demands of expanded interests and moral virtue are extensionally coincident. For such an alternative will maintain that the virtuous person has a distinctive point of view, and that this transforms her conception of her interests, but deny that the virtuous person's life is thus to be justified on self-interested grounds. This raises a theoretical challenge to contemporary proponents of EIE. But the theoretical challenge also has a historical corollary. For two of the major competitors to the orthodox interpretation do take positions of roughly this kind. McDowell's Aristotle asserts that moral virtue and enlightened self-interest are coextensive in their demands, whilst Richard Kraut claims that Aristotle believes at least 'that one should always promote one's good to some

extent.¹⁷ Both maintain that the virtuous person has a distinctive point of view and that this transforms her conception of her interests, but deny that her life is thus to be justified purely on self-interested grounds. In light of these rival views, it is vital that EIE defend its central justificatory claim.

Exactly what claims must Expanded Interests Eudaimonism defend in order to flesh out its distinctive position? The claims fall into roughly four groups. EIE requires (A) that there is something that counts as the agent's expanded interests; (B) that the agent's expanded interests are realized in a morally virtuous life; (C) that they can in some sense be recognizable as the agent's interests for reasons to some extent independent of the particular moral claims that the virtuous person accepts;¹⁸ and (D) that they are in fact what justifies the particular moral claims.¹⁹

More precisely, we can fill out those groups as follows:

¹⁷ See Kraut, *Aristotle*, 84; italics in original.

¹⁸ By 'moral claims' here, I mean only moral propositions or theses, views about moral issues. Moreover the sense of independence at stake need not be so strong as that the reasons must make no reference to the moral claims. All that is required is that the reasons *must not be exhausted, nor fully constituted*, by the moral claims. The rationale for this is that the egoist account must be able to distinguish itself from a nonegoist alternative which accepts that the virtuous agent can recognize and act on the particular moral claims on which the Point of View Defence depends, but denies that the egoist's claims about expanded interests are true.

¹⁹ This point suggests a way in which McDowell's original criticism was not strong enough: even if the orthodox interpreter does endorse some set of mutually acceptable canons intelligible in advance, these need not be identical with the canons that justify the virtuous person's life to the virtuous person. For example, it might turn out that even the agent's commonsense conception of her own interests is best realized by being virtuous. In that case, many nonvirtuous people will be attracted to virtue for that reason. But that does not show that it is this fact about the virtuous life that justifies it to the virtuous person.

(A) *Expanded interests*

- (EIE1) There is something that counts as the expanded conception of the agent's interests
- (EIE2) The expanded conception of the agent's interests is in principle recognizable²⁰ as a conception of the agent's interests.
- (EIE3) The agent's expanded interests are such that it makes sense to talk of better and worse satisfaction of them.
- (EIE4) The expanded conception of the agent's interests is in principle recognizable as the conception of her interests which the agent should endorse.

²⁰ The phrase 'in principle recognizable' deserves some comment. For Expanded Interests Eudaimonism in general, it refers simply to some suitable epistemic position. But the Point of View Defence singles out the virtuous person's position as epistemically privileged, and so suggests that the virtuous person herself plays this role.

A more complicated possibility might be defended by an indirect egoist. It might be argued that the virtuous person is epistemically privileged only in recognizing the moral claims, not in recognizing either the expanded conception of her interests or its justificatory role (or both). Such views seem in conflict with the spirit of the PVD, since some further privileged epistemic standpoint must be posited. They also seem to conflict with Aristotle's demand that the virtuous person do the virtuous action for the right reason. Hence, I would be inclined to strengthen the epistemic requirements by stipulating: (1) that the virtuous person be able to recognize the pertinent fact; (2) that she does actually recognize this fact; and (3) that it is this fact and her recognition of it that ultimately explains her choice of the virtuous life. However, I leave such considerations aside here to allow for the possibility of an indirect egoist eudaimonism. (On this kind of view, see Gottlieb, 'Aristotle's Ethical Egoism'.)

(B) *Virtue*

- (EIE5) The agent's expanded interests are realized in a morally virtuous life.
- (EIE6) The agent's expanded interests are realized only in a morally virtuous life.

(C) *Independence*

- (EIE7) The expanded conception of the agent's interests is in principle recognizable as a conception of her interests for reasons not exhausted by the particular moral claims that the virtuous person accepts.
- (EIE8) The expanded conception of the agent's interests is in principle recognizable as the conception of her interests that the agent should endorse for reasons not exhausted by the particular moral claims that the virtuous person accepts.

(D) *Justification*

- (EIE9) The expanded conception of the agent's interests justifies the set of moral claims that the virtuous person accepts.
- (EIE10) The fact that the expanded conception of the agent's interests justifies these moral claims is ultimately the primary reason²¹ that the virtuous person's life is more choiceworthy than any other.

The most important observations to made about this list are as follows.

²¹ By 'the primary reason', I mean that it is a decisive consideration in favor of that life. (There may be other reasons why the virtuous person's life is more choiceworthy, but these would not be sufficient either individually or collectively to make that life more choiceworthy in general.)

First, the main point of producing the list (which may not be exhaustive) is simply to show that there are a significant number of claims on it, many of which are not even vaguely trivial. Hence, the fact that they are essential to the revised orthodox view suggests that showing that view to be correct will be a considerable, and perhaps overwhelming, task. Second, since some nonegoistic versions of eudaimonism are in a position to make almost all of these claims—at least (EIE1)-(EIE8), and perhaps even (EIE9)—there is particular pressure on the orthodox interpreter to make plausible the last, and main, justificatory claim (EIE10). This is the claim essential to justificatory egoism: namely, that it is the fact that the virtuous person's life (including the moral claims she acts on) is justified by her expanded interests that is the ultimate reason why the virtuous person's life is more choiceworthy than any other.

Now, there is a way in which these points may, on reflection, seem obvious. After all, if correct, the list simply states the essence of Expanded Interests Eudaimonism in its more sophisticated form. Nevertheless, the list is important because it is not clear that orthodox interpreters have recognized the trouble it brings. Consider the following more specific points.

First, Justificatory Egoism is not a completely plastic theory: it cannot be moulded to fit just any set of facts about moral life that one happens to encounter. Instead, it has a certain internal integrity because the concepts that play a subsidiary role in it, such as 'interests', and 'prudence', have a certain internal integrity. In particular, since it is not the case that just anything could count as a person's interests, or in a person's interests, then it is not the case that just any set of practical prescriptions could be justified on egoist grounds. Nor would any self-respecting egoist want this to be the case: this would render the doctrine vacuous and so unable to do the (justificatory) work it is intended to do.

Second, given that one must preserve the internal integrity of Justificatory Egoism, it will not be enough to show merely that the virtuous person accepts a certain preference ordering for actions to be performed, and that this ordering is rationally favored. Instead, it is essential to show that the ordering can be called a *prudential* ordering, and that it is favored

over other orderings because of its preferability on prudential grounds.²² The orthodox interpreter must show that expanded self-interest plays the essential justificatory role in Aristotle's theory in general, and in the justification of altruistic action in particular.

Third, for Expanded Interests Eudaimonism to justify altruistic action, expanded self-interest needs to be independent of the moral claims that need to be justified. This requirement becomes perspicuous when one remembers that EIE must offer a defense of altruistic action that is distinct from that offered by nonegoistic accounts. Nonegoist accounts typically claim that altruistic action is defensible simply because some moral claims are true and have appropriate weight. Hence, EIE cannot be reducible to the position that some moral claims are true and have appropriate weight. Some reason must be given for thinking that it is *in an agent's interest* to recognize, endorse and act on these moral claims.

Fourth, the independence requirement is especially important once the Point of View Defense is employed. According to the PVD, the agent needs already to accept the point of view of the virtuous person in order to endorse moral virtue. But for the reasons given above, the orthodox interpreter cannot say that the role of the point of view of the virtuous person is *simply* to identify some moral claims as true and having appropriate weight. Instead, the PVD must forge an appropriate connection between the accepted moral claims and expanded self-interest. But the PVD faces an additional challenge on this point. For it must provide some reason for thinking that it is *in an agent's interest* to recognize, endorse and act on the moral claims that does not undermine the justificatory role of expanded

²² For the fact that the expanded conception of her interests is the conception of her interests that the virtuous person accepts is not enough to show the superior desirability of the virtuous person's life. Since the vicious person also has a conception of her interests which (in some sense) justifies her life from her point of view, the orthodox interpreter must defend the advisability of taking up the virtuous person's point of view. Hence, he must show that the virtuous person's expanded conception of her interests is the conception to be favored.

self-interest. That is, there must be an appropriate gap between the *epistemic* role of the moral claims in generating expanded self-interest, on the one hand, and the role of expanded self-interest in *justifying* morality, on the other. For the justification of morality on self-interested grounds will be viciously circular if the moral claims go further than merely identifying expanded self-interest and play too direct a role in justifying expanded self-interest.

The task of bridging the gap between the epistemic role of the moral claims in generating expanded self-interest, and the role of expanded self-interest in justifying morality looks daunting. In the next two sections, five strategies are considered. I argue that none are satisfactory.

4. Five strategies

The challenge for Expanded Interests Eudaimonism is keeping expanded self-interest and the moral claims close enough together to support the Point of View Defence, but far enough apart that the moral claims do not play too direct a role in justifying altruistic action. The orthodox interpreter will presumably argue that endorsing²³ at least some moral claims is a necessary condition of recognizing expanded self-interest because endorsing these moral claims improves an agent's epistemic situation by giving her access to a further prudential value. If this is so, we will want answers to three questions:

1. How does an agent come to endorse the initial moral claims?

²³ Why doesn't just entertaining the moral claims give epistemic access? Why does one actually have to endorse them? Can't one see without endorsing the claims that if they were true, they would reveal extra values and expanded self-interest? One problem with this proposal is that it makes it unclear why the nonvirtuous person would be unable to entertain the claims, as the Point of View Defense requires.

2. How does the endorsement of these claims facilitate epistemic access to expanded self-interest?
3. How does expanded self-interest itself endorse the moral claims and their role in a full conception of virtue through a change in the appropriate conception of self-interest?

The five strategies emerge from considering these questions.

Consider first the question of the initial endorsement of the moral claims. The First Strategy would be to claim that the moral claims come in via commonsense conceptions of self-interest. But this is implausible. First, it would seem to imply that the nonvirtuous person ought also to endorse the claims, and so to have access to the further prudential values and expanded self-interest. Second, as mentioned above, though there is a case for a weak justification of moral concern via commonsense conceptions of self-interest, an egoist will question the rationality of commonsense conceptions of self-interest in precisely this area. Hence, to include the moral claims on the basis of commonsense conceptions of self-interest would beg a crucial question. Third, even if the strategy were independently plausible, it would imply a reduced need for the Point of View Defence. For at least some moral claims would already be acceptable on the grounds of commonsense conceptions of self-interest.

If the orthodox interpreters reject the commonsense conceptions of self-interest as a basis for the initial moral claims, some other basis must be provided. The orthodox interpreter cannot appeal to expanded self-interest itself to generate the moral claims, as the moral claims are supposed to provide epistemic access to it, not *vice versa*.²⁴ Hence, there are two remaining possibilities (which become the Second and Third

²⁴ If the correct conception of expanded self-interest were already available, endorsed, and generating the moral claims, then the focus of the debate would be on justifying the enlarged conception, and the virtuous person's distinctive point of view, on nonmoral grounds. This is a possible way of defending one kind of egoistic eudaimonism, but does not fit well with the Constitutive Thesis.

Strategies). Unfortunately, both threaten to undercut the role of self-interest.

The Second Strategy would be to appeal to some *third conception* of self-interest. But this would be a difficult position to defend, and in any case, an unreasonably complicated one. The Third Strategy would be to say that the moral claims must be accepted via some standard of endorsement other than self-interest. This creates two problems. First, if there are reasons to endorse some moral claims that are independent of self-interest, it is not clear what role is left for expanded self-interest to play. Since the original motivation for Expanded Interests Eudaimonism was to account for the independent appeal of virtues which make moral claims on us, much of its original appeal seems to disappear. Second, it is unclear what the new standard of endorsement will be. But the most plausible candidate is simply moral value itself. Unfortunately, this makes the strategy of EIE seem even more redundant.

It is worth dwelling on the threat of redundancy for a moment, since this position may have some intuitive appeal to defenders of EIE. Consider the following objection. Surely, it might be said, the idea of the Point of View Defence is to say (a) that the virtuous person recognizes the importance of acting morally, (b) that in recognizing this the virtuous person becomes motivated to act morally, and (c) that this leads the virtuous person to see acting morally as in her interests. Hence, the independence of morality, far from making the Point of View Defence redundant, is a necessary presupposition of the Point of View Defence. For the independence of morality is captured by (a) and, to a lesser extent, (b), and these are presupposed by the essential claim of the Point of View Defence, (c). Why then is there a threat of redundancy?

The threat of redundancy is created by the concessions, in (a) and (b), that some moral claims ought to be recognized and acted on simply because they are true moral claims. For the claim that there are true moral claims which ought to be recognized and acted on simply because they are true moral claims is, in essence, simply the core claim of nonegoistic rivals to Expanded Interests Eudaimonism. The sophisticated version of EIE is, of course, distinct from the nonegoist positions because it

adds more to the core nonegoist claim. EIE asserts in addition that the agent's ultimate justification for actually acting on moral claims is that they are endorsed by an expanded conception of self-interest that is revealed to the agent once she has endorsed some moral claims as true. Nevertheless, at this point, these extra claims render EIE less, rather than more attractive than the nonegoist alternative. On the one hand, the extra claims require considerable further defense. On the other hand, and this is the absolutely crucial point, there is little reason left for developing such a defence if the core nonegoist claim is accepted. For a nonegoistic position which claimed that the ultimate reason actually to act on the moral claims is *simply that they are true and should be acted on* would be a simpler and thereby more attractive position than this version of EIE. Once the crucial claim is conceded, there seems no justificatory role left for expanded interests to play.²⁵

The Fourth Strategy is to claim that moral claims play a metaphysical role in generating expanded interests. Suppose we say that what makes moral virtue in our interest is that we do endorse the moral claims for the undisclosed independent reasons. Then, the mere fact of our endorsement produces expanded self-interest.

The advantage of this metaphysical interpretation is that it solves the immediate problem. We have independent values being endorsed, and so becoming part of expanded self-interest. Nevertheless, overall it is far from satisfactory. Consider four closely-connected problems. First, all the substantive work is done by the admission that there are independent reasons to accept moral claims. In particular, it is the independent reasons which determine the content of morality. The metaphysical interpretation ensures the compatibility of morality with self-interest, but does not justify any particular set of moral claims rather than any other set. Indeed, the metaphysical interpretation suggests that claims that are endorsed have implications for self-interest whatever their content, because it is the fact of their

²⁵ The possibility that the role of self-interest here is not justificatory (as required by EIE), but motivational is addressed below.

endorsement (not their content) than makes them in a person's interests. Second, the metaphysical interpretation makes it hard to argue for taking up of the virtuous person's point of view. By itself, it does not claim that the virtuous life has a superior, or even secure, position with respect to other lives which endorse different moral claims. For all we know the virtuous life is merely one amongst many lives which come to embody expanded self-interest through the conferral of self-interest on certain endorsed aims. Third, the view is in any case implausible. The metaphysical interpretation asserts that once the moral claims are accepted, they form part of expanded self-interest. But why should we believe that it is the case? Why should we believe that endorsement automatically confers self-interested value?²⁶

These points imply that even on the metaphysical interpretation, Expanded Interests Eudaimonism is less appealing than a nonegoist close alternative. For a nonegoistic explanation of the endorsement of moral claims, where it is the moral reasons themselves and their weight which provide a secure and superior status to moral virtue, is simpler and less mysterious than the metaphysical interpretation.

The question of the initial endorsement of moral claims thus seems threatening to the plausibility of Expanded Interests Eudaimonism. Nevertheless, this is not the end of the line for the orthodox view. For EIE may still play an important role in the *later* stages of moral development. Consider the following. The orthodox interpreter could claim that a person must accept only a few moral claims to gain epistemic access to expanded self-interest, and that the role played by these claims in morality as a whole is comparatively small. Perhaps endorsing the initial set of moral claims leaves out much that is important, or perhaps it leaves the initial moral claims in an inferior position with respect to other goods. For example, perhaps the initial set of moral claims is in danger of being crowded out by other goods, such as pleasure nor honour, which initially seem more

²⁶ One possibility would be to adopt McDowell's account of derived self-interest. But this is unlikely to be congenial to the orthodox project.

important. Then, the role of expanded self-interest is to complete morality, and give it the appropriate status.

This possibility brings on the issue about how the moral claims play their designated epistemic role. How does endorsing or recognizing some moral claims provides epistemic access to more prudential facts, and so to expanded self-interest? First, one option, the Fifth Strategy, is to maintain that the role of the moral claims is purely the epistemic one of facilitating the identification of a further set of independent prudential facts. Hence, endorsing the moral claims has ramifications that change what we believe to be in our interests. Unfortunately, this purely epistemic role seems extremely mysterious. Why should endorsing some moral claims lead us to new views about self-interest? It is not enough for Expanded Interests Eudaimonism to assert that it does. Some explanation is required. Second, one such explanation is offered by contemporary desire- or preference-based theories of well-being. These theories typically have a phase where the agent's actual desires or preferences are sanitized in some way, so that their content changes to reveal the agent's 'real' or 'reflective' desires or preferences. Unfortunately, the sanitation tends to be mainly formal. All that is done is to dispose of such things as inconsistencies, and errors in information. But this kind of change seems insufficient to be called 'transformation', and in any case seems unlikely to produce a distinct and robust virtuous person's point of view.

5. Two (partial) retreats

In light of the problems raised above, the orthodox interpreter may be tempted to retreat a little. As it has been understood thus far, Expanded Interests Eudaimonism needs to claim:

- (1) Expanded self-interest justifies morality
- (2) Expanded self-interest is a version of self-interest
- (3) Expanded self-interest is the best conception of self-interest.

But a weak version of EIE might give up one of these claims.

One option would be to accept (1) and (2), but deny (3).²⁷ For example, suppose that there are internal and independent standards of self-interest which support (2). These may still provide either limited or no grounds on which to judge the relative merits of different conceptions of self-interest *vis-à-vis* one another, as better or worse. Perhaps all that can be said from the point of view of self-interest is that different conceptions are or are not conceptions of self-interest, or (more optimistically) that there are a number of conceptions of self-interest which fall within an acceptable range. In these scenarios, there need be no 'best' conception of self-interest. Hence, it may turn out that commonsense self-interest does not support morality and altruistic action, whilst expanded self-interest does, but there is no reason based on self-interest to choose between them. Nevertheless, the proponent of EIE may well be able to accept this position. For it still asserts Justificatory Egoism insofar as it says that the virtuous life is justified by self-interest; and this is most of what's wanted. All that is missing is the ability decisively to defend the virtuous life on self-interest grounds against at least some alternatives.

The problems for this position are twofold. First, there is the absence of external justification itself. This implies that the nonvirtuous person lacks a decisive reason to develop moral virtue, and perhaps that even the virtuous person lacks decisive reason to believe it a good thing that she is virtuous. Second, it makes EIE even closer to some of its major rivals. For McDowell and others believe that external justification is impossible, or at least that Aristotle believed this. But proponents of the traditional view usually find this idea unsatisfactory, and in fact consider it a major motivation to pursue EIE.²⁸

²⁷ In a way, this option involves simply conceding the objections made against the metaphysical interpretation earlier, and so might naturally be married with that interpretation.

²⁸ Perhaps the proponent of EIE could say that there is reason to prefer the life with expanded self-interest because there is a nonself-interested reason to choose

A second option for modifying the orthodox position would be to give up (a), the claim that it is expanded self-interest that justifies morality. This option may seem appealing to someone who accepts externalism about moral motivation: the claim that the motivational force of moral considerations depends on factors external to the moral considerations themselves.²⁹ For then perhaps the point of Aristotle's alleged appeal to expanded self-interest is not to justify morality, but to provide some motivation for agents to act morally once such a justification is recognized.

Unfortunately, this approach is also unattractive. Quite apart from the attractions of internalism about moral motivation and (arguably) of attributing such internalism to Aristotle, to give up the justificatory claim is to give up the essence of Justificatory Egoism and so change the point of Expanded Interests Eudaimonism entirely. In addition, since (as mentioned earlier) some nonegoist versions of eudaimonism already recognize some extensional coincidence between the virtuous life and an agent's self-interest, even this version of the orthodox view will have to distinguish itself from its major rivals.

between them. What might this be? Perhaps one could argue that the reason is that morality is independently valuable and recognized as such, and the life of requires denying this. So one has a reason to choose expanded self-interest on grounds of rational coherence. This is an interesting possibility. Nevertheless, note how much of a justificatory role it concedes to morality itself, rather than to egoism. One must defend at least some moral claims on independent grounds, defend a connection between these and expanded self-interest, and defend the claim that the moral claims themselves give an agent a nonself-interest reason to prefer the virtuous life over nonvirtuous alternatives. But at this point one is accepting almost all of what would be required by a nonegoist alternative.

²⁹ This definition is drawn from Brink, *Moral Realism*, 42. Brink attributes externalism to Irwin's interpretation of Aristotle (and Plato) on the following page.

GARDINER

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, even if the orthodox interpreter were to adopt the Point of View Defence against McDowell's claims about independent canons of desirability, a lot of work would still need to be done to show that Expanded Interests Eudaimonism works. Thus, McDowell's comments do, after all, provide a foundation for shifting the burden of explanatory proof towards the orthodox interpreter. The key problems for EIE are in explaining: (1) the generation of the moral claims that contribute to the virtuous person's distinctive point of view; (2) the role played by these claims in generating an expanded conception of self-interest and justifying full virtue; and (3) the preferability of the expanded conception of self-interest over ordinary conceptions. On all of these points, EIE is less attractive than a simpler and less mysterious nonegoist position which claims that it is moral reasons themselves and their weight which provide a secure and superior status to moral virtue, and defends the virtuous life over the nonvirtuous life on these grounds. Hence, provided that they do not have similarly deep problems of their own,³⁰ nonegoist versions of eudaimonism are to be preferred to EIE.

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³⁰ One such problem would arise if the very idea of independent moral claims were incoherent. (This position is taken by the third major school of contemporary Aristotelians and interpreters of Aristotle, inspired by Anscombe. It deserves to be taken seriously. However, as mentioned in a much earlier footnote, I do not address this school of thought in this paper as the Constitutive Thesis shares with nonegoist views the assumption that the idea of independent moral claims does make sense.)

Do we have duties to our friends? *Nicomachean Ethics* Books 8 and 9

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Do duties and obligations arise out of friendship? Is it morally better to help a stranger than to help your friends? Or is it, perhaps, the other way around? Aristotle, who devotes two books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter *NE*) to the subject of friendship, is generally understood to favor helping friends over strangers, and better friends over lesser friends. In this paper I show why this is too simplistic a reading of Aristotle. The connection between duty and friendship is an important issue in Aristotle's ethics since he discusses friendships often in terms of such things as fair exchanges, reciprocity, and expectations of 'return'. But the precise nature of the connection between duty and friendship is not dealt with in detail in much of the recent literature.¹ Looking closely at *NE* Bks 8 and 9, I want to consider when and what kinds of duties and obligations arise out of friendship as Aristotle conceives it.

Perhaps a good way to approach the issue is by considering various cases in which duties to friends might be said to arise. Consider the following:

¹ In three recent book-length studies on Aristotle's notions of friendship or moral responsibility, Price, *Love and Friendship*; Meyer, *Moral Responsibility*; and Stern-Gillet, *Philosophy of Friendship*, there is no explicit discussion of the connection between duty and friendship. This connection in fact appears to be ignored in much of the more general literature on the moral importance of friendship, as for instance, Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality*.