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ARISTOTLE'S ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ-ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑ DISTINCTION AND THE ENDS OF HUMAN ACTION

Joseph Murphy

1. Introduction

A key feature of Aristotle's discussion of the distinction between *κίνησις* and *ἐνέργεια* in *Θ.6* is his focus on human action (*πραξις*). Indeed the actions of 'seeing', 'understanding', 'thinking', and so forth, become the parameters within which *κίνησις* and *ἐνέργεια* are analysed with respect to the concepts of *δύναμις* (in opposition to *ἐνέργεια*), *τέλος* and *ἐντελέχεια*.¹ For Aristotle's discussion in *Θ.6* holds the underlying assumption that, regardless of whether human action is classified as *κίνησις* or *ἐνέργεια*, it is always ordered towards and limited by a particular terminus or proximate goal; that is, an action (such as 'building a house') is rendered intelligible only insofar as it is terminated in the achievement of the goal most immediate to the origin of action (i.e. 'having built the house').² From here, Aristotle separates actions into two types: *κίνησις*-actions, which require movement and change in order to reach their proximate termini, and *ἐνέργεια*-actions, the completion of which is the perpetuation of their termini.

Yet crucial to the purposes of this paper is the observation that Aristotle's discussion of the *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* distinction is only carried out in relation to the most proximate terminus of action. 'Building a house' is analysed with respect to *δύναμις*, *τέλος* and *ἐντελέχεια* only in relation to 'the house having been built', not in relation to the more remote termini which are *per se* unattainable. In short, the more ultimate purposes underlying human action (e.g. 'walking' for the sake of 'health', or 'painting' for the sake of 'beauty'), which the human actions themselves can never fully exhaust nor accomplish, are left out of the *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* discussion of *Θ.6*. My aim in this paper, therefore, is to provide an analysis of human action

¹ N.B. *κίνησις* is commonly translated as 'motion' or 'change', *ἐνέργεια* as 'act', 'actuality', or 'activity' (although this is the subject of debate), *δύναμις* as 'potency', 'potentiality', or 'capacity', *τέλος* as 'end', and *ἐντελέχεια* as 'fulfilment' or 'perfection'. I will leave these concepts (for at least the first part of this essay) untranslated, however, firstly for the purposes of precision, and secondly so as to sidestep making any contentious claims which are beyond this paper's scope. I only mention these possible translations so that the reader might follow the general concepts to which these key terms in the Aristotelian vocabulary refer.

² I use 'terminus' here not in the sense that the action necessarily ceases, but rather that it holds or reaches some kind of endpoint by which the action is rendered intelligible.

and its more distant terminus within the framework of the *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* distinction. In order to achieve this, I will (i) provide an in-depth and analytical reading of the *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* distinction in passage 1048^b18-35 of *Θ.6*, (ii) connect the results found from my reading of *Θ.6* to the concept of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* as analogy, and (iii) apply the connection established in sections (i) and (ii) to the relation between human action and its more remote terminus.

2. The *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* Distinction: a Close Reading of *Θ.6* (1048^b18-35)

In order to gain a firm grasp of Aristotle's argument regarding the *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* distinction, I will provide a systematic commentary on the relevant passage. Consider then the following:

“ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν πράξεων ὧν ἔστι πέρας οὐδεμία τέλος ἀλλὰ τῶν
περὶ τὸ τέλος, οἷον τὸ ἰσχυαίνειν ἢ ἰσχυασία [20] [αὐτό], αὐτὰ δὲ ὅταν ἰσχυαίνῃ
ἢ οὕτως ἔστιν ἐν κινήσει, μὴ ὑπάρχοντα ὧν ἕνεκα ἢ κίνησις, οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα
πρᾶξις ἢ οὐ τελεία γε (οὐ γὰρ τέλος)· ἀλλ’ ἐκείνη <ἢ> ἐνυπάρχει τὸ τέλος
καὶ [ἢ]
πρᾶξις. οἷον ὄρᾳ ἅμα <καὶ ἐώρακε,> καὶ φρονεῖ <καὶ πεφρόνηκε,> καὶ νοεῖ καὶ
ὐ νενόηκεν, ἀλλ’ οὐ μανθάνει καὶ μεμάθηκεν [25] οὐδ’ ὑγιάζεται καὶ ὑγιάσται·
εὖ ζῆ καὶ εὖ ἔζηκεν ἅμα, καὶ εὐδαιμονεῖ καὶ εὐδαιμόνηκεν. εἰ δὲ μή, ἔδει ἂν πο-
τε παύεσθαι ὥσπερ ὅταν ἰσχυαίνῃ,
νῦν δ’ οὐ, ἀλλὰ ζῆ καὶ ἔζηκεν. τούτων δὲ <δεῖ>
τὰς μὲν κινήσεις λέγειν, τὰς δ’ ἐνεργείας. πᾶσα γὰρ κίνησις ἀτελής, ἰσχυασία
μάθησις βάδισις οἰκοδόμησις· [30] αὐταὶ δὲ κινήσεις, καὶ ἀτελεῖς γε. οὐ γὰρ ἅ-
μα βαδίζει καὶ βεβάδικεν, οὐδ’ οἰκοδομεῖ καὶ ὠκοδόμηκεν, οὐδὲ γίγνεται καὶ
γέγονεν ἢ κινεῖται καὶ κεκίνηται, ἀλλ’ ἕτερον, καὶ κινεῖ καὶ κεκίνηκεν· ἐώρακε
δὲ καὶ ὄρᾳ ἅμα
τὸ αὐτό, καὶ νοεῖ καὶ νενόηκεν. τὴν μὲν οὖν τοιαύτην ἐνέργειαν
[35] λέγω, ἐκείνην δὲ κίνησιν.”³ (*Meta. Θ.6*, 1048^b18-35)

³ “Since of actions which have limit there is no end, but a means to an end, such as the act of thinning, and whenever one is thinning the things themselves, [20] they are thus in *κίνησις* (motion), that that for the sake of which there is *κίνησις* is not present, these are not actions, or at least not completion; for they are not the end; rather that in which the *τέλος* (end) is present is indeed action. For instance, one sees and at the same time has it in view (i.e. this Greek perfect translated as “one has it in view” conveys the notion of ‘one having seen and continuing to see’), one understands and has achieved understanding (i.e. ‘one having understood and continuing to understand’), [25] and one thinks and has thought (i.e. ‘one has thought and continues to think’), but one certainly is not learning and [at the same time] has learned, nor is becoming healthy and is being healthy (i.e. ‘has been and continues to be healthy’); one is living well and has lived well (i.e. ‘has lived and continues to live well’) at the same time, and is being happy and has been happy (i.e. ‘has been and continues to be happy’); if this were not so, it would have been necessary for the action to have ceased at some time, as when one is thinning; yet this is not so, rather one lives and has been living. Of these then, it is necessary to classify some of them as *κίνησις*, and others of them as *ἐνέργεια*. For every *κίνησις* is incomplete (*ἀτελής*): thinning, learning, walking, building; [30] these indeed are *κινήσεις* (plural of *κίνησις*), and are certainly incomplete. For one is not walking [somewhere] and at the same time has walked [there], nor is one building [something] and has built [it], nor is one becoming [something] and has become [it], or is being moved and has been moved; but both one moving and one having

The first point to note pertains to grammar. Aristotle distinguishes between *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions by comparing the verbs in their present and perfect forms.⁴ The action of ‘seeing’ (*ὄρα*) in the present tense, when juxtaposed with the perfect tense ‘having seen’ (*ἑώρακε*), is determined to be of a different kind from that of ‘learning’ (*μανθάνει*), when it in turn is compared with its perfect form ‘having learnt’ (*μεμάθηκεν*). And the two may be differentiated in this way: in the first kind, which Aristotle calls *ἐνέργεια*-actions, the truth of the present tense verb entails the concurrently occurring truth of the perfect, such that, as in the above passage, one’s act of seeing some object necessarily yields the simultaneous act of having seen (Greek perfect) that same object. ‘To be seeing’ something means ‘to have seen’ that same thing is at the same time (*ἄμα*) included within that action. For, as Aristotle argues, “if this were not so, it would have been *necessary* for the action to have ceased at some time.”⁵ This might be expressed logically as, when taken at some particular time (in order to express the *ἄμα* occurring in the passage above):

$$\forall x \forall y (S_{xy} \rightarrow P_{xy})^6$$

moved are different; and one has in view and sees the same thing at the same time, and knows and has known it. Therefore I call this latter type *ἐνέργεια*, [35] and that former type *κίνησις*.”

Parts of the translation which I have provided are borrowed from that of M. Burnyeat, “*Kinesis vs. Energeia: A Much-Read Passage in (but Not of) Aristotle’s Metaphysics*”, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 34, (2008), 251-2. The Greek text itself is taken from Aristotle, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, vol. 2, (ed.) W. D. Ross, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), whose edition I judge to make the most sense of the varied corrupted manuscripts containing the passage at hand. It is also worth noting that segment 1048^b18-35 is the subject of much debate regarding textual authenticity. To some scholars (Myles Burnyeat being one), the text seems out of place and disjoined from the continuity of the rest of Book Θ ’s argument. But this need not concern us here. Regardless of whether the passage is an interloper or not, I maintain that it is consistent with Aristotle’s broader thought. C.f. J. Beere, *Doing and Being*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 226-30 for a more detailed discussion of the manuscript evidence from which the passage is taken and the place of the context of the passage in relation to Book Θ as a whole.

⁴ It must be known here that the Greek perfect tense holds a sense different from that of the English past tense. For whilst it has sense the same as the English past tense insofar as it denotes completed action, the Greek perfect tense also contains a sense in which the action is perpetuated into the present. Thus the Greek perfect for the verb ‘seeing’ (*ἑώρακε*), whilst it is more easily translated as ‘having seen’, must be understood as including the sense of completed action being perpetuated into the present. It might be more properly construed then as ‘having seen and continuing to see’. This will allow for a fuller understanding of how *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions are distinguished. C.f. A. Kosman, *The Activity of Being*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 40-41, Beere, *Doing and Being*, v221-2 & D. Haug, “Aristotle’s *kinesis/energeia*-test and the semantics of the Greek Perfect”, *Linguistics* 42, no. 2 (2004), 393-415 for further discussion of the Greek perfect.

⁵ “εἰ δὲ μή, ἔδει ἄν ποτε παύεσθαι...” (1048^b26-7). I have italicised *ἔδει* (necessary) in order to tease out Aristotle’s point here, for it is pivotal to understanding the relationship between the action’s present and perfect verb forms. For Aristotle stipulates that, if the action did not hold the relation between its present and perfect verb forms expressed as above, then it would be *necessary* for the action to cease (i.e. not be continuous). We can infer then that, if the action were to hold this present-perfect tense relation, then it would *necessary* that it be continuous (i.e. not cease). It is clear from this account that the language used here by Aristotle expresses a conditional relation of some kind between the present and perfect forms. Consider these as preparatory remarks for what is to follow.

⁶ I use symbolic logic here for clarity in expressing the conditional relation between the Greek present and perfect actions (as discussed in greater detail in footnote 5).

Where S is the predicate ‘is seeing’ in the present, P is the predicate ‘has seen’ in the perfect, x is some (unspecified) subject of the verb, and y is some (also unspecified) object of the verb. So for every subject engaging in an *ἐνέργεια*-action, if their present tense action is true, then their perfect tense action is simultaneously true as well. The same is true, Aristotle discerns, for the verbs of ‘thinking’ and ‘understanding’.

In the second kind, however – *κίνησις*-actions according to Aristotle – the truth of the present tense verb does not entail the truth of the perfect. For instance, one could not say that, whilst engaging in ‘learning’, one has at the same time (*ἄμα*) successfully performed the action of ‘having learnt’. For the truth of the perfect is contingent on the completion of the present; that is, if one has learnt something, then they are no longer in the process of learning that same something. At no particular time can one say that they are both learning and have learnt the same thing. The action of learning something is distinct from the ‘state’ (I use this term loosely) of having learnt it, since the former is the process by which the latter is achieved. Thus, construing this relation in symbolic logic (taken at some single point in time):

$$\forall x \forall y (Lxy \rightarrow \sim Nxy)$$

Where L is the predicate ‘is learning’ in the present tense, N is the predicate ‘has learnt’ in the perfect tense, x is the subject of the verb, and y is its object. So for a *κίνησις*-action to occur, the truth of the present tense necessitates the negation of the perfect tense. For the present and perfect tenses of the verb cannot simultaneously be true. Otherwise, there would be no distinction between the *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions. Aristotle argues that the conditions necessary for the concept of *κίνησις*-actions applies not only to the particular action of ‘learning’, but also to others such as ‘becoming healthy’ (*ὕγιάζεται*), ‘walking’ (*βαδίζει*), ‘building a house’ (*οἰκοδομεῖ*), and so forth.

Thus far, the *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions have been differentiated according to their respective relations between present and perfect verb forms. But Aristotle’s focus on grammar is not with the intention of making a mere semantic point. The relation between the present and perfect verb forms reveals something about the very nature of the two kinds of actions.⁷ For it was previously pointed out that, for *ἐνέργεια*-actions, what is true of the present tense verb is also necessarily true of the perfect. The two verb forms are indistinct. However, for *κίνησις*-actions, the truth of the perfect verb form is dependent on the present tense having once been

⁷ Kosman, *The Activity of Being*, 41.

– but no longer being – true. The two verb forms are distinct insofar as the present is a kind of process which finds its completion in the truth of the perfect tense. And so, in and of itself, the present tense action is incomplete (*ἀτελής* is the word Aristotle uses to convey this concept). The *κίνησις*-action then must *end* – end, that is, insofar as it undergoes a transition from that which is denoted by the present to the ‘state’ which is described in the perfect.

‘Completion’, ‘incompletion’, ‘end’ (in the sense of *τέλος*): the language at play here is clearly teleological. The perfect verb form is the most immediate point at which the action described in the present tense is given completion and purpose – that is, the most proximate end of the action and the ‘state’ (again, used loosely here) towards which the action is oriented.⁸ For one’s *κίνησις*-action of ‘learning’ is rendered intelligible by one’s subsequently reached state of ‘having learnt’. Thus ‘having learnt’ becomes the proximate end of the action of ‘learning’, or rather the point nearest to the source of action.⁹ The same is true of an *ἐνέργεια*-action such as ‘seeing’: one’s action of ‘seeing’ becomes intelligible only in connection to the proximate end of ‘having seen’ (that is, one cannot be seeing some object and not at the same time have seen that same object without the entire action becoming unintelligible). Yet, as our previous discussion of *ἐνέργεια*-action indicates, the relation between this kind of action and its proximate end will be very different from that of *κίνησις*-action.

For it is the nature of a *κίνησις*-action to undergo at the point of completion (i.e. at the time at which the proximate end is reached), a transition from movement to end-state. The *κίνησις*-action itself therefore encapsulates a process of becoming which has a definite starting point and end point. Thus it occurs prior to its transition into that state which is described by the perfect tense (e.g. ‘learning is prior to ‘having learnt’).

On the other hand, an *ἐνέργεια*-action is indistinct from its proximate end (recall that we observed the simultaneous occurrence of the present and perfect verb forms). The indistinguishability of this kind of action from its proximate end entails that there is no process of becoming, no gap between the starting point of the action and its completion. The *ἐνέργεια*-

⁸ C.f. M.R. Johnson, *Aristotle on Teleology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 82-3, in which the point made above is teased out in greater depth with an analysis of *Meta. a.2*, 994^b9-16. Based on his analysis, Johnson states that “the *τέλος* as an end blocks infinite regress that would otherwise render demonstration, motion, and activity, incomplete, vain, and ineffectual.” The argument here is indeed helpful for gaining a clearer understanding of the link between the perfect tense and proximate end. If the action of ‘building a house’ were to regress infinitely, such that there would be no time at which the action is completed with the house having been built, then the action itself would be unintelligible. In fact, it would not be the action that it is. For one to say that one is building a house (I refer here specifically to *κίνησις*-actions), is for one at the same time to express one’s vision for the house ‘to have been built’ (at some point in the future). Embedded within the very fabric of the verb is the anticipation of the perfect tense, i.e. the end of the action.

⁹ Johnson, *Aristotle on Teleology*, 85.

action is the state of completion (*τὸ τέλος*) perpetuated indefinitely.¹⁰ This makes good sense of Aristotle's claim that every *κίνησις* is *ἀτελής* (incomplete) since it is not an end (*οὐ γὰρ τέλος*) (1048^b22), by this meaning that the action and its proximate end are completely distinct. And on the basis of this claim, we should, as Beere rightly observes, infer that the *ἐνέργειαι* "are themselves ends" insofar as they are complete.¹¹ So in sum: an *ἐνέργεια*-action is indivisible from its proximate end, whereas a *κίνησις*-action, being necessarily divided from its proximate end, is the means (*τῶν περὶ τὸ τέλος*; 1048^b19) by which the proximate end is brought about.

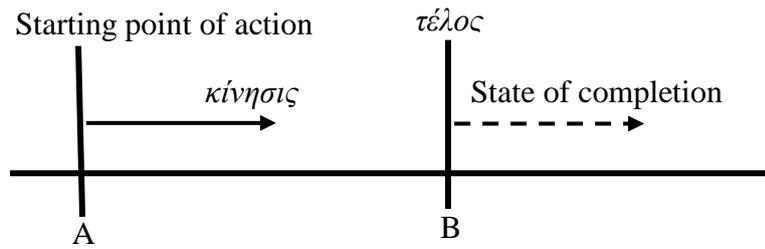
Another helpful way of progressing our analysis of *Θ.6* is by looking at the key differences between *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions within Aristotle's conception of time. For it has been established already that the former kind of actions are distinct from their proximate end insofar as they instantiate a movement towards a state of completion. They contain definite divisions between the starting point of action, the end of action itself, and the state of completion. The latter kind, however, are indistinct from their proximate end by virtue of the action itself being an indefinite perpetuation of the state of completion (indefinite, I might note, since the action does not necessarily cease). Consider the diagrams below to see how these conditions of the two kinds of actions might be best represented. The horizontal axis allows for clear divisions between the different stages of each action:¹²

¹⁰ This is where my previous remarks on the Greek perfect are useful for understanding the nature of *ἐνέργεια*-actions. For I previously argued, with the support of Kosman, Beere, and Haug (c.f. footnote 4), that the perfect tense in Greek denotes past actions which are perpetuated into the present. Thus the Greek perfect of the verb 'to see' is most accurately translated as 'having seen and continuing to see'. Perpetuation of the state of completion is the key idea here (hence why I have used 'state' with the qualification that I intend its usage to be understood loosely). And by 'indefinitely', I do not mean *ad infinitum*. The indefinite perpetuation of a state of completion implies that there is no necessary boundaries placed around it, i.e. it is not necessary for the perpetuated state to end (since it is its own end – proximate, I might add). C.f. St. Thomas Aquina, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, (trans.) John P. Owen, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961), 2: 675-6 & J.C.B. Gosling and C.C.W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 303.

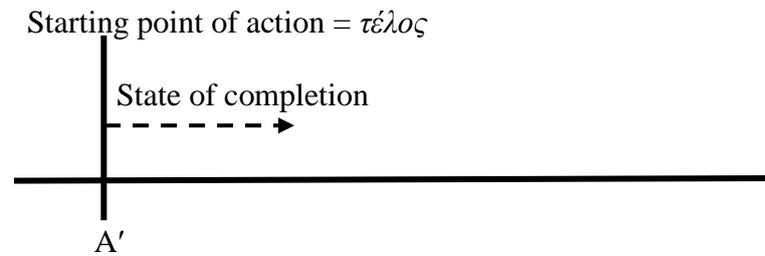
¹¹ Beere, *Doing and Being*, 223.

¹² N.B. 'State' of completion I use here for ease of communicating the perfect tense. This idea will be developed later.

κίνησις-action:



ἐνέργεια-action:



As can be seen in the *κίνησις*-action diagram, the gap between points A and B (starting point and τέλος respectively), being the *κίνησις*-action itself, instantiates a transitional process which encompasses a period of time.¹³ Or put more succinctly, the A-B gap constitutes a portion of the horizontal axis in which there is *κίνησις*. Contrast this with the *ἐνέργεια*-action diagram: point A', insofar as it is both the starting point and τέλος, encompasses what is achieved by A and B in a single point.¹⁴ Thus for *ἐνέργεια*-actions, there can be no transitional process prior to the state of completion.

On the basis of our preceding discussion, the differences between the two kinds of actions probably seems obvious. Yet it is helpful to our purposes when considered in relation to the following three passages (I will call them I, II and III to make discussion of them easier):

¹³ i.e. a transitional process ordered towards the state of completion (B onwards).

¹⁴ This A-B and A' makes perfect sense when applied to an example. The *κίνησις*-action of 'learning' consumes a period of time before the state of completion (i.e. 'having learnt') is true, whereas in the case of the *ἐνέργεια*-action of 'seeing', there is no temporal division between 'seeing' (some object) and 'having seen' (that same object).

I:

“μετρήσει δ' ὁ χρόνος τὸ κινούμενον καὶ τὸ ἡρεμοῦν, ἢ τὸ μὲν κινούμενον τὸ δὲ ἡρεμοῦν· τὴν γὰρ κίνησιν αὐτῶν μετρήσει καὶ τὴν ἡρεμίαν, πόση τις. ὥστε τὸ κινούμενον οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἔσται μετρητὸν ὑπὸ χρόνου, ἢ ποσὸν τί ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἢ ἡ κίνησις αὐτοῦ ποσῆ.”¹⁵ (*Phys. A.12*, 221^b16-20)

II:

“ἔτι διώριστα ὅτι κινεῖται τὸ κινητόν· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν δυνάμει κινούμενον, οὐκ ἐντελεχεία, τὸ δὲ δυνάμει εἰς ἐντελέχειαν βαδίζει, ἔστιν δ' ἡ κίνησις ἐντελέχεια κινητοῦ ἀτελής.”¹⁶ (*Phys. Θ.5*, 257^b6-9)

III:

“ἐλήλυθε δ' ἡ ἐνέργεια τοῦνομα, ἡ πρὸς τὴν ἐντελέχειαν συντιθεμένη, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἐκ τῶν κινήσεων μάλιστα: δοκεῖ γὰρ ἡ ἐνέργεια μάλιστα ἡ κίνησις εἶναι...”¹⁷ (*Meta. Θ.3* 1047^a30-2)

In passage I, Aristotle establishes that the concepts of *κίνησις* and measured time (*χρόνος*) go hand in hand. The transitional process (which constitutes some *κίνησις*-action) is the progression to a particular state of completion, the point at which the *κίνησις* ceases.¹⁸ But because this transitional process is delineated by separate boundaries within which movement and change is experienced (the A-B gap in our *κίνησις*-action diagram), the period within the boundaries is divisible and hence measurable (*μετρητός*) according to time. Hence, referring back to the *κίνησις*-action diagram, the portion of the horizontal axis between points A and B

¹⁵ I: “Time will measure that which is in *κίνησις* (i.e. moving) and that which is at rest, one insofar as it is moving and the other insofar as it is at rest; for it will measure their *κίνησις* and their rest, (measuring) how great each is. Thus that which is in *κίνησις* is not at all measurable by time according to how great each is, but rather according to how great its *κίνησις* is.” I have once again used Ross’ edition of the text, not that there is any particularly contentious variation amongst the manuscripts which would greatly alter our understanding of Aristotle’s thought on time here. C.f. Aristotle, *Aristotelis Physica*, ed. W. D. Ross, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950).

¹⁶ II: “It is still defined that that which is in *κίνησις* is the ‘kinetic’ (i.e. able to be put into *κίνησις*); and this is put into *κίνησις* by *δύναμις*, not by *ἐντελέχεια*, and that which is in *δύναμις* progresses towards *ἐντελέχεια*, and *κίνησις* is the incomplete (*ἀτελής*) *ἐντελέχεια* of the kinetic.” N.B. I use ‘kinetic’ here to denote that which has the capacity for *κίνησις*, yet is not necessarily in *κίνησις*.

¹⁷ III: “The name *ἐνέργεια*, that which is composed with a view towards *ἐντελέχεια*, has especially progressed towards other things from *κινήσεις*. For *ἐνέργεια* seems especially to be *κίνησις*.”

¹⁸ U. Coope, *Being in Time: Physics IV. 10-14*, (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2005), 154. Many modern commentators on Aristotle, such as Coope, associate the transitional process of which I speak with the concept denoted by the English word ‘change’. And I agree that this word does indeed cover a lot of the territory expressed in Aristotle’s notion of *κίνησις*. However, I have opted to use ‘transitional process’ on some occasions instead (or I have left *κίνησις* untranslated). The reason for this is that Aristotle’s discussions of *κίνησις* are always coupled with the concepts of end and state of completion (*τέλος* and *ἐντελέχεια*), and so an accurate translation of *κίνησις* must have this coupling embedded within it. The English word ‘change’ does not have an anticipation of *τέλος* and *ἐντελέχεια* as strongly present within it as ‘transitional process’. For ‘change’ has common parlance associations that allow it to be analysed as a self-sufficient concept (i.e. without reference to *τέλος* and *ἐντελέχεια*). ‘Transitional process’, on the other hand, is a compounded phrase which is technically precise insofar as it both captures that which ‘change’ denotes, plus anticipates a discussion of *τέλος* and *ἐντελέχεια*. This is a minor point, and one that I do not drive unreservedly.

constitutes a temporal gap. In passage II, *κίνησις* is determined to be a product of *δύναμις*, such that whatever is in *κίνησις* is in *δύναμις* to some *έντελέχεια* (that is, some state of fulfilment or completion).¹⁹ But Aristotle also qualifies this with the statement that that which is ‘kinetic’ (able to enter into *κίνησις*) is put into *κίνησις* (*κινούμενον*) by *δύναμις*, not by *έντελέχεια*. So in the case of a *κίνησις*-action such as ‘learning’, the process of learning is put into effect by the subject’s *δύναμις* for learning, not by the end state of completion in itself. This adds a feature to the A-B gap in the preceding *κίνησις*-action diagram: A is set in motion by virtue of the subject’s *δύναμις* for B, but that which is prior to A, when the subject is at rest (*τὸ ἡρεμοῦν*; see again *Phys. A.12*, 221^b16-17), is in *δύναμις* to the *κίνησις*-action encompassed within the A-B temporal gap.

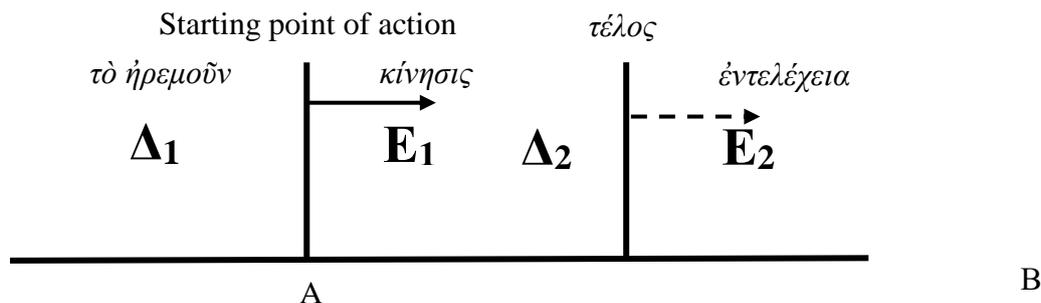
In passage III, however, Aristotle seems to turn our entire analysis of the distinction between *κίνησις*- and *ένέργεια*-action on its head. For *ένέργεια* is determined to be that which has a view to *έντελέχεια*, and in this sense is *κίνησις*.²⁰ The only possible way of reading this whilst maintaining the coherence of our original reading of *Meta. Θ.6*, 1048^b18-35 is to understand *ένέργεια* as an oppositional relation with *δύναμις*. Thus the *κίνησις* of some kinetic subject is the *ένέργεια* of that same kinetic subject when at rest (*τὸ ἡρεμοῦν*); and correspondingly, the kinetic subject’s state of rest is in *δύναμις* to its *κίνησις*. The relation is the same for the subject in *κίνησις* compared to when it is in *έντελέχεια*: the subject in *κίνησις* holds a *δύναμις*-relation to when it is in *έντελέχεια*, whereas the *έντελέχεια* state is the *ένέργεια* of the subject in *κίνησις*.²¹ In order to see how these insights can be integrated into the original analysis of *Meta. Θ.6*, 1048^b18-35, consider the following reformulations of the *κίνησις*- and *ένέργεια*-action diagrams. These will be of use later in considering the application of the *κίνησις*-*ένέργεια* distinction to more remote (rather than only proximate) ends:

¹⁹ The ‘state of completion’ to which I originally referred can be incorporated into the notion of *έντελέχεια*. C.f. Kosman, *The Activity of Being*, 46-7.

²⁰ T.K. Johansen, “Capacity and Potentiality: Aristotle’s Metaphysics Θ.6-7 from the Perspective of the De Anima”, *Topoi*, (2012), 31: 214.

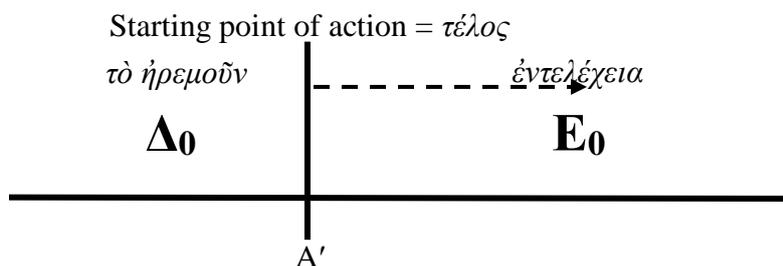
²¹ U. Coepe & C. Shields, “Aristotle on Action”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 87, (2007): 119 offers an alternative reading, which is based more on passage II: “change [*κίνησις*] is the actuality [*ένέργεια*] of what is potentially [*δυνάμει*] in some end state [*έντελέχεια*].” The suggestion is an enticing one. At first blush, it appears to capture the *δύναμις*-relation of *κίνησις* to *έντελέχεια*, whilst accounting for the seemingly odd turn taken by passage III. However, on closer analysis, it is seen to be erroneous, or at best imprecise. The error (or imprecision) revolves around how we understand the phrase “that which is potentially in some end state”. For the thing which holds a *δύναμις*-relation to some subject in *έντελέχεια* is primarily the *κίνησις* itself of that same subject. But the actuality [presumably *ένέργεια*] of the subject in *κίνησις* is that subject’s state of *έντελέχεια*, not its *κίνησις*. And so, if we are to account for all three passages, this reading cannot be right. It is true, however, that the kinetic subject at rest (i.e. the subject which is potentially [*δυνάμει*] in *κίνησις*) holds a *δύναμις*-relation to the same subject in *έντελέχεια*, and on this score the reading might work. But this is only the case insofar as the kinetic subject at rest passes through a stage in which it is in *κίνησις* prior to reaching its state of *έντελέχεια*. Consequently, the use of the phrase “potentially in some end state” to pinpoint the actuality of *κίνησις* is imprecise.

κίνησις-action diagram (II):



The diagram requires some explanation. The three stages into which κίνησις-action can be divided are marked with a series of Δs and Es. These point out the various δύναμις-ἐνέργεια relations of which the κίνησις-action is composed. Thus Δ₁ identifies that stage which is in δύναμις to the stage marked with E₁, and (needless to say) E₁ becomes the ἐνέργεια of the stage marked with Δ₁. The same relation holds for Δ₂ and E₂. Notice that the A-B gap, which constitutes the κίνησις stage, contains both E₁ and Δ₂. As such, it is an admixture of δύναμις and ἐνέργεια inasmuch as it holds simultaneous relations of each to both τὸ ἡρεμοῦν and ἐντελέχεια. Now compare this with the reformulated ἐνέργεια-action diagram:

ἐνέργεια-action diagram (II):



As is evident, the ἐνέργεια action holds no stage in which there is admixture of δύναμις and ἐνέργεια. The proximate end A', which separates the action into its τὸ ἡρεμοῦν- and ἐντελέχεια-stages, represents a δύναμις and ἐνέργεια division-point. Yet the stage at rest (τὸ ἡρεμοῦν) has no active capacity in itself by which the proximate end might be reached. Rather it is merely capable, or rather is in δυνάμει (Δ₀), of fulfilling the ἐνέργεια-action. On the other hand, the ἐνέργεια-action itself, which is its own ἐντελέχεια, is the proximate end perpetuated without deficiency or incompleteness. Hence the subject performing the action is in ἐνέργεια without qualification in the stage following A'.

This is different from the *κίνησις*-action diagram (II). We have noted previously that the A-B gap is an admixture of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* (E_1 and Δ_2), and that this *ἐνέργεια* expresses the relation of the subject's *κίνησις* to its *τὸ ἡρεμοῦν* (that is, *τὸ ἡρεμοῦν* \rightarrow *κίνησις* corresponds to a $\Delta_1 \rightarrow E_1$ relation). But the *ἐνέργεια* of the *κίνησις* in the A-B gap is not the perpetuation of the proximate end given that it is still in *δύναμις* it (Δ_2). The A-B gap constitutes a movement towards the proximate end, but with the qualification that that proximate end has not yet been reached. As such, the *ἐνέργεια* of *κίνησις* is incomplete. Recapitulating this point into our analysis of *Meta. Θ.6*, 1048^b18-35, it is clear that the *ἐνέργεια* of an *ἐνέργεια*-action must be more truly (or more completely, in keeping with our findings above) '*ἐνέργεια*' than the *ἐνέργεια* of *κίνησις*-action. And this is indeed consistent with Aristotle's original semantic observation by which he distinguishes *κίνησις* from *ἐνέργεια*: in *κίνησις*, the truth of the present and perfect verb forms are temporally separate, but with the present form constituting an active movement towards the perfect form (hence it is a depleted *ἐνέργεια*); however in *ἐνέργεια* proper, the truth of the present and perfect verb forms are continuously inseparable, indicating a state of completion to which nothing can be added.²² These concluding remarks provide an adequate platform into Aristotle's discussion of the analogical connection between different *δύναμις*-*ἐνέργεια* relations.

3. *Δύναμις*-*ἐνέργεια* Relation as Analogy

In the preceding section, Aristotle's distinction between *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions was analysed in terms of the relation between *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*. But note well that this distinction is with respect to proximate ends only; it is a different matter when the action is considered in terms of its more distant end(s) (e.g. painting for the sake of beauty, or observing for the sake of knowledge of the truth, and so forth). In order to determine how the *κίνησις*-*ἐνέργεια* distinction applies in this instance, it is necessary first to consider how the concepts of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* are analogically related across various instances of capacity and motion (as well as substance and matter), and furthermore what exactly constitutes a *δύναμις*-*ἐνέργεια* analogy. The following passage will be helpful in achieving this end:

²² i.e. when I see some object *x*, it is also true that I have seen *x*, and it is not possible to progress (as in *κίνησις*) such that I can see *x* more. Thus seeing *qua* seeing cannot have anything extra added by which the action becomes more complete.

“(1) δῆλον δ' ἐπὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα τῆ ἐπαγωγῆ ὃ βουλόμεθα λέγειν, καὶ οὐ δεῖ παντὸς ὅρον ζητεῖν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἀνάλογον συνορᾶν, ὅτι (2) ὡς (a) τὸ οἰκοδομοῦν πρὸς τὸ οἰκοδομικόν, [1048b] [1] (b) καὶ τὸ ἐγρηγορὸς πρὸς τὸ καθεῦδον, (c) καὶ τὸ ὄρῶν πρὸς τὸ μῦον μὲν ὄψιν δὲ ἔχον, (d) καὶ τὸ ἀποκεκριμένον ἐκ τῆς ὕλης πρὸς τὴν ὕλην, (e) καὶ τὸ ἀπειργασμένον πρὸς τὸ ἀνέργαστον. (3) ταύτης δὲ τῆς διαφορᾶς [5] θατέρον μορίον ἔστω ἢ ἐνέργεια ἀφωρισμένη θατέρον δὲ τὸ δυνατόν. (4) λέγεται δὲ ἐνεργεία οὐ πάντα ὁμοίως ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ ἀνάλογον, ὡς τοῦτο ἐν τούτῳ ἢ πρὸς τοῦτο, τόδ' ἐν τῷδε ἢ πρὸς τόδε· (5) τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὡς κίνησις πρὸς δύναμιν τὰ δ' ὡς οὐσία πρὸς τινα ὕλην.”²³
(*Meta. Θ.6*, 1048^a35-^b9)

The above passage is divided up into five key claims concerning *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* relations, with (2) dividing the general concept of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* relation into five different sets [(a)-(e)]. These sets constitute varying instances of the relation. Aristotle is quite clear, however, that each of the sets are related by analogy (*τῷ ἀνάλογον*). Upon examining the text, one insight which might be immediately drawn is that the relation holds not just for substances in motion, but for the composition of substances as well. Thus Aristotle claims that *κίνησις* is to *δύναμις* as substance is to matter. But the relation is not identical (i.e. not univocal), since there are key differences between each of the sets: each pertains to substance, but the notions of *κίνησις* and composition examine different aspects of substance. Hence we are not to consider the sets (a)-(e) as related to one another as identical to the relation “little Jimmy is to his mother as little Johnny is to his own mother”. The relation there is univocal insofar as it expresses a son-mother relationship in each case. And this is certainly not what Aristotle means by the analogy of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* relation.

Nor does Aristotle mean that the application of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* relation is purely an instance of homonymy. The difference between sets (a)-(e) is not so great that each has nothing whatsoever in common (i.e. such that they are simply equivocations). Claim (3) from the preceding passage is helpful in establishing this. For, as Beere argues, each set demonstrates a connection between something capable and the exercising of that capacity (since formless

²³ “(1) What we want to say is clear on the grounds of each particular case by induction, and it is not necessary to seek a definition of everything, but to comprehend [i.e. *ἐνέργεια*] by analogy, (2) such that (a) as the thing building a house is to the things capable of building a house, [1048b] [1] (b) also the thing awake is to the thing asleep, (c) and the thing seeing is to the thing with its eyes shut, (d) and the thing which is separated out of matter is to the matter, (e) and what has been worked up is to what has not been worked on. (3) Let one part of this distinction [5] be marked off as *ἐνέργεια*, and the other as the thing capable (*τὸ δυνατόν*). (4) Not everything is said to be in *ἐνέργεια* in the same way but by analogy, since this is in some other thing or in relation to that other thing, [while] that is in that thing or in relation to it; (5) for with respect to some things, it is as *κίνησις* is to *δύναμις*, while with respect to other things, it is as *οὐσία* (substance) is to matter.” The Greek text has been taken from Aristotle, *Aristotelis Metaphysica*, (ed.) W. Jaeger, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957). I have relied on Beere, *Doing and Being*, 178 for the numerical/alphabetical markers in the translation, and have adapted them to the Greek text in order to divide the passage up into its various *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* relations. My own translation has also borrowed some elements of Beere’s due to its accuracy.

matter has the capacity for substance).²⁴ Thus the relation cannot be likened to the connection between the notion of a small portion and the metallic mouthpiece of a horse, both of which are meant by the word ‘bit’. There is no real underlying conceptual connection between the single word’s two distinct meanings. By conceptual connection, I mean that the relation between the two terms is one of proportion, understood in an almost mathematical sense.²⁵ It is as if there is an underlying formula by which analogically related terms share common ground.

The idea of conceptual connection is critical for understanding what exactly Aristotle means by the analogy in *Θ.6*, 1048^a35-^b9. Beere attempts to explain the conceptual connection underlying sets (a)-(e) according to the relation between something capable and the exercising of that capacity. But to construe the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy as merely an ‘exercise’ lends itself more to sets (a)-(c), in which *κίνησις* appears to be the predominant feature. It does not quite capture the matter-substance relation of sets (d)-(e). For just as matter is theoretically *capable* of being substance, something in *δύναμις* is capable of being in *κίνησις*. However, although the exercise of something in *δύναμις* is that same thing in *κίνησις*, the ‘becoming-substance’ of matter is not an *exercise* of a capability *per se*. ‘Exercise’ is peculiar to *κίνησις*.²⁶ On the other hand, the portioning-off of matter from composed substance demonstrates, albeit theoretically, that matter is *ordered towards* composed substance. For matter in and of itself (prime matter) cannot exist actually (only theoretically) – as a concept, it merely helps to explain how matter is intelligible when informed for the composition of a particular substance. This point sheds new light on set (d): “τὸ ἀποκεκριμένον ἐκ τῆς ὅλης πρὸς τὴν ὅλην” (*Meta. Θ.6*, 1048^b3).²⁷ Matter is capable of receiving form such that a composed substance is produced. However the substance receives form by being ‘separated out of the matter’, or rather by matter being delineated in such a way that it holds certain limiting proportions which give it intelligibility.²⁸ Beere tries to relate set (d) to the other four sets by describing it in terms of the production of herm from wood. The description involves the exercising of external agents’ active capacities in order to explain how the passive capacity of the wood is related the

²⁴ Beere, *Doing and Being*, 201.

²⁵ Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, 676; and Beere, *Doing and Being*, 179.

²⁶ Beere, *Doing and Being*, 185; at 201 Beere refers to matter’s capacity to become substance as a passive power, i.e. “[t]he block of wood has a passive power to be acted on by a hermmaker in such a way that it becomes herm.” Passive powers are not as such ‘exercised’, as the quotation notes, but rather are “acted on” by some external agent. It is the external agent which exercises its active powers: “[i]n producing a herm, the hermmaker’s hermmaking power is exercised, as are the wood’s powers to undergo the changes involved in becoming a herm.” C.f. Kosman, *The Activity of Being* 65.

²⁷ *Ἐνέργεια* is to *δύναμις* as “the thing which is separated out of matter is to the matter [itself].”

²⁸ C.f. M. Wedin, *Aristotle’s Theory of Substance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 436-7.

substance of the herm.²⁹ It is natural for Beere to posit from this that (d) is distinguished from the other sets by the passivity of its capacity. But it is still a capacity which may be exercised by the *κίνησις* of the external agent. Thus Beere concludes that the conceptual connection which analogically unites sets (a)-(e) is the exercise of a capacity. And it is in this way that he explains the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy.

But surely explaining the substance-matter relation in terms of *κίνησις* is not telling the full story of what Aristotle is arguing by putting forward set (d) as an instance of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy. For it is only the separated matter (substance) in relation to the matter itself which is given mention. Beere's kinetic process by which the passive capacity is acted upon by the exercise of the external agent's active capacity is left off, deliberately so, and the comparison is simply between the substance and its constituent matter. *Κίνησις* is not what Aristotle is predominantly concerned with here.³⁰ Thus the construal of set (d) in terms of *κίνησις* is an inadequate explanation of how it is an instance of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy.

The problem at hand then is this: if *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* is the conceptual connection between sets (a)-(e), insofar as *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* is analogically related to each, then it must be identified how this is expressed – what exactly is a key feature in each which renders it an instance of *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια*. We have already determined that Beere's overemphasis on capacity, *κίνησις* and exercise does not quite square-up with the substance-matter relation of set (d). For the terms are particular to substances in motion, whereas set (d) is primarily concerned with substance composition. However, this is not to say that Beere is completely wrong. For in each set we see *δύναμις*, understood as a capacity, playing a pivotal role in the analogy. It must be state however that the capacity is always connected to some kind of state of completion, such that it is fulfilled by its corresponding *ἐνέργεια*. But capacity, or more precisely *δύναμις*, is in apposition to *ἐνέργεια* because it constitutes a privation – that is, *δύναμις* is technically a deficiency of *ἐνέργεια*. And by Beere construing the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy with an emphasis on capacity and *κίνησις*, he is in effect emphasising its privative aspect. I argue that this is looking at the analogy from the wrong end. It is more consistent with the priority of *ἐνέργεια* to think of the analogy as the 'state of completion of that which is ordered towards completion' rather than as a 'capacity exercised'. For 'state of completion' has a much wider scope than Beere's explanation of the analogy in terms capacity and *κίνησις*. Consider the tabulation below of sets (a)-(e), which I offer in support of my claim:

²⁹ Beere, *Doing and Being*, 201.

³⁰ Claim (5) distinguishes the substance-matter from that of *κίνησις-δύναμις*, and thus it is sufficient evidence for my point.

<i>Ἐνέργεια</i>	<i>Δύναμις</i>
(a) That which is building a house	That which is capable of building a house
(b) That which is awake	That which is asleep
(c) That which is seeing	That which has its eyes shut
(d) That which is separated out of matter	The matter itself
(e) What has been worked up	What has not been worked on

If the *ἐνέργεια*-states in each of the sets above are considered as states of completion, and their corresponding *δύναμις*-states too are considered as states of incompleteness *ordered towards* completion, then the original problem with Beere's explanation of set (d) is sufficiently resolved. For the substance, being separated out of matter, is the completion of the matter itself, and it is complete insofar as the matter is ordered towards that state of being substance. The same is clearly the case with any of the other sets: that which is building a house is the (immediate) state of completion of that which is capable of building a house, and that which is capable of building a house is ordered towards being that which is building a house; that which is awake is the state of completion of the same thing asleep, and the thing asleep is ordered towards being awake; and so forth. There is a clear focus on the *δύναμις*-state being *ordered towards* its completion.³¹ This is an aspect of the analogy which is evidently lacking in Beere's account.³² The analogy must be construed with a definite focus on the state of completion to which the thing in capacity is ordered if Aristotle's thought is to be accurately presented.

³¹ “τέλος δ' ἡ ἐνέργεια, καὶ τούτου χάριν ἡ δύναμις λαμβάνεται.” (*Meta.* Θ.8, 1050^a9-10): “The *τέλος* is the *ἐνέργεια*, and it is for the sake (*χάριν*) of this that the *δύναμις* is acquired.”

³² Beere, *Doing and Being*, 201-2, by construing the analogy as the exercise of a capacity, leaves the analogy ambiguous. For the emphasis on capacity is weak when considered in apposition to ‘exercise’, thus resulting in the link between *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* being rendered far more tenuous than Aristotle surely intends. The term ‘exercise’ is open, lacking a definitive endpoint, and perhaps even teeters on the edge of making the blunder of equating *δύναμις* with possibility. Irwin, T., *Aristotle's First Principles*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 226-7.

Moreover, the explanation of the analogy which I have argued is reminiscent of the *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* discussed in the first section. For it was determined that the *ἐνέργεια* of substance is the perpetuation of its proximate end (*τέλος*), and *κίνησις* is that transitional process by which the substance moves and changes *towards* that proximate end. The same is the case for the substance in *κίνησις* in relation to the state of being at rest (*τὸ ἡρεμοῦν*) with the capacity for a particular *κίνησις*. For *κίνησις*, as the analysis highlighted, is the completion (and thus proximate end) of the thing-at-rest's capacity, and consequently it is in *ἐνέργεια* in relation to the thing at rest. At the same time, however, it possesses a capacity which is ordered towards a particular *τέλος*. What is clear from this analysis, understood in conjunction with the preceding analysis of sets (a)-(e), is that the *ἐνέργεια*-state is only an *ἐνέργεια*-state insofar as some proximate end is achieved. Or to convey this supposition more clearly, *ἐνέργεια* necessarily entails the achievement of some proximate end. But if *δύναμις* is only *δύναμις* in relation to *ἐνέργεια*, that is, inasmuch as it is for *ἐνέργεια*, then it is necessarily ordered towards that proximate end. This is the most comprehensive way of understanding the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy given that it explains how the analogy fits in both in sets (a)-(e) and the *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* distinction from the first section. It is clear once again that Beere's explanation is insufficient insofar as its construal as the exercise of a capacity is in want of a distinct teleological framework. Teleology is intrinsic to the analogy. For without direct focus on ends, the intelligibility of actions and substance-matter relations is left out of the picture. Hence Beere's explanation, whilst not completely incorrect, leaves the picture incomplete.

But given that the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy is only be comprehensively analysed within the framework of teleology, the analogy itself can be extended beyond merely proximate ends – that is, it can be applied to the relation between actions and that to which they are ultimately ordered.

4. Application to Actions Ordered Towards Remote Ends

Thus far we have been analysing actions only as far their proximate ends. It has already been established that proximate ends are those most immediate termini which render actions intelligible. And given that they render actions intelligible, proximate ends are the most rudimentary 'reason why' for actions.³³ But they are by no means exhaustive of the reasons for

³³ By rudimentary 'reason why', I mean that they most immediate terminal point by which the question "for what reason is the action been done?" is answered. Thus a person who is performing the action of building a house might respond to the previous question with: "in order that a house will have been built". The phrasing of this

action. Indeed proximate ends are only ends inasmuch as they are ordered towards more remote ends. For instance, one might dance, firstly in order to achieve the state of dancing (proximate end), but secondly for the sake of health or beauty (remote end), given that the action of dancing produces something of health or beauty (that is, the action produces something of health in the one dancing, or it produces beauty inasmuch as there is an observer who appreciates the action). Or again, an ethologist might observe the behavioural patterns of a honey badger, firstly in order to achieve the state of having observed a honey badger (proximate end), and secondly for the sake of knowledge of the truth (remote end).

It is clear that the proximate end, as a reason for action, lacks explanatory power without the remote end. The one dancing does not simply dance for the sake of dancing, nor does the ethologist observe the honey badge merely for the sake of observing honey badgers. Proximate ends are not ends for their own sake – they are only ends insofar as their achievement is ordered towards the achievement of remote ends. To this extent, proximate ends are at once both ends (being the most rudimentary reasons for action) and means (since they are ordered towards the achievement of remote ends).

But here we run into a dilemma. The remote ends of action (beauty, knowledge, etc.) denote concepts in which proximate ends of action partake. Hence ‘beautiful’ is predicated of the action ‘dancing’, or ‘knowledgeable’ is predicated of the ethologist who has observed the honey badger (or ‘knowledge-giving’ of the action itself, since ‘knowledge’ pertains to the agent rather than the action), but the concepts themselves cannot be predicated of the proximate ends of the actions.³⁴ For only *knowledge* is most properly knowable (insofar as pertains to truth), and *beauty* itself most properly beautiful, indicating that such conceptual terms are most

response clearly points to the future achievement of the proximate end. The achievement of this endpoint cannot be detached from the reasons for action, since without it more remote ends cannot be attained (e.g. ‘beauty’ might be a remote end for a painter painting an artwork, but the proximate end of being in the state of having painted an artwork is a necessary condition of the progression towards the endpoint of ‘beauty’). C.f. Johnson, *Aristotle on Teleology*, 92.

³⁴ We have arrived here at a distinction between two kinds of remote ends: (i) ends instantiated in the action, and (ii) ends instantiated in the agent performing the action. Aristotle makes this observation in *Meta. Θ.9*, 1050^a23-34. The distinction is related to the *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions, in which the proximate end of the former is external to the agent, whereas the proximate end of the latter is internal. The actions of kind (i), as outlined in the first section of this paper, require a transitional process for the achievement of the proximate end. On the other hand, actions of kind (ii) are only theoretically distinguishable from their proximate end – i.e. the proximate end is achieved by virtue of the action. Thus, because the end is internal to the agent, it is perpetuated by the action. It is clear from this account that (i) constitutes *κίνησις*-action, whereas (ii) points to *ἐνέργεια*-action. This is only mentioned in order to relate the problem at hand to the first section. And whilst this first section only deals with proximate ends, I will offer apply later the diagrammatic models developed for *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions to the more remote ends with which we are dealing at present.

properly predicated of themselves.³⁵ In ‘having danced’, one might have done something beautiful. But at the same time one has not achieved ‘beauty’ in the sense that one can properly utter “I am doing/have done *beauty*”, such that the term ‘beautiful’ is most properly predicated of it. Nor could the ethologist, upon successfully observing the behaviour of the honey badger, make the claim “I am doing/have done *knowledge*” with any accuracy. Consequently, the ethologist’s attainment of the proximate end does not render them ‘knowledgeable’ in the fullest sense of the term.

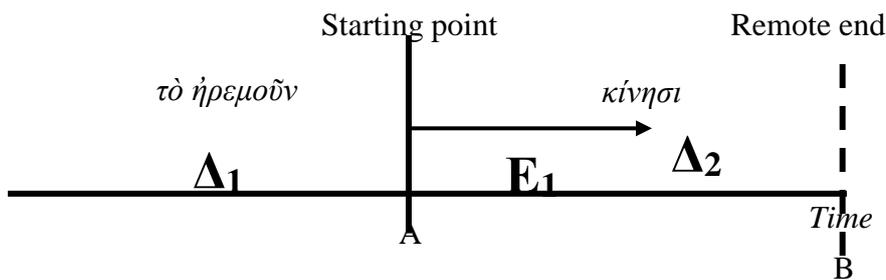
Our discussion therefore reveals this: a human action, whilst being ultimately ordered towards remote conceptual ends, can never fully achieve them. A remote end is approached through the achievement of a proximate end. And a proximate end, insofar as it is ordered towards the remote end, might receive the predicate most proper to the concept of the remote end, but the predicate will never apply to the proximate end in the same sense that it does to the remote. One’s dancing might become more and more beautiful, but it will never be beautiful in the same sense in which *beauty* itself is beautiful.

That the achievement of proximate ends constitutes an approach towards the conceptual remote end is a key point. For its approach is proportionately related to the approach of the proximate end in a *κίνησις*-action. I use the notion of proportion here deliberately, since it implies the relevance of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy (outlined in the second section) to the relation between the proximate and remote ends of action. Like a *κίνησις*-action, the ordering of an action towards the remote end (via the achievement of its proximate end) constitutes a motion towards some *τέλος*. As I posited earlier, however, the key difference is that the remote end is inexhaustible and hence unachievable (properly speaking) – the one dancing can always be more beautiful, or come closer to beauty itself, and the ethologist can always become more knowledge by their observation of the honey badger, and so come closer to knowledge itself. Yet a *κίνησις*-action terminates in the achievement of the proximate end, at which point (so our analyses in sections one and two revealed) the proximate end is in *ἐνέργεια*. Nevertheless both demonstrate the movement towards some state of completion from a capacity ordered towards that state of completion.

It is helpful then to revisit the *κίνησις*-action diagram (II), but with amendments particular to the problem at hand:

³⁵ I acknowledge here the distinct overtones of the Platonic principle of self-predication, which I have found helpful for teasing out the unattainability of remote ends. Plato formulates this principle as an explanation of the purity of the Forms: “τὸ καλὸν καλὸν ἐστίν...” (*Euthyd.* 301^b5-6); “αὐτὸ τοῖνυν ἐκεῖνο σκεψώμεθα, μὴ εἰ πρόσωπόν τι ἐστὶν καλὸν ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, καὶ δοκεῖ ταῦτα πάντα ρεῖν· ἀλλ’ αὐτό, φῶμεν, τὸ καλὸν οὐ τοιούτον ἀεὶ ἐστὶν οἷόν ἐστιν;” (*Crat.* 439^d1-5).

Action-Remote end diagram:



Within the action-remote end diagram, it is clear that the action within the A-B gap, which is directed towards the remote end at B, is composed of both *ἐνέργεια* and *δύναμις* - *ἐνέργεια* insofar as the *κίνησις* is the state of completion relative to that which the *τὸ ἡρεμοῦν*-state is ordered towards (Δ_1 - E_1), and *δύναμις* insofar as the *κίνησις* has the capacity to fulfil more and more the conceptual remote end towards which it is ordered (Δ_2), albeit never fulfilling it completely. Thus one who dances is in *ἐνέργεια* by virtue of completing the capacity for approaching the remote end of beauty. Yet one is nonetheless in constant *δύναμις* to the remote end of beauty given that the action ‘dancing’ cannot fully exhaust the concept *beauty*. The term ‘beautiful’ however can be predicated of *κίνησις*, which itself occurs within the A-B gap, but not to the same extent that ‘beautiful’ is predicated of the remote end at point B. The same is the case for the ethologist, who is in a constant state of *δύναμις* inasmuch as more and more knowledge of the truth can be gained by observation of the honey badger. But the fact that the ethologist is in *ἐνέργεια* relative to the *τὸ ἡρεμοῦν*-state renders the term ‘knowledgeable’ predicabile of them. But the admittance of *δύναμις* makes the predication still deficient.

Thus the analysis of the actions-remote ends problem in terms of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy enables us to offer an explanation for the unattainability of remote ends. For insofar as actions (whether they be *κίνησις*- or *ἐνέργεια*-actions *qua* proximate ends) can attain only some portion of their remote ends but not exhaust those remote ends fully, they are composed of an admixture of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*. Yet this account poses one final question. Consider again the *κίνησις*-remote end diagram. It must be observed that the Δ_2 within the A-B gap has no corresponding E_2 towards which it is ordered. But it is crucial to the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* relation that there be an *ἐνέργεια* towards which the *δύναμις* is ordered and in which it is fulfilled.

I have made the claim previously that the remote end is a concept. Yet in order for the *κίνησις* to be ordered towards its remote end, there must be something which is the concept in *ἐνέργεια* and which at the same time admits no *δύναμις* for attaining the concept in a fuller sense. That is, there must be some *x* of which it is true to say “*x* is beautiful” in the same sense or in a greater sense than that by which one says “*beauty* is beautiful”, resultantly implying that *beauty* must be equal to or contained within *x*. These conditions are required for the remote end to be in *ἐνέργεια*. For if no such ‘something’ exists, then the concept, and by extension the remote end, is ultimately unknowable. And, as such, it would provide no real terminus of action, consequently rendering all actions indefinite, directionless, and unintelligible. So without an *E*₂ corresponding to the Δ_2 within the A-B gap, both the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy and the teleology intrinsic to Aristotle’s metaphysics fall apart.

Therefore it should come as no surprise that Aristotle argues the following:

“ὅσοι δὲ ὑπολαμβάνουσιν, ὥσπερ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι καὶ Σπεύσιππος τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ ἄριστον μὴ ἐν ἀρχῇ εἶναι, διὰ τὸ καὶ τῶν φυτῶν καὶ τῶν ζώων τὰς ἀρχὰς αἴτια μὲν εἶναι τὸ δὲ καλὸν καὶ τέλειον ἐν τοῖς ἐκ τούτων, οὐκ ὀρθῶς οἴονται. τὸ γὰρ σπέρμα ἐξ ἐτέρων ἐστὶ προτέρων τελείων, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον οὐ σπέρμα ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ τὸ τέλειον.”³⁶
(*Meta. A.7*, 1072^b30-1073^a1)

Things which attain varying degrees of perfection with respect to a particular remote end are posterior to that which is in *ἐνέργεια* that remote end. But for it to be in *ἐνέργεια* that remote end, this entity must be without any *δύναμις* for achieving further perfection of the remote end. Thus Aristotle concludes from the foregoing account that the thing which is in *ἐνέργεια* the remote end “ἔστιν οὐσία τις αἰδῖος καὶ ἀκίνητος...” – “it is some substance, eternal and unmoving” (*Meta. A.7*, 1073^a3-4). And insofar as *δύναμις* is ordered towards *ἐνέργεια*, the *δύναμις* admitted to the *κίνησις* of human action is consequently ordered towards the *ἐνέργεια* of the remote end. Therefore, all human actions are ordered towards the *οὐσία αἰδῖος καὶ ἀκίνητος*, and it is there that they find their ultimate state of completion.

³⁶ “Those who suppose, just as the Pythagoreans and Speusippus, that the most beautiful and the most excellent (i.e. perfect beauty and goodness) do not exist in the beginning, on account of the fact that, whilst at the beginnings of plants and living things are causes, it is in those things which are from these that beauty and perfection are found – but they do not think correctly. For seed comes from prior creatures which are perfect, and that which is first is not the seed, but the perfect...”

5. Conclusion

I set out in this paper to analyse Aristotle's *κίνησις-ἐνέργεια* distinction according to both the proximate and more distant ends of human action. The first section was dedicated to the close reading of *κίνησις*- and *ἐνέργεια*-actions in relation to their most proximate ends. And it was found that *ἐνέργεια*-actions have the distinct quality of being indistinguishable from their proximate ends. The action admits no *δύναμις* for achieving the proximate end. *Κίνησις*-actions, on the other hand, were shown to be in *ἐνέργεια*, but at the same time to be in *δύναμις* insofar as they are still moving towards and have not yet attained their proximate end. In the second section, I offered an explanation of the *δύναμις-ἐνέργεια* analogy with a strong emphasis on teleology. For I have argued that the inseparability of *ἐνέργεια* and *τέλος* is a concept that underlies both *Meta. Θ.6, 1048^b18-35* and *Meta. Θ.6, 1048^a35-^b9*, and that as a consequence the analogy cannot be understood in terms of capacity and exercise by an implicit focus on *δύναμις* (*pace* Beere). My explanation of the analogy in terms of teleology has been critical for its subsequent application to actions ordered towards remote ends – the topic to which the third section of this paper was devoted. For it was revealed that human actions, inasmuch as they cannot completely attain the remote ends to which they are ordered, constitute a *κίνησις*. But *κίνησις* admits *δύναμις*, and *δύναμις* (being a privation) is by definition ordered towards its state of completion (*ἐνέργεια*). Therefore, there must be some entity which is the remote ends of human action in *ἐνέργεια* and towards which all human action is directed.

The reader is undoubtedly all too aware that the final section of this paper has briefly turned discussion of the first two sections towards Aristotle's natural theology. The *κίνησις* of human actions for remote ends must be ordered towards the pure *ἐνέργεια* of those remote ends. And I stress that the *ἐνέργεια* must be pure, lest we should fall into thinking that the absolute *ἐνέργεια* of the remote ends is identical to the limited *ἐνέργεια* of the remote ends achieved by human action. Many Aristotelian scholars delve into the notions *κίνησις*, *δύναμις*, and *ἐνέργεια*, but few arrive at his natural theology. Perhaps then Aristotle's discussions of such notions are incomplete without it.

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