

Ann Ward, (2016) *Contemplating Friendship in Aristotle's Ethics*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. x + 182 pp. \$80.00. ISBN 9781438462677 (hbk).

In this short book on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Ann Ward offers something for readers both new to and familiar with the text. For new readers, her book generally follows the path of the *Ethics* itself; there are clear, and often illuminating, treatments of many of the major themes, such as voluntary action, the possibility of *akrasia*, and the varieties of friendship. She persuasively traces an argumentative thread through the book that makes sense of some of the surprising turns it can take (e.g., pp. 11, 147). For readers more familiar with the text, Ward's book addresses a variety of puzzles therein, focusing on the debate between 'exclusive' interpretations of happiness that emphasize solely contemplation and 'inclusive' readings that call for moral, or ethical, virtue as well (pp. 1, 4-5, 28-9, 137-41, 147-8). She argues that contemplation is more dependent than we might think on friendship and thus moral virtue: 'moral and intellectual virtue can actually manifest two ways of being' that are 'in close symbiosis' (pp. 5, 138).

Much like Aristotle, Ward begins with a discussion of the moral virtues. 'From the perspective of the morally virtuous person, moral virtue ... is done for its own sake because it is noble', but this perspective ignores that our activity is situated within communities (p. 22). On her reading, the moral virtues reveal 'significant problems' (p. 1, cf. pp. 38-39, 58-59), primarily an erroneously excessive belief in the autonomy of moral agents who pursue happiness through the virtues without regard for the community in which they live (p. 33) and a failure to recognize that moral virtue is 'grounded in and motivated by sociopolitical inequality' (p. 31) as well as 'psychological inequality' (p. 59). Paradoxically, magnanimity most highlights the dangerous tendencies toward autonomy and inequality characteristic of moral virtue (p. 42) yet the magnanimous person may be spurred, by love of honor, to engage in 'great things for one's city' (pp. 60-62).

Thus far, Ward has followed the path of many exclusive conceptions that find the moral virtues problematic. Yet Ward moves in a different direction, arguing Aristotle intends not to undermine the moral virtues but rather to encourage people to approach them 'with a degree of caution as well as enthusiasm' and to indicate something that transcends moral virtue alone, namely 'intellectual virtue and friendship' (p. 43). Moreover, she points to the moral virtue of justice as a corrective, if partial, of the dangerous tendencies of the other moral virtues. Arguing that virtuous actions can only stem from a virtuous character, we must find the source of that virtuous character; she thus argues that, in

Book v, Aristotle shifts from the perspective of the moral agent to that of the legislator (pp. 64, 67, 72). By enacting laws that encourage the development of virtue, legislators educate citizens who will not see their dependence on the regime but will nevertheless act according to virtues that help achieve 'the common advantage and happiness of the political community' (p. 72). More important, justice can compensate for the real inequalities that do exist among people in a way that enables them to live together as equals in a political community. This is achieved, she argues, through the introduction of money, which enables us to form political communities and make 'commensurable' diverse 'human beings and skills'; it may tempt citizens toward 'isolated individualism' but it can also be used 'to reduce the inequalities generated by inherited wealth' through a form of "public' redistribution of goods' (pp. 65, 68-9, 81-2).

Like the other moral virtues, justice has its limits; it cannot, on its own, sustain a political community because of the tension between what is demanded by geometric and arithmetic equality. Ward thus takes the introduction of the intellectual virtues in Book VI as a response to the 'contradictions' that come to light in Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue (p. 82). Ward's most intriguing suggestion is that 'moral virtue actually gives rise to and sustains intellectual virtue' (p. 91). In defense of this claim, Ward takes up the complicated issue of whether *akrasia* is possible. Aristotle raises two possible causes – the inability to resist pleasure and the inability to withstand pain – but indicates in these cases knowledge exist only 'in a secondary sense' (p. 97). There is, however, another cause of *akrasia*, she argues, and it results from the way in which intellectual virtue can stand apart from moral virtue, being concerned only with 'what is true and false' and not what is good or bad (p. 98). In some cases, knowledge of what is true and false can liberate our desires to pursue 'what theory has just shown to be true, rather than to what prudence has determined is morally right' (p. 98). Ward uses the example of the hedonist Eudoxus, who observed on the basis of 'theoretical observation' that pleasure was the good; though he himself acted moderately, others were not so restrained (pp. 99-100). Aristotle responds by arguing for integrating intellectual and moral virtue, 'the political and the philosophic', to preserve the integrity of both (pp. 84, 102).

Ward argues that the dependence of intellectual virtue on moral virtue has consequences for our understanding of the highest form of moral life in friendship and the highest form of intellectual life in contemplation. With regard to friendship, Ward argues that it offers another way to restrain *akrasia* insofar as people will act properly 'to achieve recognition and affection from a friend due to the goodness of one's character' (p. 103). Within her careful discussion of the twists and turns of Aristotle's account, she emphasizes two particular