There is a well known difficulty in understanding Aristotle's answer to the central question of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: what is eudaimonia? Some, leaning on Bk. X, chapters 6-8, maintain that Aristotle's answer is contemplation to the exclusion of anything else. Others, leaning on Bk. I, hold that eudaimonia includes other goods besides contemplation, especially (what I will call) moral action, the exercise of the moral virtues. Still others hold that Bk. X contains an exclusive view of eudaimonia as consisting in nothing but contemplation, and is not in the end reconcilable with Bk. I's inclusive account.

At present, a consensus seems to be growing that at least we can be sure that Bk. I propounds an inclusive account of eudaimonia. Hence, if Bks. I and X fit together into a coherent account, Bk. X must be brought into line with such a position. I'll call this "the comprehensive view" of eudaimonia.

The comprehensive interpretation relies on a number of arguments to support its view of NE I, above all the criterion of self-sufficiency laid down at 1097b14-21. In the present paper I will argue that the appeal to self-sufficiency as well as other arguments fail to prove the comprehensive

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1 Hereafter NE. All references are to this work unless otherwise indicated.
interpretation and that there are in fact conclusive objections against it. The comprehensive view arises from a failure to distinguish sharply enough different questions to which Aristotle supplies different answers.

I begin in section I by briefly sketching some relevant aspects of what I take to be Aristotle's position. Section II examines some minor arguments for the comprehensive interpretation before section III turns to its main crutch – self-sufficiency.

I

Most commentators agree, and I will assume here, that Aristotle did not intend any divergence in the accounts of Bks. I and X. In Bk. I Aristotle promises that, later, he will both discuss the theoretical life as a candidate for eudaimonia (1096a4-5) and provide a more specific account of eudaimonia (1098a20-22). Both promises are fulfilled in X.6-8. When Aristotle resumes the discussion of eudaimonia in X.6, he begins by outlining the results of Bk. I's discussion (1176a32-b2). And, after stating his answer to the question at the start of X.7 (1177a12-18), he says that his answer agrees with what was laid down before (1177a18-19), and by this I take Aristotle to mean that his answer – in X.7 – satisfies the requirements for eudaimonia specified in Bk. I.

Aristotle believes that the total life of a human being consists in a variety of types of activity, each of which is an instance of living in a certain way, and each of which is the exercise of a certain type (or types) of capacity of soul. So my total life, according to Aristotle, consists in perceiving, growing, digesting, walking, feeling emotions, thinking, etc. Each of these activities is living in a certain way. And Aristotle uses the word 'life' to refer to these types of activities – the perceptual life, the nutritive life etc. That is how I will use the word too, referring to the sum total of the instances of such lives for an individual as the "total life" of a person.

Aristotle identifies eudaimonia with a certain kind of life. But when Aristotle makes this identification, does 'life' denote the total life of a person or life in the sense explained above? Cooper and Irwin think it cannot be the latter, but Keyt has shown the inadequacy of Cooper's

5 Cooper, pp. 159-60.
7 Keyt, pp. 145-46.