

*A Critique of Happiness: an Elusive Value as the Ground for Ethics in Aristotle's  
Nicomachaen Ethics*

Justin Nnaemeka Onyeukaziri, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2019  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The philosopher in Ethics is concerned with providing the ground for morality; the fundamental reason why we should be who we should be or the fundamental reason why we should do or not do what we choose to do or not to do. This is because philosophy investigates the ultimate ground or the fundamental reason or cause of things. Aristotle, incontestably the first to create a systematic work in ethics, chose to provide us with a fundamental reason why we should be who we ought to be. In other words, he provides us with a virtue-ethics not a normative ethics. This work aims at a critical exposition of Happiness as the Ground for Ethics in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. The writer's thesis, is that, Aristotle provides an obscure ground for his ethics and that Happiness is an elusive human value. To achieve this, the writer shall: expose Aristotle's conception of ethics; Give an exposition of happiness as the ground for the Nicomachean Ethics; Give a critique of Aristotle's ground for ethics by sustaining that happiness is an elusive human value and then finally give a conclusion.

Keywords: Aristotle, Nicomachaen Ethics, Happiness, Virtue-ethics, Philosophy, human value.

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## 1. Introduction

Timothy Williamson, begins the introduction of his work entitled, “The Philosophy of Philosophy”, by asking the question: “What can be pursued in an armchair?” He immediately goes ahead to give a response to his own question, thus:

Every armchair pursuit raises the question whether its methods are adequate to its aims. The traditional methods of philosophy are armchair ones: they consist of thinking, without any special interaction with the world beyond the chair, such as measurement, observation or experiment would typically involve. (Timothy Williamson, 2007,1)

It is not contestable, to say that every serious philosophizing or to be a philosopher at all, demands spending quantitative and qualitative time in an “armchair.” For philosophy generally speaking, involves the love of wisdom via the contemplation of truth, the good and the beautiful. Philosophy, hence, demands serious critical thinking and speculation. Thus, to think seriously requires a still, quiet and reflective posture and position, which could metaphorically be called an “armchair.” The attraction towards the text of Timothy Williamson, above is to draw the attention of those who engage in philosophical thinking, to pay serious attention to the fundamental relationship that must exist between the methods and ends of philosophical thinking. Thus, it is not to indict the profound philosopher par excellence, Aristotle, as an armchair philosopher. However, today, it is pertinent to ask: Is the thesis of Happiness as the ground of ethics, a pursuit in an armchair?

Today, in order to balance the methods and ends of our engagements on ethical philosophizing, it is therefore necessary to raise the question: What is the philosophy of Ethics or Morality? In other words, what is the primary task of the philosopher in engaging in ethical or moral thinking? The writer contends that the task of the philosopher in Ethics is to provide the ground for morality; is to make clearly and distinctly the fundamental reason why we should be who we should be or the fundamental reason why we should do or not do what we choose to do or not to do. This is because philosophy investigates the ultimate ground or the fundamental reason or cause of things. Thus, philosophy of ethics, should investigate the ultimate ground or cause (reason, end) of ethics. It is not strictly speaking its task to define morals nor suggest good moral behaviours or values. While Socrates-Plato, dealt with ethical issues under the philosophical discourse of politics and epistemology, Aristotle, could be said to be the first who in its own right, endeavoured to investigate the philosophy of ethics. Hence, Aristotle, who is incontestably the first western philosophy, to create a systematic work in ethics, chose to provide us with a fundamental reason why we should be who we ought to be. In other words, he provides us with a virtue-ethics not a normative ethics. In executing this task, Aristotle posits, Happiness, as the ultimate ground of Ethics. In an age, where individuals seek happiness, to lead a happy life, in a totally solitary, free and subjective manner, the idea of happiness has become a human value under severe strain for a philosophical consideration. There is no better person to consider on the matter of happiness as its relates to ethics and morality, than Aristotle. This is because Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics, and by extension in his Eudemian Ethics, posits happiness as the ground for Ethics. At the current time, with a high level of depression and self-inflicted violence, it is pertinent to put Aristotle’s happiness-ethics thesis on a critical trial.

Thus, this work aims at a critical exposition of Happiness as the Ground for Ethics in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The writer's thesis is that Aristotle provides an obscure ground for his ethics and that Happiness is an elusive human value. To achieve this, the writer shall: expose Aristotle's Conception of Ethics; Give an Exposition of Happiness as the Ground for the *Nicomachean Ethics*; Give a Critique of Aristotle's Ground for Ethics by sustaining that Happiness is an elusive human value and then finally give a Conclusion.

## 2. Aristotle's Conception of Ethics

The primary objective of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is to investigate the highest or ultimate good attainable to the human person. It is clear from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*<sup>1</sup> that his conception of Ethics is teleological, that is to say he posits an end, which is the good, of which human actions and life should be oriented. The first line of his *Nicomachean Ethics* read thus: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim." (NE, Bk 1, 1094d1, 1) In other words, to avoid the problem of infinite regress, Aristotle posits 'the good' (the *Summum Bonum*) as the end of human pursuit. He maintains thus:

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good. (NE, Bk 1, 1094d1, 20)

For Aristotle, the good of every human pursuit categorically is "*Eudaimonia*" a Greek word translated as happiness or wellbeing, presently "human flourishing" is considered the most accurate translation of the word. We find similar teleological approach to Ethics in the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas, who unsurprisingly as a Theologian cum Philosopher posits 'the good' (the *Summum Bonum*) of human pursuit categorically as God, the Christian God revealed in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. This approach to ethics is different from the Deontological approach purported by Immanuel Kant and the Utilitarian approach advocated by Jeremy Bentham and the Mills.

Aristotle conceives Ethics more as an art than as a science, for he agrees with his predecessor, Plato, that Ethics deals with the particulars. If Ethics deals with the particulars but not the universals, this proposition, conflicts with the essential character of the sciences which nature deals with universal and strictly necessary principles. He himself asserts that "Scientific knowledge is judgment about things that are universal and necessary, and the conclusions of demonstration, and all scientific knowledge, follow from first principles (for scientific knowledge involves apprehension of a rational ground)." (NE, Bk 6, 1140b1, 30) To this effect, Aristotle maintains that Ethics deals with practical wisdom not intellectual wisdom, for practical wisdom deals with things that are variable not things that are invariable as in

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael Pakaluk, explains that, 'The Greek word which means "pertaining to traits of character" is *ethike*, then, in the historic and original sense of that term. (It is called "*Nicomachean*" after Aristotle's son, Nicomachus, but whether because it was dedicated to Nicomachus or because Nicomachus was the editor, we do not know.)' (Michael Pakaluk, 2005, 4)

science. Hence, practical wisdom deals with the ability to do deliberations. Thus, he asserts:

Practical wisdom, then, must be a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods. But further, while there is such a thing as excellence in art, there is no such thing as excellence in practical wisdom; and in art he who errs willingly is preferable, but in practical wisdom, as in the virtues, he is the reverse. (NE, Bk 1, 1140b1, 20)

Aristotle's Ethics is Virtue-Ethics, not Normative-Ethics as early mentioned. This means that Aristotle does not aim to provide us with principles of judging the right or wrong behaviour or action but he aims at forming a good person, a virtuous person. This motif in ethics is not exclusive to Aristotle or the ancient Greek nation; we find it present in other nations in the classical times. A good example is in the Ethics of Confucius of the classical Chinese nation, where words like 聖人 and 賢人, which means holy and virtuous person respectively, are prevalently used to name the ethical person. Being a virtue-ethics grounded on happiness, which is an activity of the rational part of the soul, Aristotle maintains:

it is natural, then, that we call neither ox nor horse nor any other of the animals happy; for none of them is capable of sharing in such activity. For this reason also a boy is not happy; for he is not yet capable of such acts, owing to his age; and boys who are called happy are being congratulated by reason of the hopes we have for them. (NE, Bk 1, 1100a1, 1)

Hence, Aristotle contends that complete virtue and a complete life, that is to say a mature and experienced life is *conditio sine qua non*, to be happy. He defines virtue as "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it." (NE, Bk 2, 1106b, 35-1107a1) A mean for him is the relative middle point between two extremes. He admits that there are a lot of human behaviour where it is very difficult if not impossible to say with certitude where lays the mean. (Cf. NE, Bk 2, 1107a)

### 3. Exposition of Happiness as the Ground for Ethics

We have said above that Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics produced a teleological Ethical system, which maintains that ethics ought to be oriented towards an end, a *Summum bonum*, that is to say the chief or highest good. This *Summum bonum* becomes the ground for teleological ethical edifice. For Aristotle, the *Summum bonum* of the human person is Happiness.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle did not undergo great stress in locating, *Eudaimonia*<sup>2</sup>, which in English has been generally translated as happiness, as the chief good of all rational persons, but he was under severe pain to define or ascertain what precisely happiness is. Using an analogy from inquiries like art, which action and pursuit is usually aimed at a certain good, he contends that the end of which every rational human pursues is happiness. The question is what is happiness? In his interlocation, while stating that many people agree that happiness or well being is that

---

<sup>2</sup> Claudia Baracchi, maintains that "The word *eudaimonia* evokes the benevolent and beneficial sway of the *daimon*, and, hence, the sense of harmonious connection with or attunement to the *daimonic*." (Claudia Baracchi, 2008, 81)

of which everyone seeks, he echoes the differing opinions of some people as to what happiness precisely is, saying thus:

Verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness, and identify living well and doing well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise. For the former it is some plain and obvious thing, like pleasure, wealth, or honour; they differ, however, from one another—and often even the same man identifies it with different things, with health when he is ill, with wealth when he is poor; but, conscious of their ignorance, they admire those who proclaim some great ideal that is above their comprehension. (NE, Bk 1, 1095a1, 15)

The above quotation clearly tells us how problematic defining happiness is. Even to this day people differ on what they think or feel happiness is. It, thus, seems that it is by a kind of democratic consensus<sup>3</sup> that ‘happiness’ is considered as the highest good of all men and women. Be that as it may, there is no consensus on what happiness is. Nevertheless, what is Aristotle’s own understanding or definition of happiness? He defines happiness thus: “happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue.” (NE, Bk 1, 1102a1, 5) To this effect, he asserts that “Happiness then is the best, noblest, and most pleasant thing in the world.” (NE, Bk 1, 1099a1, 20) Claudia Baracchi, explains this Aristotle’s understanding of happiness as: “the highest moment of human finality and projection.” (Claudia Baracchi, 2008, 79) This helps to understand, the reinterpretation of happiness as the beatific vision of or in God by the scholastics philosophers, especially, Aquinas. Aristotle himself in the Nicomachean Ethics, realizes the vagueness and elusiveness of his own definition of happiness. Thus, in an effort to make his definition clearer and concrete he added that happiness: Needs the external goods as well; for it is impossible, or not easy, to do noble acts without the proper equipment. In many actions we use friends and riches and political power as instruments; and there are some things the lack of which takes the lustre from happiness, as good birth, goodly children, beauty; for the man who is very ugly in appearance or ill-born or solitary and childless is not very likely to be happy, and perhaps a man would be still less likely if he had thoroughly bad children or friends or had lost good children or friends by death. (NE, Bk 1, 1099a30-1099b1)

The question to Aristotle is: if one needs all the above-mentioned qualities and privileges<sup>4</sup> and in addition to virtue who then can be happy? According to Aristotle’s

---

<sup>3</sup> Claudia Baracchi, put it thus: “It is thanks to the virtually unanimous agreement that happiness is established as the highest good.” (Claudia Baracchi, 2008, 79)

<sup>4</sup> It has always been a problem to know if Aristotle posits an activity or many activities as necessary to life a happy life or the ideal life. Gavin Lawrence, contends that “he is not primarily concerned with the question of what activities a human being should value, or be devoted to, or how to juggle them on particular occasions, but rather with the question of what activity, or weave of activities, makes up, or constitutes, the most ideal life for a human (under ideal circumstances). Thus the monism he advocates is one of activity, not of value. He is not crazily saying that the happiest human life is one where we value only one thing, theoretical activity. No, the happiest human life is one whose circumstances are such as to allow us to engage in contemplation as much as a human ever can.” (Gavin Lawrence, 1999, 184-192)

standard one should ask, is being happy possible? Doesn't one need to be deified to become happy according to Aristotle's standard?

The above questions lead us to inquire how Aristotle thinks happiness could be acquired. Is it by learning? Is it by habituation? Is it by a sort of training? Is it by divine providence? Or is it by chance? Aristotle thinks that happiness is not god-sent and is not gotten by chance; but thinks rather that happiness "comes as a result of virtue and some process of learning or training, to be among the most godlike things; for that which is the prize and end of virtue seems to be the best thing in the world, and something godlike and blessed." (NE, Bk 1, 1099b1,15) Because happiness comes as a result of virtue, therefore we can praise the virtuous person. Aristotle does not equal happiness with pleasure as the Epicureans do, hence, for Aristotle happiness should not be understood as the opposite of pain. The happy person is the virtuous man or woman who has learnt how to deal with the ups and downs of life. As he maintains:

For neither will he be moved from his happy state easily or by any ordinary misadventures, but only by many great ones, nor, if he has had many great misadventures, will he recover his happiness in a short time, but if at all, only in a long and complete one in which he has attained many splendid successes. (NE, Bk 1, 1100b1,10)

It is clear that, Aristotle understands that his attempt to expound clearly what happiness is, is anything but satisfactory. Thus, he saw the need to write another work, entitle *Eudemian Ethics*. Aristotle commences the discourse in the book I, of the *Eudemian Ethics*, on the need to understand what happiness precisely is. Though, this work's focus is on the Nicomachean Ethics, but since Aristotle decided to make a second effort in readdressing the obscurity and elusiveness lurking in the definition of happiness in the *Eudemian Ethics*, it will be fair to accompany him. Book I and II, of the *Eudemian Ethics*, investigate the idea of happiness. We shall thus investigate these two books, with the hope for any possible clarity and precision.

Aristotle disagrees with the those who attempts to separate: the good, the beautiful and the pleasant. On the contrary, he maintains that "happiness is at once the most beautiful and best of all things and also the pleasantest." (EE, Bk 1, 1214a1,5) Already, here, Aristotle has started a discussion on happiness, by elevating it to a transcendental nature. Anyone, reading this claim of Aristotle on happiness, would quickly ask: What is this most beautiful? What is this best of all things? What is this most pleasant? Any attempt, Aristotle seems to make in clarifying what happiness is, the more obscure it becomes; any attempt to make us grasp the meaning of happiness, the more elusive it becomes. However, we shall be patient with him. Temporarily ignoring the problem inherent in defining happiness, Aristotle proceeds to propose ways by which happiness, in other words, "the good life" or "wellbeing", could be acquired. He raises the question if happiness is acquired by nature or through teaching. In other words, using the parlance of Chinese philosophy, is happiness 天賦予的 (Heaven given) or 後學的 (personal learned). Or is neither acquired by nature nor through teaching? For according to Aristotle, "or by some sort of discipline—for men acquire many qualities neither by nature nor by teaching but by habituation." (EE, Bk1, 1214a1, 15) Aristotle, contending that it is possible that happiness may not be acquired by nature, teaching and habituation, adjures that: "To be happy, to live blissfully and beautifully, must consist mainly in three things, which seem most

desirable; for some say practical wisdom is the greatest good, some excellence, and some pleasure.” (EE, Bk1, 1214a1, 30) Aristotle, while sustaining that all animals can enjoy pleasure, dismisses happiness as a property of plants and other animals and argues that only the human beings can be happy. He maintains that “we must regard happiness as the best of what is within the range of action for man.” (EE, Bk1, 1217a1, 35) Thus, Aristotle upholds happiness as the virtue of the human person. By virtue, Aristotle, following the Greek understanding, means *arête*, which is the Greek word for ‘excellence’, of which in English is usually translated as ‘virtue.’ (c.f., Noel Stewart, 2009, 59) This implies that the excellence of the human person is to live the life of virtue, which means the life of excellence. Aristotle, further argues, that since what distinguishes the human person from other animals is the activity of the soul, reason. It means happiness will imply a life of an excellent use of reason, the use of the rational part of the soul to it fullness. This excellence becomes the good of the human person. Aristotle following his disputations in his work, *Metaphysics*, also in the *Eudemian Ethics*, critique the idea of “a good *per se*.” Maintaining, that ‘good’ is ambiguous, he rather opted for the understanding of ‘good’ “as an object aimed at.” (EE, Bk1, 1218b1, 10) Hence, the good *per se*, the end of all human action, becomes happiness. Happiness, thus, becomes the excellence of the soul; the activity of a good soul. Hence, he holds that, happiness as the activity of a complete life in accordance with complete excellence or virtue.

Though, Aristotle, in *Eudemian Ethics*, made a serious effort to make the understanding of happiness a little clearer and more specific, the question of attempting to posit happiness as the ground for ethics, remains elusive and obscure. And this is obvious according to Aristotle’s own words:

We find confirmation also in the common opinion that we cannot ascribe happiness to an existence of a single day, or to a child, or to each of the ages of life; and therefore Solon’s advice holds good, never to call a man happy when living, but only when his life is ended. For nothing incomplete is happy, not being whole. (EE, Bk1, 1219b1, 5)

Solon’s advice as quoted in acceptance by Aristotle, simply implies that it will be elusive or deceptive to judge oneself or other persons to be happy while still existing in this mortal life.

#### **4. A Critique of Aristotle’s Ground for Ethics**

First of all, Aristotle’s boldness to be the first to create a systematic work on Ethics needs a resounding praise. Socrates and Plato in an effort to make the day to day concept we use clear tried to help us see the difficulty in defining ethico-political concept like Justice. Furthermore, Plato in his discourse on the Universals proposes the idea of “the Good”. And Plato thinks that the noblest pursuit of a rational person is the contemplation of the Good. He opines that it is by this contemplation that we become happy. Notwithstanding the brilliant dialectics of Socrates-Plato on ethical ideas and concept it was with Aristotle that we have a systematic treatise on ethics. No doubt Aristotle is the Ethical Philosopher *par excellence*.

Like the contemporary Greek thinkers of his time, Aristotle developed a *Eudaimonia* Ethics, that is to say ethics that is orientated towards happiness as the chief good of the human person. Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* presents a sustained argument

for happiness as the ground for ethics. While it may sound plausible to posit happiness as the chief good of all humans, it is the view of this writer that Aristotle built his ethical system on an obscure, vague, relativized and unsystematic ground or foundation. To this effect, J.L. Ackrill maintains: “Like most great philosophical works Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* raises more questions than it answers. Two central issues as to which it is not even quite clear what Aristotle’s view really is are, first, what is the criterion of right action and of moral virtue? and, second, what is the best life for a man to lead?” (J. L. Ackrill, 1980, pp.15-34) Thomas Nagel put this obscurity thus: “The *Nicomachean Ethics* exhibits indecision between two accounts of *eudaimonia*—a comprehensive and an intellectualist account.” (Thomas Nagel, 1980, pp.7-14) The intellectualist account is elaborated in the chapter 7 of the book 10, while the comprehensive account is discussed in NE 1178a9. In the intellectualist account, *eudaimonia* is a rational activity of the soul, that is to say the contemplation of truth and the search for wisdom, in accordance with virtue. While in the comprehensive account, *eudaimonia*, is an activity that entails the entire life of a person, which includes good health and fortunes with some sorts of luck.

First of all, Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* not only used the analogy of the arts or craft to develop his ethics, he conceives Ethics as an art rather than as a science. Hence, Aquinas contends that though virtue takes the place of art but moral science (Ethics) cannot be said to be an art. (C.f. Thomas Aquinas, 1985, 19) While art deals with things that are variable, scientific knowledge deals with things that are universal and necessary. (c.f. NE, Bk 6, 1140b1, 30) A system cannot be built on variable factors, for variable factors give rise to relativity not objectivity. When an ethics is built on a variable not on necessary and a universal factor, the implication is that the ethical ground cannot be proposed for all. If Ethics should be philosophical it ought to deal with ultimate principle that is consistently necessary and universal in nature. The variable factor of which Aristotle built his Ethics is the Chief Good, which he calls happiness.

Secondly, Aristotle is in pain to establish a precise idea of what the chief good of all human beings is. He admits thus: “Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all the products of the crafts.” (NE, Bk 1, 1094b1, 15) So it is obvious from Aristotle himself that he is building an Ethics on an unclear and imprecise concept—Happiness. Aristotle himself submits that there is no objective agreement on what happiness is. He says, “Verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness, and identify living well and doing well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise.” (NE, Bk 6, 1095a1,15) An Ethics of this kind that is built on probability and imprecision cannot be recommended for all. On Critiquing happiness as the ground of Ethics Immanuel Kant has this contention: “the precept of happiness is often so constituted as greatly to interfere with some inclinations, and yet men cannot form any definite and certain concept of the sum of satisfaction of all inclinations that is called happiness.” (Immanuel Kant,1993,399) If we cannot form any definite and certain concept of happiness according to Kant, which I certainly agree with, how can a philosophical Ethics be built on it?

Thirdly, based on the above argument it would be bold to contend that Aristotle rather built a religious Ethics rather than a philosophical Ethics. This contention would be sustained not only by looking at his Eudemian Ethics where he talks about the worship and contemplation of God, but more important by considering the analysis of the Greek word eudaimonia, which translation in English is given as happiness. The word eudaimonia has two main components: the prefix “eu” and the root word “daimon.” “eu”, in Greek language signifies that which is excellent, eminently good and harmoniously. On the other hand, “daimon”, has a sense of divinity, thus signifies the divine, strangely marvellous or awful, a kind of above human manifestation in a human realm. Thus, the combination of “eu” and “daimon”, will give us a sense of been excellently harmonious with divine. A sense which is similar to the “beatific vision of God” used by medieval theologians and philosophers. Little wonder that Aristotle’s eudaimonia ethics became appealing to religious thinkers, especially Thomas Aquinas who later in the middle Ages building on Aristotle’s Ethics brought Aristotle’s *Summum Bonum* to its most sublime conclusion, God, the Christian God.

## 5. Conclusion

Finally, as a way of conclusion it is to be noted that the objective of this paper, is not a critique of virtue ethics, or an attempt to replace virtue ethics with other forms of ethical theories. The writer strongly thinks that, virtue ethics, is still more comprehensive and appealing than any other modern ethical theories. However, the writer has a serious problem in understanding how, happiness, which is an elusive and obscure concept or idea will be established as the ground for philosophical ethics by Aristotle in his Ethics. The writer would rather suggest that the virtue ethics of Aristotle should be complemented with the virtue ethics of the Confucian philosophy which is grounded on relationship not on happiness. Chinese ethical and political philosophy is built on the concept of a five cardinal relationships, known as 五倫: relationships between ruler and subject (君臣), father and son(父子), husband and wife(夫婦), brothers(兄弟), and friends(朋友). While, appealing to the relationship model of virtue ethics in the Chinese philosophy, the writer does not exclude the level of relationships to the five mentioned above, which are clearly humanistic. For there are also transcendental levels of relationship, which includes the transcendental self-conscious experience of oneself as a subjective person and the transcendental relationship with the Ultimate reality of all things. It is thus, in the committed effort to live and maintain a life in the relationships we are engaged in, that can possible produced happiness, however, we subjectively conceive it. Happiness thus, is not the ultimate good but a by-product of committed relationship or union, which should be the ultimate good. Hence, one should not seek happiness, for one cannot find it, because one do not know what happiness is.

Thus far, this work aimed at a critical exposition of Happiness as the Ground for Ethics in Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics. The writer’s thesis was that Aristotle provides an elusive and obscure ground for his Ethics. To achieve this, the writer did the following: exposed Aristotle’s Conception of Ethics; Gave an Exposition of Happiness as the Ground for Ethics; Gave a Critique of Aristotle’s Ground for Ethics and then finally gave a conclusion.

## References

Ackrill J. L (1980), Aristotle on Eudaimonia, in Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (ed), *Essays on Aristotle's ethics*, California: University of California Press.

Aristotle (1984), *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (vol.,II), Jonathan Barnes (ed), Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Aristotle (1995), *Nicomachean Ethics*, W. D. Ross (trans), Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Claudia Baracchi (2008), *Aristotle's Ethics as First Philosophy*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gavin Lawrence (1999), Aristotle and the Ideal Life, in Lloyd P. Gerson (ed), *Aristotle Critical Assessments* (Vol. III), London: Routledge, pp. 184-192.

Kant Immanuel (1993), *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, James W. Ellington (trans), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, INC.

Karol Wojtyla (1993), *Love & Responsibility*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Karol Wojtyla (1979), *The Acting Person*, Andrzej Potocki (trans), Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Lloyd P. Gerson (ed) (1999), *Aristotle Critical Assessments* (Vol. III), London: Routledge.

Michael Pakaluk (2005), *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics an Introduction*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Noel Stewart (2009), *Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Timothy Williamson (2007), *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Thomas Nagel (1980), Aristotle on Eudaimonia, in Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (ed), *Essays on Aristotle's ethics*, California: University of California Press.

Thomas Aquinas (1985), *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, Armand Maurer (trans.), Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

**Contact email:** jonyeuka@gmail.com