FRIENDSHIP AND GOODNESS OF CHARACTER

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LAY ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I explore and defend underappreciated and misunderstood features of Aristotle's theory of friendship. Aristotle's account of friendship is one of the foundational texts for contemporary philosophical discussions of friendship. Understanding Aristotle on his own terms is therefore important to carrying on these discussions. Furthermore, I argue that when his view is understood in the ways that I suggest, it is more philosophically defensible and psychologically plausible than is often supposed. I show that, for Aristotle, friendship and virtue are importantly connected; that his view on friendship's development tracks with many of our contemporary intuitions; and that his view is defensible against several common contemporary objections. Finally, I defend Aristotle's claim that goodness of character is an essential aspect of friendship and highlight the advantages this view offers contemporary discussions of friendship.

ABSTRACT

This project will contribute to our understanding of both Aristotle's theory of friendship in particular and friendship as a philosophical topic in general. Chapter 1 focuses on explaining what Aristotle means when he says that friendship either is a virtue or is similar to virtue. Specifically, he claims that friendship is like a *hexis prohairetikē* (a state which chooses). This phrasing is remarkably similar to his description of the character virtues, and it invites comparison between the two kinds of states. In Chapter 2 I examine the common scholarly suggestion that Aristotle's taxonomy of pleasure- utility- and virtue-based friendships is closely linked to the motivations that individuals have when they pursue friendship. By focusing on Aristotle's remarks on the time it takes to properly establish a friendship, I develop a view of Aristotle on which the motivations that a person has for pursuing a friendship often uncouple from the kind of friendship they succeed in forming. In Chapter 3 I defend Aristotle's account of friendship from three common contemporary objections. Some scholars believe that Aristotle is too strict in his account of friendship, that only truly good people can be friends, that many friendships on Aristotle's account are not truly friendship, and that Aristotle is wrong about vicious peoples' ability to form friendships. I reply to each objection. In chapter 4 I follow Aristotle in arguing that we should understand goodness of character as a necessary, grounding feature of friendship. In so doing, I disagree with those contemporary scholars who do not follow Aristotle on this point, insisting instead that two individuals can be friends without being good, and their friendship can be about bad or immoral things and activities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EN - *Nicomachean Ethics (Ethica Nicomachea)*

EE - *Eudemian Ethics (Ethics Eudemia)*

INTRODUCTION

There has been a resurgence of interest in the last fifty years in the topic of friendship and its place within ethics.[1] This is partly due to a parallel growth in virtue ethics and a pushback against utilitarian and deontological frameworks for articulating ethical concerns.[2] It is also partly due to a new generation of Aristotelian and ancient philosophy scholars re-exploring Aristotle's theory, and the place that friendship has within it.[3] The growth in attention paid to friendship as a philosophical topic has naturally prompted renewed focus on Aristotle, since his account is detailed, sophisticated, and filled with

[1] The renewed interest was largely sparked by Elizabeth Telfer in her article "Friendship" (1970), and by John Cooper, who begins his famous article "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship," *The Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1977a) with the claim that "Neither in the scholarly nor in the philosophical literature on Aristotle does his account of friendship (*philia*) occupy a very prominent place" (p. 619). Since his article, it is common for scholars to reference the uptick in interest and direct focus on friendship as a topic of philosophical interest, both for Aristotelian scholars and for ethical theorist generally. See, for instance, Neera Badhwar's introduction to *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), and Michael Pakaluk's introduction to *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1991).

[2] The renewed interest in virtue ethics is partly attributable to Elizabeth Anscombe's influential article "Modern Moral Philosophy" (1958). The impact on discussions in modern ethics is, perhaps, more the renewed or burgeoning interest in topics like friendship, moral character, motives, and moral psychology. Virtue ethics has no special claim to investigating these topics, and many philosophers continue to tackle these issues from within a deontological or utilitarian framework. Noteworthy among these is Lawrence Blum's deontological approach in *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* (London: Routledge, 1980).

[3] For full commentaries on Aristotle's ethics, see William Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1980); Gerard Hughes, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Aristotle on Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2001); Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics; An Introduction* (2005). For scholarship on how Aristotelian friendship fits within his ethical theory more generally, see Talbot Brewer, "Friends we can Share: Friendship and Aristotelian Ethical Theory", (2005); John Cooper (1977a); Robert Heinaman, "Eudaimonia and Self-Sufficiency in the 'Nicomachean Ethics'," *Phronesis*, 33 (1988); Richard Kraut, "The Importance of Love in Aristotle's Ethics," *Philosophy Research Archives* 1 (1975); Lorraine Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Nancy Sherwin, "Aristotle on the Shared Life", (1987).

insights into the psychology of human relationships. Aristotle's work is also a key part of the resurgent virtue ethics tradition, broadly considered. Consequently, many scholars who wish to comment upon friendship begin their discussion with Aristotle and then modify or dissent from his views where they think it appropriate, thus building out their philosophical theories of friendship. As a consequence of this broad trend in philosophy on friendship, Aristotle is often analysed, often criticised, and his views are often developed and adapted to update or translate the important contributions he has made to create a workable modern theory of friendship.

This project will contribute to our understanding of both Aristotle's theory of friendship in particular and friendship as a philosophical topic in general. On the one hand, I hope to present certain aspects of Aristotle's view as more philosophically plausible and psychologically compelling than they are often understood to be. To this end, I explore some complexities in Aristotle's view which have enjoyed little or no direct scholarly attention. On the other hand, I will argue throughout, but primarily in chapter 4, that our own philosophical understanding of friendship can benefit from following Aristotle's view more closely in certain key respects, even if not in every detail.

One major claim of my dissertation is that goodness of character is what all friendships have as their ultimate foundation, one way or another. The "one way or another" hides a great deal of complexity which, if we were to only focus on the complexities, might lead us to doubt the plausibility of the claim that it is goodness of character which forms the ground of friendships. Human relationships are extremely complex. To fully describe a phenomenon like friendship and explicate "friendship" as a philosophical concept requires

a lengthy reflection on, and enumeration of, the variety of relationships which can exist under the one descriptor "friendship". Since individuals' goodness of character might not always be the most obvious, or even the most relevant, feature of their relationship, it is natural to doubt whether goodness of character is truly a central, necessary feature of every friendship. Some of the work of contemporary scholars, and much of their questioning of Aristotle's view, focuses on the ways that goodness of character does *not* obviously ground the friendship or does *not* have the largest impact on the kind or quality of the friendship in question.

For instance, in the recent literature on friendship, a fair amount of attention has been paid to the fact that friendship can be good *for* a person, and that this fact can be examined without reference to the goodness of the people in question and might even uncouple from their actual goodness.[4] Moreover, having friends can help us *achieve* goods in our lives. For example, it can serve as a means for personal moral progress, or as a means for personal self-actualization; we can discover alternative worldviews which are liberating and support our autonomy.[5] And we can reasonably imagine all these goods of friendship

[4] Philosophers who make this and related claims include C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves,* (Geoffrey Bles Ltd. Fontana Books, 1960); Howard Kalmer, "Strong Feelings." *Value Inquiry* 19 (1985); Alexander Nehamas, "The Good for Friendship," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 110 (2010b). The many ways that friendship can be good *for* us are somewhat separate from the question of whether our friends must be good in themselves. I discuss the second question, the question of whether our friends must be good in themselves, in Chapter 4.

[5] See, for instance, Mavis Biss "Aristotle on Friendship and Self-Knowledge: The Friend Beyond the Mirror" *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 28 (2011); Nathanial Branden, "Love and Psychological Visibility," in *Friendship; A Philosophical Reader*, edited by Neera Badhwar (1993); Anne Marie Dziob "Aristotelian Friendship: Self-Love and Moral Rivalry," *The Review of Metaphysics* 46 (1993); Marylyn Friedman, *What are Friends For? Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral Theory*, (New York: Cornell University Press 1993); Richard Klonski, "Teaching as a Primordial Act of Friendship," *The Journal of Educational Thought* 37 (2003).

without needing to make any reference or recourse to the goodness of our friend's character. Indeed, as is sometimes noted, friendship sometimes serves as a *secession* (even if only in part) from moral and "good" behaviour, and it might be that the good *for* us in a friendship is precisely where our friendship secedes from moral and good behaviour.[6] Finally, we all know and experience our friends as deeply complex individuals who display a range of good and bad behaviours, and who have character traits which correspond to the varieties of their behaviour. Sometimes, our love for them and our friendship with them is directly experienced through joint participation in bad or non-moral activities, activities which stunt our moral development, take us away from meaningful and important life-pursuits, have us fail in other moral commitments, and so on. But we love our friends nonetheless, even when we know them to be bad, or bad for us, in some respects.

The foregrounding of these sorts of concerns in the recent philosophical literature on friendship, such as what friendships are *like* to the people involved, how individual friendships might impact us, how we experience the love we have for our friends, is an excellent development. These sorts of concerns touch on many important topics worthy of the attention they have received. One thing that attention to these aspects of friendship

[6] C.S. Lewis (1960) describes friendship as a sort of secession, indifference, or turning away from the outer world, and towards an internal, shared reality. Friendship can, in some cases, be the subject of suspicion and worry for the outer world, since in their inner world their behaviour has some internal logic which can at times run contrary to the outer world (pp. 75-77). Alexander Nehamas *On Friendship*, (New York: Basic Books, 2016) picks up on this insight and develops it in his chapter "A Sort of Secession". He notes that the duties, or expected behaviours, of friends are sometimes in tension with or run at odd to public, shared morality. For a further discussion on this tension between our universal duties of morality and the partiality we think we owe our friends, see Lawrence Blum (1980), Marilyn Friedman (1993), David Annis "The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship" (1987), Mark Bernstein "Friends Without Favouritism," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 41 (2007), and Diane Jeske, "Friendship, Virtue, and Impartiality." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57 (1997).

reveals is the extreme variety and complexity of friendship as a topic, and how nuanced our ethical perspective must be to adequately account for it. However, I believe we also need an external, general account of what friendship is, what makes it distinct, and how it relates to other sorts of relationships in our lives. It is on this side of our analysis of friendship that I believe Aristotle has something to say which is often overlooked or denied. I will go on to show that his account has potential to fit comfortably with, and to enhance, contemporary accounts of friendship.

This distinction between (i) the perspective of the individuals involved in the relationship and (ii) the external perspective that we might have as philosophers considering "friendship" plays a crucial role in revealing complexities in Aristotle's view. Aristotle himself does not spell out a distinction such as this directly in his account, but he is clearly examining friendship primarily from the latter, external perspective, and he says relatively little about the former, internal perspective on friendship. But this should not surprise us. Aristotle also says relatively little about what growth in virtue will be like from the agent's own perspective, or what *eudaimonia* will be like from the agent's own perspective. His *Ethics* attempts to answer questions about what the good life *is*, what virtue *is*, and, similarly, what good friendships *are*. He is less concerned with filling in *what they are like* to the people involved in them. Throughout this project, I will attempt to colour in what friendships might be *like* from an Aristotelian perspective, and how Aristotle's external analysis of friendship might map on to the reality we all experience of what it is like to have friends of different sorts.

A thematic goal in this project is to affirm many of the excellent contributions to the philosophical literature over the past few decades. On the whole, this is not a deeply divisive or controversial area of philosophy, and the amount of agreement between philosophers on the topic of friendship dwarfs the remaining puzzles and disagreements. While I will argue against some views adopted by contemporary philosophers, this project is intended to add to and complement the well-established and excellent body of work developed in recent decades. My goal is to recommend underappreciated aspects of Aristotle's theory of friendship as being worthy of inclusion in our modern philosophical understanding of friendship, not to reject that understanding or to overturn it fundamentally.

Outline by Chapters

Despite the frequency with which Aristotle is interpreted and brought into contemporary discussions of friendship, there are some elements of Aristotle's theory which are often overlooked or underappreciated. For instance, little has been said about how Aristotle's understanding of friendship connects to his understanding of virtue. However, he clearly thinks that friendship and virtue are intimately connected. He even asks whether friendship *is* a virtue, or only involves virtue (1155a2). Most scholars who have paid attention to this subject suggest that friendship involves virtue (or at least some virtue) as a prerequisite. But while this may be so, this hardly exhausts the possibilities for how friendship and virtue are similar. In Chapter 1, I explore the relationship of friendship to virtue. Aristotle claims that friendship is like a state which chooses, a claim which is

remarkably similar to his description of the character virtue as a *hexis prohairetikē*. This striking similarity is largely unnoticed in commentaries on Aristotle, and I believe it can help explain why Aristotle initially considers whether friendship is a virtue or involves virtue. I argue that we can better understand Aristotle's thought on friendship if we understand it to involve each individual being in something like a prohairetic state, and if we understand the acquisition and exercise of a friendship as similar in important ways to the acquisition and exercise of the character virtues.

In Chapter 2, I evaluate the view that Aristotle's taxonomy of pleasure- utility- and virtue-based friendships is closely linked to the motivations that individuals have when they pursue friendship with one another. By focusing on Aristotle's remarks on the time it takes to properly establish a friendship, I emphasize and develop a view which is not directly defended or considered by commentators on Aristotle, a view on which the motivations that a person has can be (and often are) uncoupled from the kind of friendship they actually form. A significant upshot of my argument in this chapter is that it allows for there to be a wide range of cases (and perhaps a significant number of friendships in our own lives) in which we are mistaken about the kind of friendship we have and about the quality of that relationship.

In Chapter 3, I look at three related criticisms of Aristotle which, taken separately or together, suggest that Aristotle's view of friendship is incompatible with a good contemporary account of friendship. The first criticism is that, since friendship is a common feature of our world and Aristotelian virtue is not, Aristotle's standard of virtue is too high a standard to have for friendship. The second is that imperfect friendships are too

instrumental to be considered friendships in a modern sense. The third criticism is that, contrary to what Aristotle says, it is obvious from experience that vicious people have friends. I respond to each objection and show that Aristotle's view is sufficiently nuanced to accept that non-virtuous individuals can have true friendships, that Aristotelian imperfect friendships are not instrumental in the way critics sometimes suggest, and that, properly understood, vice *is* a barrier to forming lasting friendships. Taken together, my replies to these objections show that Aristotle's understanding of friendship is closer to contemporary ideas about friendship as it is variously envisioned in the philosophical literature than is commonly supposed.

In Chapter 4, I argue that we should follow Aristotle in understanding goodness of character as a necessary, grounding feature of friendship. Many contemporary scholars do not follow Aristotle on this point, focusing instead on the other key characteristics of friendship. Some openly reject this part of his view, insisting instead that two individuals can be friends without being good, and even that their friendship can be about bad or immoral things and activities. But, as Alexander Nehamas observes (2010a, pp. 243-244), if we do not follow Aristotle's view of the good, and if we do not insist that friendship must be grounded in the good of another person's character, it is challenging to articulate what, exactly, friendships are *about*.[7] I argue that goodness, understood in broadly Aristotelian terms, is what we want to answer this question. Additionally, including goodness of character as a necessary feature of friendship conveys other theoretical benefits to our

[7] Alexander Nehamas, "Aristotelian *Philia,* Modern Friendship?" in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 39, (2010a).

philosophical account of friendship. It helps, for instance, explain why our friends are not interchangeable with other virtuous people, and it helps provide a standard or conceptual framework within which we can compare friendship-types.

A Note on Texts and Translations

In this project, I use both the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* to advance my arguments.[8] It is unclear which account of friendship is Aristotle's later view, and which he considered to be better or more defensible.[9] Although there are some differences in the organization and presentation of his theory of friendship between the two texts, and some differences too in the specific claims that Aristotle makes, none of the claims that I make in this dissertation require a strong preference for one text over the other. As many scholars do, I take the *EN* to be more primary for my analysis, but I hold the *EE* close by and consider the unique points made there to be authoritative for Aristotle's view.

All translations from Greek are my own, but I often base my translation on Terence Irwin's translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1999) and Brad Inwood and Raphael Woolf's translation of the *Eudemian Ethics* (2013). For the *Nicomachean Ethics*, I used text prepared by Ingram Bywater (1894) and published by Oxford University Press (1983).

[8] I make no reference to the *Magna Moralia* since it is not written by Aristotle, it is unclear whether it corresponds more to the *EE* or the *EN* account, and in my estimation it does not provide further insight into Aristotle's established view of friendship for our purposes.

[9] Athony Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics: A Study of the Relationship Between the Eudemian and Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) defends the minority position in scholarship that the *EE* is the later, more definitive version of Aristotle's ethics.

For the *Eudemian Ethics*, I used the text prepared by Franz Susemihl (1884) and edited by R. R. Walzer and J. M. Mingay (1991).

CHAPTER 1
FRIENDSHIP AND VIRTUE

The goal of this chapter is to explore several ways in which friendship is similar to virtue, and the ways that our virtue and our friends contribute to achieving eudaimonia, on Aristotle's account. This is a topic that other scholars have considered,[10] but I believe that virtue and friendship are like one another in ways that have not been adequately explored in the scholarly literature.[11] Given the importance of friendship to Aristotle's ethics and given the central role he envisions virtue playing in living well, the connection between virtue and friendship is important to understand. In this chapter, I will give an account of some of the ways friendship and virtue are connected, for Aristotle. Specifically, I will

[10] For discussions of Aristotle's account of friendship, virtue, and their contributions to eudaimonia, see Mavis Biss (2011), Talbot Brewer (2002), Anthony Carreras (2012), John Cooper "Friendship and the Good in Aristotle," *The Philosophical Review* 86 (1977b), Robert Heinaman (1988), Daniel Maher, "Contemplative Friendship in 'Nicomachean Ethics'," *The Review of Metaphysics* 65 (2012), Nancy Sherman *The Fabric of Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, Chapter 4).

[11] There is no settled view among commentators on what relationship Aristotle envisions between friendship and virtue. The most common understanding is that virtue is a condition for friendship, either because a person must already have virtue to be true friends with another person, or because *some* level of virtue is necessary for friends to come together. See Neera Badhwar and Russel Jones "Aristotle on the Love of Friends", in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Love*, ed. Christopher Grau (2017), Talbot Brewer (2005, p. 725), Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett "Friendship and the Self," *Ethics* 108 (1998, p. 506), John Cooper (1977b, p. 323), William Hardie (1980, p. 319), Richard Kraut (1975 pp. 308-9), Nancy Sherman (1989, pp. 124-5). Alexander Nehamas observes that Aristotle gives us no conclusive remarks on this topic (2016, p. 241).

Some scholars note that virtue and friendship are similar to one another in that what marks an action as virtuous or as an expression of friendship are the motives and feelings of the agent acting, and not only the action itself. In the case of virtue, one and the same action could be brave or cowardly; in the case of friendship, one and the same action could be an expression of friendship, or not. See, for instance, Alexander Nehamas (2016, pp. 103-6).

show that, for Aristotle, friendship is a relationship which includes a state which chooses, and I will show how that view about friendship is similar to his claim that virtue is a state which chooses (*hexis prohairetikē*). I believe that establishing how friendship and virtue are connected and how they are similar can help us better understand how Aristotle envisions the formation of friendship and the role it plays in our lives. In section 2, I investigate the aspirational nature that both virtue and friendship have. In section 3, I show how our aspirations in virtue and friendship can mutually impact our progress in living a good life. Specifically, I highlight some of the ways that virtue can teach us about our relationships and how our friends can influence our character and our understanding of and growth in virtue. On the whole, the similarities between virtue and friendship that I discuss in this chapter also lay the groundwork for my claims in Chapter 2 regarding the development of friendship, and for my overarching thesis that friendship depends upon the goodness of the other person's character.

1. Friendship Includes a Prohairetic State

Aristotle opens his discussion of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* by enumerating several reasons why friendship is important for happiness. His first reason for discussing friendship – before he mentions its usefulness in all areas of life, or its pleasures – is that friendship "is a virtue or involves virtue (*met' aretēs*)" (1155a2).[12] As we will see,

[3] Irwin translates '*met' aretēs*' as "involves virtue," David Ross (2009) translates "implies virtue." I will generally be following Irwin's translation, with some emendations.

it does not make sense to think of friendship as one of the virtues, which suggests that friendship involves virtue in some way. However, I also take this passage as inviting a broader comparison between the natures of virtue and friendship.

First, let us consider the possibility that friendship *involves* virtue. One way to think of this is that virtue is a prerequisite for friendship.[13] This view is implausible if Aristotle means that virtue is a prerequisite for *all* of the relationships he classifies as '*philia*'. However, it is reasonable to think that Aristotle is referring only to the most central case or cases of friendship, such as virtue-based friendships between good people. Since virtue-based friendship is the best kind of friendship, and the one we ought to strive for (as we will discuss below), it makes sense for Aristotle to suggest that virtue is a prerequisite. A second possible interpretation is that friendship goes along with virtue, and so where virtue is present, friendship will be too. This view is implausible if we consider that not every pair of virtuous persons who meet will be friends with each other. For Aristotle, friendship of the best kind is exclusive and can only be extended to a few individuals.[14] However, it is true that two individuals who are virtuous are more likely to be friends, since they are both excellent people, and could come to recognize this about one another.[15] And so, there seems to be something true on either interpretive path. Virtue seems to be a prerequisite for friendships of a certain sort (we will discuss what level of virtue is necessary later), and

[13] This is, perhaps, the most common reading. See note 2 above.

[14] 1158a10-14. See also Aristotle's discussion of the number of friends in *EN* IX.10.

[15] There is another way this interpretation makes some sense. If Aristotle has in mind civic friendship and concord within a society, then virtue in the citizenry will invariably result in a general friendship between members of society.

friendship seems to go along with virtue in that, where virtue is, friendship will be near at hand. What more can we consider about friendship "involving virtue" (*met' aretēs*)?

Aristotle often employs the construction '*meta*' + genitive noun in predicate position to suggest a specific sort of relationship.[16] Consider, for instance, his claim that the function of a human life is a certain sort of activity which involves reason (it is *meta logou*: *EN* 1098a13); or that choice involves reason and thought (it is *meta logou kai dianoias*: 1112a16); or again that practical wisdom is a virtue which grasps truth, involving reason (it is *meta logou*: 1140b5), concerning the actions that are good and evil for humans.[17] In each of these cases, it is not just *having* reason which is important for the proper performance of the activity in question. Rather, Aristotle's point is that the *exercise* of reason (or thought) is required for humans to live out their function, or to choose, or to act wisely. Further, the exercise of reason in these cases cannot be just *any* exercise of reason. In each case, it must be some definite sort of exercise of reason, the nature of which depends on the activity being done (choosing, acting wisely, and so on).

Broadly speaking, I take the relationship Aristotle is describing when he says that something *involves* (is *meta*) reason or virtue to be as follows: the thing in question (e.g. practical wisdom or friendship) depends, in part, on the *exercise* of the latter (e.g. reason,

[16] In the *EN*, Aristotle typically uses *meta* + genitive noun in predicate position in the manner I outline here with *meta logou*. However, he also uses it simply as the word 'with,' i.e. 'living with friends' (1156a27), which specifies togetherness in a broad, less technical way.

[17] Aristotle uses *meta logou* in the *EN* several times. For instance, he uses it often in his discussion of craft knowledge in 6.4 (1140a4-23), and at times elsewhere in books 6 and 9 (1140b20, 1140b28, 1144b27, 1144b3, 1169a1).

or virtue) in some definite way.[18] And so, reason is part of whatever is *meta logou* by definition, and virtue is a part of friendship by definition. The specifics of *what* the relevant exercise of reason looks like, in passages involving the phrase *meta logou*, are left unexplained by Aristotle.[19] Similarly the specifics of *what* the exercise of virtue is upon which friendship depends is also left unexplained by Aristotle. Nevertheless, if friendship stands in this kind of relationship to virtue, then friendship requires *at least some* exercise of virtue, and virtue is, by definition, a part of friendship.[20]

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[18] Another reading here is possible. We might say that the phrases *met' aretēs* or *meta logou* suggest a relationship of accompaniment, where we require the possession of the quality prior to obtaining the subject of discussion. So, we need virtue before we can have friends, and we need reason before we can have practical wisdom. This reading seems plausible with respect to friendship, but it is impossible to suggest the same for practical wisdom. All human beings have reason, but the person lacking practical wisdom exercises their capacity *poorly*. Therefore, if Aristotle is using the construction of *meta* + noun consistently, then friendship involves virtue in the manner I suggest.

[19] One way to interpret Aristotle here is to take the exercise of reason as the agent's ability to provide some sort of account for her action. See Jessica Moss's article "Right Reason in Plato and Aristotle: On the Meaning of Logos," *Phronesis* 59 (2014), especially pp. 190-191, 211-213, and 219-224. For Moss, actions related to *phronesis* are *meta logou* when the agent is capable of giving an account of her action by appealing to certain sorts of reasons:

> Therefore logos in the phrase 'with logos' should be taken to refer, in the descriptions of each of these three intellectual excellences, not to Reason but to a special kind of account: a syllogism. To say that the person with a superior epistemic status, practical, productive or theoretical, 'has the logos' is to say that she is able to give or grasp a complex account: demonstrative syllogism in the theoretical case, deliberative syllogism in the practical or productive. (p. 213)

The 'with reason' (*meta logou*) here does not suggest that the reason is excellent or perfect. Instead, some exercise of reason of the kind mentioned must be *present* in the agent acting. My claim is that the phrase *met' aretē* similarly suggests a sort of exercise of virtue in friendship, but no complete virtue is required. Hardie also seems to agree with my reading here (1980, p. 319). He suggests that Aristotle's comment that friendship involves virtue is best understood by reference to the fact that the *best* friendships will be between people of *complete* virtue. The implication of this is that less than best friendships will involve less than complete virtue. The contribution of reason in the case of practical wisdom is the same as the contribution of complete virtue to complete friendship. However, we can have reason without right reason, and we can have good states of character which are not complete virtue. Or so I shall contend.

[20] It is worth noting here that saying friendship involves virtue (it is *met' aretēs*) does not commit Aristotle to the view that only people who have achieved full virtue can be friends. Later in this chapter, and in Chapters 2 and 3, I will provide reasons why we should reject the reading of Aristotle on which full virtue is required for friendship. Overall, I agree with John Cooper's interpretation in "Aristotle on the Forms of

Some scholars, such as Alexander Nehamas, have thought that for Aristotle virtue is a prerequisite for friendship, or at least for the very best kinds of friendship.[21] Others, such as Nancy Sherman, suggest a more moderate view which does not require complete virtue prior to forming friendships of the best kind.[22] In future chapters, I will argue that Sherman's view is likely closer to Aristotle's. Moreover, I will argue that at least *some* good qualities of character are necessary for *any* kind of friendships to successfully develop. For now, however, we can set aside the question of how virtuous a person must be to have different kinds of friendships.

The other option given by Aristotle is that friendship might *be* one of the virtues. However, it is doubtful that friendship is literally a virtue. While friendship certainly resembles the virtues in many respects, there are too many dissimilarities between Aristotle's account of friendship and his account of virtue for friendship to belong in the category of virtue. For instance, for friendships to exist there must be two individuals involved, whereas virtues are states which pertain to a single agent's character. Moreover, friendship does not seem to be a mean between excess and deficiency as the virtues of character are. In addition, friendship does not seem to correspond to a particular kind of feelings or action as most of the character virtues do.[23] Finally, the actions which are

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Friendship" (1977a), and think that "character friendship" best describes the way(s) in which virtue, partially or fully formed, is a necessary component of friendship. I will return to this in Chapter 4.

[21] See Alexander Nehamas, *On Friendship* (2016, p. 14).

[22] Nancy Sherman, (1993, p. 105).

[23] The virtue of justice is the notable exception here. It is not entirely clear whether there is a feeling associated with justice, according to Aristotle. For several discussion on this topic, see: Howard Curzer, "Aristotle's Account of the Virtue of Justice," *Apeiron* 28 (1995); Shane Drefcinski, "Aristotle and the Characteristic Desire of Justice," *Apeiron* 33 (2000); Susanne Foster, "Virtue and Material Goods: Aristotle

expressive of friendship seem to overlap with the actions characteristic of other virtues. For instance, my action to rescue my friend from enemies in battle might be done both out of friendship and out of courage. Given these important differences, it is implausible that friendship is a virtue, strictly speaking.

However, I believe that there is more to be said on how friendship is similar to virtue. In his subsequent discussion of friendship, Aristotle refers to friendship as being like a state which produces choices. In the *EN* he says:

> Loving seems to be like a feeling, but friendship [like] a state (*hexei*). For loving is directed no less toward inanimate things, but reciprocal loving involves choice, and choice (*prohairesis*) comes from a state; and [good people] wish good to the person they are loving for his own sake, in accord with their state, not their feeling. *EN* 1157b28-32[24]

He also observes that friendship is like virtue in that they both involve state and activity, and that friends can be "in a state that would result in friendly activities" (1157b9-10).[25] The point is that friendship is not just a feeling of love for another person, but an ongoing condition, like a state (*hexis*), or being in a state which is productive of the activities of friendship. A similar passage is present in the *EE*:

> If actively loving is the pleasurable, mutual choice that two acquaintances make towards each other, then it is clear that the primary

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on Justice and Liberality," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1997); James Urmson, "Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 10 (1973); Bernard Williams, "Justice as a Virtue," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, edited by Amelie Rorty, (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

[24] ἔοικε δ' ἡ μὲν φίλησις πάθει, ἡ δὲ φιλία ἕξει· ἡ γὰρ φίλησις οὐχ ἧττον πρὸς τὰ ἄψυχά ἐστιν, ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις ἀφ' ἕξεως· καὶ τἀγαθὰ βούλονται τοῖς φιλουμένοις ἐκείνων ἕνεκα, οὐ κατὰ πάθος ἀλλὰ καθ' ἕξιν.

[25] … ἔχουσιν ὥστ' ἐνεργεῖν φιλικῶς

> friendship is nothing other than the reciprocal choice of the things that are good and pleasant without qualification, and that friendship itself is the state (*hexis*) from which such a choice [arises]. 1237a30-34[26]

Here, Aristotle is claiming that the activity of good people who are virtue-based friends will not just be a reciprocal choice of what is incidentally good for one another, but what is good without qualification (he begins this line of thought at 1236b27). Friendship is the relationship in which friends, when they are good, reciprocally choose the good together.

Aristotle's comments from the *EN* and *EE* present an understanding of friendship which is remarkably similar to his claim that the virtues of character are *prohairetic states* (*EN* 1106b36; 1139a22-26; *EE* 1227b8; 1227b37-39). Prohairetic states, in the context of virtue, are habits, acquired traits, or dispositions of a person's character which reliably produce choices and decisions of a specified sort, as we will discuss below. Of course, there is more to the definition of character virtue than this, and those other components do not easily fit in with Aristotle's account of friendship. Moreover, there is more to Aristotle's understanding of friendship which, once again, does not easily fit in with his understanding of virtue. Nonetheless, I believe the fact that he refers to friendship and virtue in similar

[26] εἰ δὲ τὸ κατ' ἐνέργειαν φιλεῖν μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἀντιπροαίρεσις τῆς ἀλλήλων γνωρίσεως, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ὅλως ἡ φιλία ἡ πρώτη ἀντιπροαίρεσις τῶν ἁπλῶς ἀγαθῶν καὶ ἡδέων, ὅτι ἀγαθὰ καὶ ἡδέα. ἔστι δ' αὕτη ἡ φιλία ἕξις ἀφ' ἧς ἡ τοιαύτη προαίρεσις. Aristotle probably means '*hexis*' in a fairly loose way, commensurate with his general account in *Categories* 9 as a stable quality which is acquired. See 8b25-9a28. Aristotle's examples of states (or habits, as is it is often translated) are virtues and knowledge. Nonetheless, if is doubtful that he means that friendship is a *hexis* in the same way that virtue is a *hexis* or knowledge is a *hexis*. Indeed, that friendship is a state "*from which such choices arise"* does not definitively say that friendship, itself, is a state, but rather, that being in a friendship of the primary sort means that you are in a state from which those choices arise, and that you are related to another person such that you are able to *make* the mutual or reciprocal choices that Aristotle has in mind.

terms holds a key for properly understanding his view of the nature of friendship and its development.

When Aristotle speaks about a "state" (*hexis*) in the context of character virtues, he means a kind of stable or enduring condition of the soul.[27] Aristotle says "By states I mean what we have when we are well or badly off in relation to feelings (*pathē*)" (1105b25-28).[28] Any condition of the non-rational part of the soul which implies pleasure or pain is a feeling (*pathos*, 1105b21-23). But having a state of character is more than simply having certain feelings. Rather, a person who has a state of character will have a reliable feeling-response or action-response to a given stimulus: she will be *disposed* to feel a certain way under certain kinds of circumstances. Consider the case of anger (*orgē*). The state of character with respect to anger will be the disposition a person has towards the things which could make her angry. If she is well off with respect to this, then she will get angry at the right person for the right reason at the right time to the right extent, and so on.

Aristotle spends much of *EN* book 2 outlining how the virtues of character are acquired.[29] The process involves the agent repeatedly doing the actions a virtuous person

[27] At 1105b19-21 Aristotle suggests three sorts of conditions which come into being in the soul: feelings, capacities, and states. ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γινόμενα τρία ἐστί, πάθη δυνάμεις ἕξεις, τούτων ἄν τι εἴη ἡ ἀρετή ("Since there are three conditions arising in the soul, feelings, capacities, and states, virtue must be one of these").

[28] Aristotle's description of character virtue as a *hexis* is not his only use of the term. He also thinks that knowledge is a kind of *hexis*. This also fits the point I make that friendship includes a *hexis*, since knowledge of the other person's good is an important part of being friends, as we have seen. Finally, Aristotle distinguishes between *hexis* and *diathesis*. *Diathesis* is commonly translated as 'disposition', but it is distinct from how I employ the term, since a *diathesis* is less stable than a *hexis*, and includes things like heat or health, where each person can quickly move from one quality (e.g. being hot) to its contrary (being cold) quickly (*Categories* 8b25-9a28). People who make friends quickly, I maintain, are disposed a certain way, but they do not have the requisite *hexis* that full friendship requires.

[29] His discussion in the *EE* is book II.1-5.

does as she is best able. Over time, the repetition will realign the feelings she associates with the circumstances and actions in question so that they line up with her rational judgements about those same circumstances and actions, and she will be able to better act as the virtuous person would act (*EN* 1106b17-30, 1106b36-1107a2; *EE* 1220b18-20). The very same actions which promote the virtue by eventually realigning our feelings are the actions which sustain the virtue, and which are the best expression of that virtue.

Aristotle asserts that virtues are *stable* (*bebaiōs*: Irwin translates "firm") and unchanging (*ametakinētōs*) (1105a31-33). It is not hard to see why he thinks this. The virtues are stable and unchanging because the virtuous person's feelings, desires, and actions are all harmoniously aligned. The same actions which the virtuous person finds pleasurable are the actions which, according to her judgement, she ought to do. Moreover, they are the same actions which promote and maintain the character state in question. We can imagine this as a kind of positive feedback loop in the virtuous person's feeling and actions, which continually re-enforces the state of character. In addition, the virtuous person reliably has *correct* judgements concerning what she ought to do, so the likelihood of her judgements misaligning with her built-up character response is quite small. And so, virtues are states of character which are an *achieved* and *stable* disposition of the soul in relation to feelings and actions.

Prohairetic states are states of character which involve choice (*prohairesis*). How do they involve choice? Primarily, they are states which tend to *produce* choices (*EN* 1106b36-1107a2; 1139a22-26; *EE* 1227b37-39). Choices, which for Aristotle are rational desires resulting from deliberation, might at first appear to be unrelated to the range of

feelings (*pathē*) Aristotle described in his account of character states, since feelings such as anger arise in or from the non-rational part of the soul. Feelings and choices can be in harmony with one another and the feelings we have *motivate* us for action. The degree to which our feelings accord with our choices impacts the ease with which we act according to our best judgement. Moreover, our feelings provide us with a *prima facie* reason for judging a certain action to be correct and choosing to perform actions which satisfy our feelings. In this way, the choices we make can be "downstream" from, and partially determined by, the sorts of feelings which arise in the soul.[30] And so, when Aristotle claims the virtues are "prohairetic states," he can plausibly be interpreted to mean they are harmonious states of the soul wherein feelings play a causal role in promoting actions which are sanctioned by the agent. We can contrast this sort of agent with other agents, whose feelings promote actions which they do not approve of, or whose feelings promote choices which they later regret making. For instance, a courageous person might feel fear in the presence of the enemy and might fear defeat by being in an exposed position, and so he retreats, in part due to the fear but also due to his judgement that retreating is best. Afterwards, when the danger is gone, he approves of his action, since it was in keeping with courage. Meanwhile, another agent might retreat from the battle out of fear, but not

[30] Sarah Broadie makes a similar interpretive move in *Ethics With Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 78-82). There she argues that a person's moral character is typified by her pleasure and pain responses (which are, for Aristotle, feelings). This being the case, we ought to expect this in the definition of virtue, but what we get instead is Aristotle's claim that virtue is a state which chooses. She then suggests that Aristotle intends to capture the importance of the pleasure and pain response by his claim that virtue is a state which chooses. She summarizes the translation of *hexis prohairetikē*: "Thus the meaning of 'prohairetic' may be found somewhere among the following: 'tending to give rise to a prohairesis'; 'formative of a prohairesis'; 'contributing to a prohairesis'; 'promoting a prohairesis', 'tending to result in ...', 'expressed in ...'." (p. 78).

because he is afraid of the right things. Once the danger is gone, he remembers his action with shame because he knows that he fled at the wrong time, for the wrong reasons. Both agents' feelings prompted them to act, but only the virtuous agent's feelings accorded with his considered view of the situation.

If, for Aristotle, friendship is a prohairetic state in the same sort of way that virtue is, then we should expect friendship to be a state of the soul concerned with a range of feelings and generative of choices to act in certain ways. Aristotle's account of friendship matches this description. For example, at *EN* 1157b28-29, Aristotle clearly differentiates loving from friendship by claiming that loving is like a *feeling* (*pathei*), while friendship is like a *state* (*hexei*).[31] Now, for Aristotle, loving (*philêsis*) means caring for, or having affection for, another person, and is somewhat different from feelings strictly considered, such as anger or fear. The feeling of love for another person, for Aristotle, involves wishing well for the other person.[32] And so, it should follow that my friendship with my friend includes a state in me which disposes me to act and react to a range of circumstance where my actions and reactions have the good of my friend in view. The same will be true of my friend with respect to my good.

[31] ἔοικε δ' ἡ μὲν φίλησις πάθει, ἡ δὲ φιλία ἕξει. ("Loving would seem to be like a feeling, but friendship [like] a state") (1157b28-29).

[32] The exact relationship between well wishing (*eunoia*), loving (*philēsis*), and friendship (*philia*) is not clear in Aristotle. My reading of Aristotle here is consistent with Pakaluk (2005, pp. 261-264) in that well-wishing can be used *widely* to describe my hopes for, say, an athlete to perform well, and *narrowly* to describe my more intimate wish that my friend's life go well *for his own sake*. This second, narrower use of *eunoia* goes along with friendship, and it arises out of loving. I will not wish well to *everything* I love, but only people, and indeed, only those people with whom I have some friendship, or who I aspire to be friends with.

Notice that, in friendship, my feelings and actions are not measured in reference to a mean relative to myself and determined by reason, as they are in the character virtues. Rather, they are measured in reference to *another individual*. Indeed, I suggest that this is the most fundamental difference between virtues of character and friendship, for Aristotle. Some other virtues include the good of another person, such as justice or generosity, but they do so only incidentally. Being just or generous will have me acting for this or that person's benefit at different times. But friendship is a relationship with a particular individual, and the state I have with respect to him disposes me to benefit him, and not others.

Being disposed to benefit my friend and having a consistent set of feelings towards my friend does not necessitate that my feelings are always the *right* or *best* feelings. Just as a virtue is a state which entails being well disposed with respect to a range of feelings, and it is possible to have the wrong or less than perfect feelings in certain circumstances, so too, we can expect the best friendships to involve a condition where a person has the *right* set of feelings towards her friend. As we will see, the less virtuous a person is, the less perfect an agent's feelings will be with respect to his or her friend. But to take an ideal case, my feelings towards my friend will be responsive to considerations about *her* good. This is just what Aristotle claims is true of excellent friendships (1156b1-12).[33]

[33] It is worth noting that there will be a considerable overlap in being virtuous and being a good friend and overlap too in failing to be virtuous and failing to be a good friend. For instance, if I get angry at my friend too easily, or for the wrong reasons, or at the wrong time, and so on, this is a failing *both* of virtue and of friendship at one and the same time. Similarly, if I am generous toward my friend at the right time, in the right way, and so on, then my action will be both virtuous and out of friendship.

Finally, to be in a friendship is to have one's soul or character in a certain stable, enduring condition which includes a positive feedback loop: the feelings I have towards my friend will motivate me to act in ways that will re-enforce the state of my soul with respect to that person. Additionally, we can probably add that my actions will also prompt my friend to feel well with respect to me, and that my *friend's* actions towards me will re-enforce my state of well-wishing towards *her*. Whereas in the case of character virtue, the entire virtuous loop occurs within the individual, it makes sense that in friendship, where my state of friendship disposes me to act and react in a certain way to my friend and my friend's state disposes her to act and react in a certain way to me, the loop will involve the reciprocity of actions: my feelings for my friend prompt me to act for her good, which causes her to be well disposed towards me, which motivates her to act for my good, which re-enforces my state of well-wishing towards her. Once again, this corresponds to Aristotle's description of reciprocity in friendship (1156b14-24, 1159a331159b4).

Let's sum up. So far, I have tried to explain Aristotle's comment that friendship either is a virtue or involves virtue. I have claimed that friendship is connected to virtue in at least two ways. First, friendship involves virtue in the sense that friendship requires some unspecified exercise of virtue. This is an important topic to which we will return in later chapters. Second, friendship is similar to virtue in that friendship seems to include a state which is productive of choices, much as virtue is a prohairetic state. Importantly, I have claimed that virtue and friendship are similar in that they both dispose an agent to act and react in a certain way to given circumstances. One crucial difference is that friendship will

always include a *particular* person, our friend, as the centerpiece of our actions and reactions.

2. Aspiring to be Friends

I turn now to consider a second way in which I think friendship and virtue are similar, for Aristotle. Aristotle regards both friendship and virtue as goals that a person should pursue, as things to be cultivated: we *choose* to do the actions which make us virtuous in part because we understand virtue to be a worthwhile pursuit for ourselves. In this way, we can understand both character virtue and friendship to be prohairetic, albeit in a looser sense: they are prohairetic in the sense that they are states we *choose* to pursue, and not just states which produce choices.

To show this, let's briefly look at how Aristotle understands the causes of friendship and the process by which it comes about. In *EN* 8.2, Aristotle proposes that a catalogue of friendship might be best arranged when we first consider the sorts of things which are loveable.[34] He observes that objects are loveable for three reasons – they are either useful, pleasant, or good – and that the useful is only lovable since it gets us to what is pleasant or good (1155b17-21). In addition, he distinguishes between two sorts of good and pleasant things. People can desire what is good or pleasant without qualification (*haplōs*: 1155b24), or they can desire what is good or pleasant for themselves. Finally, people will not, in fact,

[34] The connection between lovable things and friendship in Greek is more obvious than it is in English, since they follow from the same root (*phileōn*/to love; *philētos*/lovable; *philos*/friend; *philia*/friendship).

directly desire either of these things, but instead desire what *appears* to be good or pleasant for themselves or what *appears* to be good or pleasant without qualification. So, all people desire what appears pleasant or good (either for themselves or without qualification), but not all people are correct in their assessment of what actually is good or pleasant (1155b23-27). The virtuous person will be the sort of person whose perception of what is good for her or good without qualification reliably tracks what truly *is* good for her or good without qualification. Meanwhile, less than virtuous people will have some discrepancies between their perception of what is good and what truly is good for them or good without qualification. Aristotle believes that if another *person* appears to be good or pleasant, then I desire to spend my time with him, since he is a possible friend. If he, too, desires to spend time with me, and we both know of each other's desire, then we have what Aristotle calls mutual goodwill (*eunoian en antipeponthosi*: 1155b33).

Mutual goodwill is not yet the same as friendship, however. Two people acting out of goodwill for each other fulfill all the conditions Aristotle set in 8.2 (the two people must mutually and knowingly wish each other well for each other's own sake), but Aristotle adds another criterion.[35] At the end of 8.3, he adds that the wish for friendship, and the actions of friendship, precede the establishment of the friendship proper.[36] In order to be friends,

[35] Compare 1167a3-4, where Aristotle claims that goodwill is the beginning of friendship, just as the pleasure coming from sight is the beginning of erotic passion – it is not *itself* the erotic passion. See also 1166b30-32.

[36] Aristotle's describes people who act as friends, or perhaps treat each other as friends do, but who are not friends yet: "Those who quickly treat each other as friends wish to be friends, but are not, unless they are worthy of love, and know this. For, the wish to become friends is swift, but friendship is not." οἱ δὲ ταχέως τὰ φιλικὰ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ποιοῦντες βούλονται μὲν φίλοι εἶναι, οὐκ εἰσὶ δέ, εἰ μὴ καὶ φιλητοί, καὶ τοῦτ' ἴσασιν· βούλησις μὲν γὰρ ταχεῖα φιλίας γίνεται, φιλία δ' οὔ (1156b29-32, cf. *EE* 1218-23).

then, we need to perform actions which accord with friendship prior to the establishment of the friendship in order that the friendship come about. This parallels the acquisition of virtues, where a person must desire to be virtuous, act in conformity with the virtue, and then, through repeated action, acquire the state.[37]

From these considerations, we can roughly deduce that there is a kind of "proto stage" of friendship prior to the establishment of the friendship proper. In what follows, I will refer to the stage in which friendship is fully established as the "main stage" of friendship.[38] The key difference between these two stages of friendship – the proto stage and the main stage – is the presence of a stable dispositional state (*hexis*). The proto stage of friendship is the mutual recognition of this goodwill and the early instances of the two parties acting out their goodwill for each other. These actions help to build up the state of caring in each person. Then, in the main stage of friendship, the feelings and actions of each individual towards the other flow from this state, just as the virtuous person's feelings and actions flow from *her* stable dispositional state (*hexis*). This need for development over time helps explain why Aristotle likens friendship to a state.

Much more could be said about how Aristotle thinks friendships form, and about how individuals move from the proto stage to the main stage. In chapter 2, we will look a

[37] The beginning stages of virtue might not be prompted by our *desire* for virtue. We might, of course, have been raised in the right habits. However, the case I am imagining here, and which I believe friendship parallels, is the case of a person who, whatever their current character development is, aspires to become better, and who undertakes that journey. This case of virtue acquisition, which I take to parallel friendship acquisition, is also parallel to the acquisition of most crafts.

[38] There could, of course, be more stages than these in the development of a friendship. The rough and ready distinction I make here is only meant to capture the difference that *prohairesis* makes in Aristotle's understanding of friendship.

little more closely at Aristotle's view on how friendships form. For now, it is enough to say that friendship, like virtue, is something we ought to pursue, is sometimes the deliberate choice of individuals who knowingly pursue the state, and takes time to acquire. In addition, individuals can have the feelings and do the actions associated with virtue or friendship without having yet acquired the *hexis* which is necessary for full-blooded virtue and full-blooded friendship. In this way, friendship is "prohairetic" in a second way, which fits in with Aristotle's account.

3. Learning How to Live Well

Aristotle believed that living well requires people to acquire virtue and to exercise virtue in action, sharing their life and joining in virtuous activity with their friends.[39] But at the start of this process we do not always know what perfect friendships looks like, just as we do not always know what virtue is or what it looks like. Similarly, we do not always know how to act to achieve the states that are so desirable. This, of course, is part of what Aristotle tries to address in his ethics overall. Part of his goal is to fill out an account of virtue and the good life to assist individuals in their understanding of what it is they desire, and how to ultimately achieve it. But we also learn about virtue by doing the actions we think are virtuous and thereby shifting our character towards the mean. Learning about and

[39] On this point, compare Aristotle's remarks about the good life in *EN* 10.6-10.7, with his remarks at *EN* 9.12 (1171b30ff). Aristotle understands eudaimonia to include the exercise of virtue, the sharing of life with friends, and the experiencing of the pleasure that go along with these. And so, the good life will be a life which, on balance, incorporates as much virtuous activity as possible, shared with friends (and perceiving their virtuous activity), and the pleasure that accompanies the most choiceworthy activities (of theoretical study and political activity). See also Nancy Sherman (1989, Chapter 4), and Daniel Maher (2012).

acquiring virtue is a practical affair, and not merely a theoretical one. Part of coming to know what virtue is and what it looks like is doing actions which correspond to the virtues, and getting a first-hand perspective on what it is like. I argue that, for Aristotle, friendship plays a similar role in learning about the good life. Specifically, we can learn about what virtue is and how to live virtuously through interacting with our friends, and we can learn about good friendship and how to live with friends through our growth in virtue. This possibility for reciprocal growth is part of what propels us towards living an excellent life, according to Aristotle.[40]

How I am with respect to virtue will influence not only which friendships I am able to establish, but also which friendships I aspire to establish. In general, the more virtuous I am, the more I will value what is truly good. If, for instance, I am on my way to being a virtuous person and I meet another person who appears to have a good character, it will be natural for me to desire to be friends with him, and to begin acting in a way that promotes the friendship. However, if my prospective friend is quite pleasant to be around, but I know that pleasure is not precisely what I want out of a friendship, I may be wary to move too quickly in cultivating the friendship. On the other hand, if I am not virtuous and do not know what virtue is like, I might end up aspiring to establish friendships with just about anyone who appears good in some way to me.

[40] The observations that I make in this section are indebted to a broader discussion in recent scholarship on the moral progress that friendship helps or enables. See, for instance, Badhwar and Jones (2017), Mavis Biss (2011), Talbot Brewer (2005), Marilyn Friedman (1993, esp. Chapters 4 and 7), and Richard Klonoski (2003).

It is possible for our choice to pursue friendship with another person to be a poor choice. In some cases, we choose to be friends with the person for who we *think* they are, but we are mistaken either about who they are, or about why we like them. David O'Connor (1990) reads Aristotle as thinking that why we like other people reflects something incidental about our own character which we may or may not recognize, while most other scholars read Aristotle as thinking that why we like other people depends on something incidental about *them*, once again, whether we recognize this fact or not (p. 117-118).[41] I suggest that making this mistake can run both ways. For example, on the one hand, Sarah might think John is good, when in reality he is merely pleasant, and she mistook something incidental about him (such as his wit) for something indicative of him as a person. Perhaps he is a witty person, but not a very good person. On the other hand, Sarah might be mistaken about her own character, or about what she finds attractive in other people. So, for instance, she might think she is friends with John because he is good, but in reality she enjoys his company for his wit, and she is less interested in him in any other way. In this case, it is irrelevant whether John is good or merely pleasant – Sarah is inclined, because of her character, to pursue friendship with pleasant people, irrespective of their goodness.[42]

[41] David O'Connor, "Two Ideals of Friendship," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7 (1990).

[42] Gary Gurtler, "Aristotle on Friendship: Insight from the Four Causes," in *Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of Friendship*, edited by Suzanne Stern-Gillet and Gary M. Gurtler (New York: State University of New York Press, 2014). In his article, Gurtler suggests that we do not deliberately become friends with another person for pleasure or utility. On this view, when Aristotle claims that someone become friends with another person for pleasure, he is not claiming that this is the person's *intention*, but rather that her character carries certain tendencies. In this case, her character is prone to making a mistake of identifying pleasure with the good. I am sympathetic to Gurtler's reading. However, while this may be Aristotle's overarching view, I would also claim that, on his view there, will be some cases where a person can have a basic understanding that her friendship is primarily, or inordinately, based on pleasure. That is to say, there is still room on this reading of Aristotle to allow for intermediate cases, and Gurtler does not

Hence, our choice to be friends can involve a mistaken appraisal of the other person's character, or a mistaken appraisal of our own character and of the kinds of things which motivate us to love others.

Spending time with our proto-friends will tend to reveal some of these errors. I am unlikely to long be friends with a bad person if I seek a virtue friendship, especially if I am myself successfully progressing towards virtue, as I will soon notice their bad character. Nor could a person who unknowingly seeks out pleasant friendships, while mistakenly thinking they are seeking virtue friendships, tolerate growing especially close to others, be they good or bad people. Good people, though they are pleasant, are much more than their pleasantness, and if they are seeking a virtue-friendship they would not tolerate being friends with a person who is merely pleasant, not good.[43] Meanwhile, bad people do not take pleasure in the same thing for long (1159b7-12; 1167b12-16). And so, people who seek out pleasant friendships without realizing that is what they are doing will continually be frustrated by the transience of their relationships.[44] If I am honestly attempting to improve my character (and by this, my life), then it is a boon to discover that I was wrong

mention this. The more a person is aware that her friendship exists because of pleasure, the less it will be a genuine friendship – but there may be many cases which are far removed from this.

[43] Evidence for this point include 1159b4-7, where Aristotle says that good people avoid error in themselves, and do not permit error in their friends.

[44] At 1159b11-12 Aristotle contrasts utility- and pleasure-based friendships with attempted friendships between bad people. Aristotle says that utility- and pleasure-based friendships "…last longer, for as long as they supply each other with pleasures or benefits". I will return to this topic in Chapter 3. For now, it is worth noting that utility- and pleasure-based friendships, while they might last longer, they are not as enduring as virtue-based friendships, and they depend on the exchange of goods to remain. And so, once again, they are inherently less stable, and in reality, will often fail. My point here is that, in cases where they *do* fail, and fail often for one person, this could be an important sign to him or her that there is something wrong with how he or she goes about forming friendships.

about another person, or to discover that the pattern of my relationships is a sign of some flaw in my own character.

Finally, over time and as we (hopefully) progress in virtue, our relationships will likely provide many opportunities to learn about what good relationships look like, and we will become more aware of whether the relationships we currently have meet the standard which virtue sets. Our friends may lose what virtue they had, or we may outpace them in virtue (1158b29ff, 1165b23-31); the reverse might also happen, if our friends outpace *us* in virtue, or we begin to backslide ourselves; our friendship may be unequal, and the inequality can no longer be equalized (see *EN* 8.7 and 8.8). In each of these cases, the evolving circumstances can teach us about the friendships we have formed, and what, if anything, is valuable about them.

Just as our character and growth in virtue play a role in the kinds of friendships we form, so too our friendships play a key role in shaping our own character over time, and ideally help us to become better people (1172a11-14). Our friends can be excellent sources of counsel, life advice, and teaching. I will introduce three examples of how this can be the case: (i) our friends can provide us with advice and aid in deliberation and decisions which shape the course of our lives, (ii) they are living models of a certain set of values and a way of life, and (iii) they help us reflect upon and form shared goal that we pursue together so as to live well. I believe these three examples track Aristotle's views of friendship and virtue and are a natural extension of his view of how they are similar to one another.

First, the advice of our close friends might be instrumental for reaching a decision on major life choices which greatly impact our life, the life of our family, or even the life

of our communities.[45] For instance, consider the choice required when we have an option of employment. The kind of career we choose, and the jobs we take, can have important ethical significance. The choice we make will conceivably impact fundamental parts of our lives: the activities we do every day, our financial prosperity, where we live, who we are surrounded by, and the kind of contribution we make to our community through our work. The large varieties of factors in play in choosing a job make it quite difficult for a single person to remember them all, or to weigh them against each other in a correct or reasonable way.[46] Or, consider romantic relationships and marriage. Choosing whether to commit to a long-term relationship with another person is a difficult and serious question, and it is a question which the agent might not be in the most advantageous position to evaluate. The impact of romantic relationships can sometimes cloud the judgement of the people engaged in them. As concerned observers, our friends can help us deliberate carefully about whether we should make formal commitments such as a marriage with our partner. Friends can also be of assistance in our deliberations about financial concerns: whether to buy property;

[45] In *EN* 3.3 Aristotle claims that in large or important matters we enlist counsellors, or co-deliberators (*sumboulous de paralambanomen,* 1112b10-11). The actions Aristotle has in mind here are actions whose outcomes are uncertain (*adēlos*). If I am in doubt over the correct answer to the question "what should I do?", and I do not trust (*apistountes*, 1112b10-11) my own deliberative ability, I will avail myself of co-deliberators who will aid me in my choice. These co-deliberators may come from a wide range of sources. For instance, we may look to philosophers, life-coaches, or trusted personal advisors such as parents or elders. I am also suggesting that our friends can help us deliberate and think about virtue in general, and can make recommendations to us about how we ought to live.

[46] For instance, if option A pays more, but is far away, and if option B pays less but is closer, the agent needs to consider the impact on her life from commuting, or perhaps moving far away against the value of the compensation. If she moved, would she lose easy contact with her friends, family, or religious community? Is there an ethically significant difference between employer A and employer B? Is the work at employer A more in line with the agent's aspirations for living an excellent life? If so, *how* so? Weighing these considerations and spelling them out in detail is no easy task, since often there will be important asymmetries between the options.

whether *this* property is worth buying; how to best spend our disposable wealth. From these examples, we can see that my friend can be a co-deliberator by contributing arguments and considerations to which I am, in one way or another, blind.[47] When we deliberate about something, we attempt to bring to bear everything we know and understand related to the topic. Unfortunately, we are not always capable of remembering all we might need to, or of expressing what we do remember in a useful way. Another person can help overcome our shortcomings here. Our friends, too, might have experiences or knowledge which we do not have. Thus, they may be able to remind us of things forgotten, help us formulate the problem more appropriately, and provide useful insights which we could not have otherwise made ourselves. These kinds of contributions can occur even when our friend is no more able to resolve the issue on their own than we are. Since we are both, in a manner of speaking, fumbling in the dark or half-light, another set of eyes can improve our situation. However, whether or not we get the answer *right* (assuming there is a correct, or most correct answer), our friends can help provide the arguments and considerations which resolve our deliberative effort to produce a choice of what to do.

Turning to the second way in which our friends can help us to develop good character over time, our friends can also play an important role in deliberating about more abstract aspects of living a good life. So, for instance, I might deliberate about which actions will help me become a better person. Now, our friends are people who deliberate and

[47] Scholars tend to focus on the self-knowledge we gain from other people as stemming primarily from observing their *actions*. See, for instance, Sherman (1993, pp. 105-6). Though this is certainly true, it misses the important element of communication between friends in the form of discussion and argumentation.

choose on their own. If they are continent or virtuous, they live out the choices they make in the actions they perform. Thus, our friends provide us with an intimate look at how certain conceptions of happiness play out in action. They are living and working models of certain conceptions of the end of human action.[48] Friends who live together, as Aristotle suggests,[49] and who speak to one another about the nature of happiness, can prompt each other to contemplate heretofore unconsidered aspects of their conception of happiness, or aspects of their conceptions which are inconsistent or vague. And so, a friend who has thought, lived, and acted in ways I have not may provide guidance in answering questions such as the one I pose above: how do I become a better person?

Perhaps my friend is recognizably wise in the way I hope to become myself. If so, she can tell me how she became that way.[50] She might tell me that she has read certain books which changed her perspective on what is important in life. More helpfully, she might tell me what actions she performed to begin her progress: perhaps at the end of each day she took carefully notes on significant actions she had done during the day; perhaps she began by taking more time to deliberate before acting; perhaps she discovered that

[48] This is similar to the view that Marilynn Friedman advances in her work *What are Friends For?* (1993, esp. Chapters 7 and 8), and it is an idea we will return to in Chapter 4. Aristotle famously believes that we can and should hold paragons of virtue as the standard for practical excellence (1106b36-1107a2). And so, while it is unclear whether Aristotle has the idea I present here, it seems fitting that we could and should take the actions and character of our friends as examples for how to live.

[49] Aristotle says that friends will spend their lives together (1157b19-24). Nancy Sherman has argued (*The Fabric of Character*, 1989, Chapter 4) that eudaimonia, for Aristotle, involves friends living together in contemplation.

[50] Susan Sherman considers this point (1993, p. 105). She specifies that if my friend has a higher degree of some virtue than me, it will trigger a *desire* in me to *emulate* the virtue to the same or similar degree as my friend. She does not, however, connect this to deliberation and choice, or show *how* I may grow to emulate the virtue in question.

meditation helped improve her attentiveness. In each of these examples, my friend, who exhibits the quality I hope to develop, is recounting for me which actions will promote the end I desire, as well as connecting the activity to the virtue: reading increases my knowledge about what the good life looks like, note taking and pausing before acting helps my reflection and deliberation, and meditation boosts my attentiveness to particulars. My friend's advice will inevitably carry some degree of weight in my deliberation and may help me resolve my deliberative effort and settle on a chosen course of action. These examples, or, indeed, any example, argument, or consideration a friend might provide, are not meant as definitive guidelines for becoming a better person. Instead, they are examples of how one friend can aid another friend in growing and in understanding virtue.

We should note that the way I am describing friendship here suggests that friendship is not only a school for virtue, but also a school for vice.[51] Our friends may not be virtuous, their deliberations may be poor, and they might make poor arguments, provide irrelevant or wrong insights, and confuse our deliberative efforts in a myriad of ways.[52] And so, however helpful our friend's assistance might be, it also has the potential to be harmful for our understanding of and growth in virtue. Hence, a person may fall into many traps because of the friends she has and be led down a vicious path rather than a virtuous one (1172a8-14).

[51] My claim here is as similar to a claim C.S. Lewis makes in his chapter "Friendship" in *The Four Loves* (1960). He describes friendship as a school of virtue (p. 75).

[52] Whether non-virtuous people can be friends on Aristotle's view is not obvious. In chapters 2, 3, and 4, I will provide reasons why we should interpret Aristotle's theory as allowing people of lesser virtue to be friends, while also entailing that vicious people *cannot* be friends.

Finally, third, friendship prompts reflection and growth about our *shared* goals, not just about our own character and individual actions. Nancy Sherman, in her article "Aristotle on the Shared Life" (1993), shows that the main test of friendship, for Aristotle, is whether the friends can live together and choose a similar life together (pp. 97-99). She suggests that *homonoia* in the context of friendship can be understood as an extension of Aristotle's notion of *antiprohairesis*, or reciprocal choice. Coming to this consensus requires us to know the other person quite intimately, and for them to know us. We have already seen that our friends help us in our own search for self-knowledge regarding our implicit beliefs about the good life, and that we might help them in the same way. The hope of friendship is that our knowledge of the other person and of ourselves is moved towards perfection through the practice of friendship. This self-knowledge is a key element in progressing towards virtue, and towards a correct view of the good life, held in common with our community. Seeing how our friends live, attempting to live like them, and considering with them what the good life is, will influence our deliberations and choices. As friendships grow closer, we will begin to spend our lives more closely with the other person, fashioning a joint understanding of what the good life looks like and of the activities which produce a life of that kind. On some occasions, we will ultimately be repelled by our friend's lives, or by the life they advocate living (or they might become repelled by *our* lives, or the life *we* advocate living). On other occasions, we will become increasingly desirous of living the kind of life they live, or which is jointly imagined in the friendship. In either of these cases, it is the existence of the friendship which prompts us to reflect and learn about, and to choose, how to live well.

In sum, how virtuous we are will impact the kinds of friendships we value and pursue, and the friendships we form. From the relationships we attempt to form or do form, we are often afforded the opportunity to learn about virtue. Our friends can help us in our growth in virtue, and our relationship with them can prompt us towards a life of shared contemplation and action which is Aristotle's ultimate vision of the best life.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have accounted for some of the ways friendship and virtue are connected, for Aristotle. Friendship is not itself a character virtue, for Aristotle. Nevertheless, Aristotle thinks friendship is *like* character virtue in interesting and important ways. Just as character virtues reliably produces a range of feelings in us and prompt and motivate us to make specific choices to do good actions, our friendships reliably produce a range of feelings in us about our friends and prompt and motivate us to undertake actions for our friends' benefit. This is reflected in the fact that Aristotle refers to the character virtues as "prohairetic states," and to friendship as being "like a state" which produces choices. Second, Aristotle regards friendship, like virtue, as something which we *ought* to pursue, and for which we make decisions and do actions which, through repetition, produce them. In the case of virtue, we will have acquired a state of our soul, and in the case of friendship, we will have acquired a relationship which involves a state of loving toward our friend. This is a second way that we can understand friendship as a prohairetic state, even if this is not directly what Aristotle means when he uses the phrase. In addition, our character influences the kinds of friendship we form and can form, including when we are

mistaken about what we are like or find appealing in others. Paying attention to the kinds of people we are inclined to pursue friendships with and the friends we acquire can provide us with important information about our current state of character. Finally, our friendships play a key role in shaping our character over time, enabling us to develop in virtue and ultimately to live well. Our friends provide us with advice and aid in deliberation; they are living models of a certain set of values and a way of life; and they help us reflect upon and form shared goal that we pursue together in such a way as to live well. Taken together, this all helps to explain why *EN* VIII begins as it does, by emphasizing the close relationship between friendship and virtue.

CHAPTER 2
TIME AND FRIENDSHIP IN ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

Scholars typically read Aristotle's taxonomy of friendship as closely related to how he envisions the actual development of friendships in life.[53] On this reading, people who are less than fully virtuous deliberately seek out the satisfaction of their desires for utility and pleasure through useful and pleasant friends. However, some scholars suggest that the intentions that people have in forming friendships prompt them to enter relationships, sometimes without knowledge that their friendship will be of a certain sort. This understanding of Aristotle suggests that there is more distance between people's intentions in forming a friendship and the actual kinds of friendship they are in, according to Aristotle's taxonomy.[54]

I believe that this minority view is the correct way to read Aristotle. In this chapter, I present further evidence for reading Aristotle in this way by examining his discussion of the role time plays in the formation and development of friendships. Aristotle claims that people must be tested (*peiran*: *EE* 1237b13, 1237b24, 1238a1), and that two people cannot

[53] Neera Badhwar (1993, pp. 3-4); Sarah Broadie's commentary in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Christopher Rowe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 409); John Cooper (1977a, pp. 633-4); Terence Irwin, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1999, p. 274); Alexander Nehamas, *On Friendship* (2016, pp. 18-21); Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (2005, pp. 266-9).

[54] See Gary Gurtler's "Aristotle on Friendship: Insight from the Four Causes" in *Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of Friendship* (2014); also, as I argue below, Jennifer Whiting's "The Nicomachean Account of *Philia*," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Richard Kraut, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006).

be friends until they have spent a fair amount of time together (*EN* 1156b24-32).[55] This extended testing process, as we shall see, plausibly entails a marked difference between (i) what motivates people to become friends, and (ii) what kinds of friendships they actually form according to Aristotle's taxonomy. In section 1, I review how scholars treat the relationship between Aristotle's three kinds of friendship and the motives people have in forming friendships. In section 2 I look at what Aristotle means when he says our friends must be "tested" and show that this test is often unreliable for gaining knowledge of our friend's character. In section 3, I argue that Aristotle's idea of "completeness"[56] with respect to friendship can be understood as applying to either an "internal" analysis of the friendship or an "external" evaluation. This distinction can help us distinguish between the motivations of the agent in her pursuit of friendships and the actual friendships which she forms. Finally, in section 4, I show that the typical reading of Aristotle – on which his taxonomy of friendship is closely related to how people actually perceive and pursue their friendships – cannot make sense of Aristotle's comments on how these friendships dissolve.

[55] The requirements of testing and of time are repeated in the philosophical tradition. See, for instance, Cicero's *De Amicitia* and Plutarch's *De Amicorum Multitudine*.

[56] The Greek term '*teleios'* is often translated either as "complete" or "perfect" in commentaries on and translations of Aristotle. I have opted for "complete" rather than "perfect" because it seems closer to contemporary usage. "Perfect" may suggest a value judgement or sense of normativity which is not explicitly or necessarily present in *'teleios'*. No doubt Aristotle considered complete friendship to be the best sort of friendship and worthy of pursuit, but *'teleios'* does not necessarily imply this, and need not in our reading of Aristotle, since he states that complete friendships are the best and worth pursing directly. Instead, *'teleios'* can simply mean the satisfaction of certain criteria, which is closer to the normal use of "complete".

1. Two Motivational Accounts of Friendship

Contemporary readings of Aristotle's views on pleasure- and utility-based friendships typically suggest that these friendships involve a level of deliberate instrumentalism on the part of one or both friends.[57] For instance, Sarah Broadie, in her commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2002), suggests that Aristotle uses the term "*eunoia"* ("goodwill") in a wider sense for pleasure- and utility-based friendships than for virtue-based friendships. On her reading, the wider usage is "…wishing that something or someone be safe and sound simply in order that the thing or person serve some purpose of one's own" (p. 409).[58] Neera Badhwar has a similar reading. In her introduction to *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader* (1993), she claims that pleasure and utility-based friendships are, for Aristotle, primarily motivated by each individual's independent goals (pp. 3-4).[59] On her reading of Aristotle, this contrasts with virtue-based friendships, which

[57] It is worth noting that some scholars dispute the point that Aristotle envisions friendship as being organized into several categories or types. See, for instance, Bryan Bradely, Aristotle on Friendship's Possibility," *Political Theory* 37 (2009).

[58] On Broadie's view, this wider sense applies to all three kinds of friendship, but virtue-based friendships also have *eunoia* in a narrower sense.

[59] See also Badhwar's paper "Friends as Ends in Themselves," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1987). Or consider Alexander Nehamas's *On Friendship* (2016). He claims that individuals in imperfect friendships (pleasure- and utility-based friendships) wish each other well only insofar as they exchange the goods which the friendship is about – pleasure for pleasure, utility for utility (pp. 18-21).

Both Badhwar and Nehamas admit that goodwill is a part of pleasure- and utility-based friendships. On this point, they follow John Cooper's reading in his influential article "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship" (1977a). There, Cooper argues, against the prevailing view of his time, that for Aristotle pleasure- and utility-based friendships are not motivated exclusively (or almost exclusively) for self-interested reasons, but that they include a significant amount of genuine goodwill (*eunoia*). Badhwar and Nehamas accept Cooper's reading, but then read Aristotle as claiming that these two kinds of motivations – goodwill and self-interest – exist more or less as independent desires within the agent. That

are motivated by the other person as an end. Or again, consider Alexander Nehamas' reading of Aristotle, according to which people in pleasure- and utility-based friendships are motivated to engage in those friendships insofar as there continues to be an exchange of goods: pleasure for pleasure, or utility for utility (2016, pp. 19-22). While people in these relationships can wish well for each other, the relationship depends on the continued exchange. Finally, consider Michael Pakaluk's commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[60] Pakaluk claims that pleasure- and utility-based friendships are constituted by the kind of love in which person A "…takes [person] B to contribute (in some way) to A's good," or in which "A takes B to contribute (in some way) to A's pleasure," and that each friend wishes the other well insofar as the friend continues to contribute to his good or pleasure (pp. 266-9). Each of these readings of Aristotle uses language which suggests or implies that the friends have some knowledge of what kind of friendship they are in. On Broadie's reading, if I am in a utility or pleasure friendship with you, then I wish you well insofar as you serve my own purposes. On Badhwar's reading, my motivation to be friends with you is the pursuit of my own ends, of which I am fully aware. On Pakaluk's reading, I love you because I understand that you contribute to my own good or pleasure. While there are some differences between these three presentations of Aristotle's view, I take them to be similar in that they all attribute to the parties of the friendship a relatively high level of understanding regarding the nature of the friendship, and of their own motivations with

is, I love my friend because I know he satisfies some part of my self-interest, and, *independently* of this, I have goodwill towards him.

[60] Michael Pakaluk (2005).

respect to that friendship. In each case, the type of friendship is closely aligned with the motivation of the people engaged in the friendship.

Aristotle often remarks that once the exchange of pleasure or utility falls out of pleasure- or utility-based friendships, the friendships themselves soon dissolve (*EN* 1156a19-22, 1156a31-34, 1157a14-16, 1165b1-4). Readings such as those of Broadie, Badhwar, Nehamas, and Pakaluk prompt us to understand the dissolution of such relationships as follows: since each person *knows* that the reason they are friends is because of what they get out of the relationship, once one or both parties observe that exchange of those goods has ceased, they break off the friendship on those grounds. Two people who are witty will know that they are friends for this reason, and not for another reason. They are friends (if we may call them that) primarily for the sake of what they can get from the other party. This kind of relationship could still include a modicum of goodwill, since each friend hopes that the other will continue to be witty for him (1156a6-19); so, arguably, these relationships still manage to meet Aristotle's requirements for friendship.[61] Nonetheless, on this reading, Aristotle thought that people who seek out these friendships, or who have them, are *knowingly* engaging in a kind of instrumentalism: they regard their friend as a means to serve their own ends.

But did Aristotle think that the type of friendship is so tightly bound up with the individual motivations of the people involved? It is not obvious that there is a necessary

[61] John Cooper (1977a) argues convincingly for this conclusion. Cooper shows that *every* friendship, for Aristotle, must involve *eunoia*. Crucially, however, Cooper view is that *eunoia* develops *within* the derivative (imperfect) sorts of friendship – the relationship is first, and the *eunoia* follows in addition to, and on top of, the exchange of goods which forms the true basis of the relationship (p. 643).

connection between a person's motivation for being in a friendship and the kind of relationship she is in. Motivation and achievement easily come apart in other cases: I can set out to write because I am *motivated* by a dream of becoming a bestselling author, but only *achieve* a series of middling, unpublishable manuscripts; I can be motivated by my desire to use my money for my own pleasure, but spend it ineffectively and experience little pleasure as a result. It is true that our motivations are not entirely uncoupled from our achievements. Of course, many things we achieve in our lives happen because we are motivated to achieve them and act accordingly. And so, returning to friendship, it is entirely *possible* that I form pleasure- or utility-based friendships because I am motivated by my own desires for pleasure or utility; but it does not seem *necessary* that this always be the case.

I suggest that for Aristotle people can intend to form or aspire to have complete friendships, but actually achieve only incomplete friendships. I do not think that *all* incomplete friendships are a result of people failing to achieve what they intended. No doubt some people deliberately engage in the kind of instrumental thinking that Broadie, Badhwar, Nehamas, and Pakaluk think is typical of Aristotelian imperfect friendships. Nevertheless, my claim is that instrumentalism is not the only, or perhaps not even the default or typical, motive behind Aristotelian imperfect friendships. Instead, I submit that these friendships are sometimes, and perhaps quite often, the result of imperfect people failing to achieve what they intend.

Gary Gurtler (2014) advances a similar claim to mine in his article "Aristotle on Friendship: Insight from the Four Causes."[62] According to Gurtler, when Aristotle distinguishes three types of friendship in *EN* 8.3, he is not describing the ways in which people set out to *form* different sorts of relationships in their life; rather, he is describing the reality that people's characters prompt them to act in certain ways, and that these promptings play a role in how people form relationships. Gurtler notes that after dividing likeable objects in *EN* 8.2, Aristotle immediately reduces these kinds of objects to what *appears* good to the agent (Gurtler, 38; *EN* 1155b18-27).[63] It is on the basis of what appears good that the agent is motivated to become friends with another person. But, as Gurtler points out, people can be mistaken about what is good, and about whether another person is good. And so, according to Gurtler, when Aristotle speaks about people seeking out relationships of pleasure or utility, he is not referring to the person's intentions, motivations, or understanding: "[Aristotle] is not talking about their intentions but about aspects of their character that carry certain tendencies with them. It is, in other words, an extrinsic analysis, and not about how anyone in these groups goes about forming a friendship" (p. 40). On Gurtler's reading, Aristotle's taxonomy of friendship is not the taxonomy of things people typically have in mind when they go about forming friendships. In other words, friendships need not break down into three groups (pleasure, utility, and virtue) *from the agent's perspective*.[64]

[62] Gurtler, in *Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of Friendship* (2014).

[63] Aristotle makes a similar distinction at *EE* 1235b24-30.

[64] Later in his article, Gurtler underscores this point by focusing on Aristotle's later discussion in *EN* 9.5 where Aristotle seems to deny that pleasure and utility can be causes of goodwill in the agent. According to

Like Gurtler, Jennifer Whiting (2006) seems to allow the possibility of distance between the motive for friendship and the kind of relationship people, in fact, achieve. Drawing on Cooper (1977a), she argues that Aristotle understands his account of *philia* to rest on psychological attitudes people have about what is valuable.[65] On her reading, when Aristotle says friendship comes about "through" (*dia*) virtue, pleasure, or utility,[66] he is *not* speaking in terms of the agent's own goal or *telos*. Rather, he is using *dia* to express the *efficient* cause of the friendship: two people become friends because their psychological attitudes *incline* them to value what is pleasant, useful, or good in the other person (Whiting, p. 285).[67] In short, people can, as a matter of psychological fact, become fond of people they find pleasant, and become friends on that basis. Whiting's reading here does not commit her, or us, to interpret Aristotle as making the further claim that people are at some level *aware* of what caused them to be fond of one another.[68]

Gurtler, this supports his thesis, since here Aristotle is stating directly that pleasure and utility as a goal taken *by the agent* cannot produce *eunoia*, but that pleasure and utility, taken as *good* by the agent, produce *eunoia* (pp. 39-40; *EN* 1167a10-21).

[65] I take the "psychological attitudes" of Whiting to be roughly equivalent to the "certain tendencies" of Gurtler. While there are certainly differences we could observe, in both cases they are speaking of *built in* features of a person's character which prompt certain behaviors.

[66] Aristotle's typical way of describing utility- or pleasure- or virtue-based friendships is to says that these friendships are *dia to chrēsimon*, or *dia to hēdu*, or *di' arētēn*. For examples, see *EN* 1156a14-15, 1157a1, 1158a18, 1162b1, 1165b1-2, 1167a11-12, 1169b26; *EE* 1236a32, 1236b11-12.

[67] Gurtler's view is similar, but not identical, on this point (pp. 38-40). He claims that a person's tendencies result in a love of the pleasant, the useful, or the good, and that whatever it is that they love they take to be the good, and it is their love of this apparent good which is the cause of goodwill. Finally, it is goodwill (*eunoia*) which is a cause of friendship.

Whiting is agreeing with Cooper (1977a, pp. 633-4) on the question of whether *dia* refers primarily to an efficient cause, or to an efficient *and* final cause. Irwin (1999) is the main figure who adopts the view that *dia* should be read primarily as both efficient and final cause (p. 274).

[68] Cooper (1977a), on the other hand, immediately qualifies his claim that, for Aristotle, goodwill is brought about by the benefits of pleasure that another person does for us, but he claims that *alongside* these

What neither Gurtler nor Whiting provide is a defense or exploration of the consequences of their reading, that our tendencies and psychological attitude prompt us to seek out certain kinds of relationships. In truth, this fact reveals in Aristotle a complexity which is not explored by scholars and *a fortiori* not defended by any – that people can seek out virtue-based friendships but achieve only utility- and pleasure-based friendships, and not know it. In what follows, I will show that we can give such an account by paying close attention to what Aristotle says regarding the time it takes to develop and dissolve friendships.

2. An Unreliable Test

Aristotle's requirement that our friends be "tested" provides evidence in favour of reading him as allowing distance between a person's motivations for pursuing a friendship and the actual nature of the friendship she achieves and engages in. To see why, let us examine what Aristotle says about testing our friends.

In the *Eudemian Ethics* 7.2, Aristotle claims that friendship requires our prospective friends to be tried and tested:

phenomena it is *also* the aim of the friendship to continue to receive benefits and pleasure (p. 634, n. 17). This is no doubt why Cooper persists in using business-like examples for instances of imperfect friendships, such as business relationships, common religious membership, and political activism (p. 620). For Cooper, the defining purposes of imperfect friendships are viewed *by the agents in the friendship* as the acquisition of utility and pleasure.

> A stable friendship demands trust (*pisteōs*), and trust (*pistis*) comes only with time (*ouk aneu chronou*).[69] A person must be tried and tested, as Theognis says:
>
> If you would know the mind of man or woman
> First try them as you'd try a pair of oxen.
>
> To make a friend takes time, but people *want* to be friends; this condition is most easily mistaken for friendship. For when people are eager to be friends, they render each other all kinds of friendly services and they think they do not just want to be friends, but truly are friends. But it is with friendship as with other things; if people want to be healthy it does not make them healthy, and likewise if people want to be friends, they are not friends immediately. (1237b12-23)[70]

Time is a test because it takes time to grow in *trust* with the other person. Trust, in this context, is contrasted, not with suspicion, but with ignorance. Two people who want to be friends are not necessarily suspicious of one another, as vicious people are.[71] Rather, in the beginning stages of friendship, the people involved lack the necessary condition or conditions upon which trust is built. For Aristotle, at least one condition for the healthy development of friendship seems to be knowledge of the other person derived from experience (*EN* 1165b27). In order to go through these tests of the other person, to examine his or her behaviour in various circumstances, it is necessary for the friendship to develop over time, since not all of these circumstances will obtain at once, and some might not even

[69] The claim that trust arises "not without time" (οὐκ ἄνευ χρόνου, 1237b13) is clearly meant to indicate a necessary condition for trust, and hence, Aristotle claims here, for friendship. If no time has elapsed, there will be no trust; if there is trust, then there was time. And if there is no trust, there is no friendship.

[70] Later on in the same discussion, Aristotle says that it is impossible to become friends in a single day. He mentions the proverbial account of sharing a bushel of salt with a person before naming him your friend (1238a1-3).

[71] Immediately after claiming that time is a test, Aristotle draws a contrast between bad people and good people. Bad people cannot be friends because they are suspicious of everyone (1237b27-29), and good people are easily taken in because they are not suspicious (1237b29-30).

obtain soon after the initial formation of the friendship, or ever. Let's look at how this works in a little more detail.

How another person behaves in various circumstances can tell us a great deal about who he or she is as a person. As Aristotle recognized, actions reveal aspects of a person's character.[72] The actions people *choose* to do are especially revealing, since choices follow deliberation and reveal one's character state.[73] It is primarily through observing the actions of another that we learn about their character. For instance, when a person is voluntarily generous, her repeated acts of generosity contribute to the development of my belief that she is generous. I become acquainted with the fact that she *chooses* to act generously for the right reasons, as opposed to doing a generous action by accident or choosing to do it for the wrong reasons. Since the revelation of other people's character and motivations takes time, I might be liable to make a judgement too quickly and be in error. The same will hold true for my prospective friend's test of me.

Aristotle thinks that circumstances which require quick action are especially good for gauging a person's true character. Consider his remarks at *EN* 1117a17-22, where he distinguishes between someone who acts bravely without preparation and someone who

[72] This follows closely from Aristotle's account of action. For instance, in *EN* 3.5, Aristotle carefully shows that vice is as voluntary as virtue, and that the actions we do on account of our state are properly subject to praise and blame. That is, those actions accurately reveal the kind of character we have – it was up to us to act one way of the other, and we did one action or another. For the causal role character plays in action, see Susan Sauvé Meyer's work *Aristotle on Moral Responsibility* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1993).

[73] Aristotle says that choices reveal more about a person than actions do (1111b5-7). Presumably a person could *tell* you about their choices. However, to know for sure whether they did, in fact, make a certain choice, you would have to observe them carrying out that choice in action. And so, while the kinds of choices a person makes reveal more about them than their actions, it is the actions which are in keeping with that choice which reveal the choice *to us*.

has the chance to prepare to act bravely. For Aristotle, the first person acts in accordance with his character, proving that it is his character state that makes him worthy of the term "brave". The second, if he does act bravely, may have done so out of some fresh deliberation, which is not necessarily the product of his character state. In other words, acting bravely might be contrary – either more or less – to his state of character, and he must steel himself to act bravely. So, while both people might earn the title of "brave" on account of the *action* they did, the first acted simply on account of his character state, while the second acted through a concerted effort of preparation. The second might have to prepare himself for a variety of reasons; perhaps because he was merely continent, or because he rationalized the seemingly brave act as important for some further goal, or perhaps because he was attempting to become virtuous, and he knows that behaving in this way will help him get there. Or perhaps he is virtuous, but the situation was sufficiently novel or complex that he was caught unawares and needed to deliberate about what course of action would be best. For an external evaluator who is attempting to understand the character of a man who acts bravely, it is less than certain what a single brave action reveals about the agent's character. It might take time and repeated situations which call for bravery to discern whether a person is truly brave. Meanwhile, observing a person act bravely when he had no time to prepare ought to increase our confidence that he is truly brave more than if he had time to prepare.

Aristotle also thinks that circumstances that put strain on a relationship can help reveal a person's true character. In *EE* 7.2, shortly after he mentions that our friends must be tested, Aristotle says that it is correct to say "that time reveals the friend, and misfortune

does so better than good fortune" (1238a14-16).[74] Once our friend reveals an aspect of her character to us, the friendship might not last. Aristotle claims that pleasure- and utility-based friendships dissolve once the reasons for the friendships go away (*EN* 1156a19-21, 1157a14-16, 1165b1-6), or when one friend discovers that her friend does not share the same reason for the friendship (1165b6-12). For example, individuals who are friends for the sake of utility will not long endure real hardship, since it would be disadvantageous; according to Aristotle, they prioritize the goods of fortune over people (*EE* 1238a16-19). In general, hard times will increase the likelihood of trying circumstances, and it will become easier to see the true character of the other person, as it is harder for them to mask their true character in such cases.

Even though hard times and scenarios which require quick action are helpful for testing a friendship, I doubt Aristotle thought them necessary for a friendship to be properly tested. Although Aristotle is never explicit about this, it seems possible to achieve an accurate appreciation of another person's character, and the trust which accompanies it, by observing them in relatively unremarkable circumstances. In any case, regardless of the *kind* of circumstances, Aristotle thinks it crucial that we test our prospective friends by observing their actions in whatever circumstances we are embedded. Our trust of the other person depends on our assessment of their behaviour over the course of our interactions.

[74] … ὅτι χρόνος λέγεται δεικνύναι τὸν φιλούμενον, καὶ αἱ ἀτυχίαι μᾶλλον τῶν εὐτυχιῶν. Aristotle uses the participle "*philoumenon*" instead of a noun. A more accurate translation than the one I give above would be "time reveals the one being loved," or simply, as Inwood and Woolf (2013) translate it, "time reveals who is loved." Whether we translate it as "the one loved," or "the friend," it is clear that Aristotle thinks that time will eventually reveal to us the person's true character. My translation above is meant to capture this, rather than the most exact sense of the Greek.

Though Aristotle agrees with the saying that "time reveals the friend" (*EE* 1238a14-16), what we have seen so far suggests that it is more accurate to say that time provides the opportunity for *testing circumstances* to obtain. The revelation of our friend's character comes by the test of circumstances, and not directly by time itself. The function of these testing circumstances is to truncate – and hopefully remove – the gap between our impression of who the other person is and the reality of what his or her character *truly* is. It may be quite some time before we have enough experience of another person to have the deep kind of trust which seems necessary for complete friendship, on Aristotle's account.[75] However, difficult or trying times early in a friendship may help deepen the trust sooner. For this reason, some friends become close quickly relative to other individuals in less trying circumstances, or in circumstances which are less revealing of each person's character. In any case, it is our observations of our friends' choices and actions over time which build our trust in them.

This growth of trust over time is essential for the movement from what I have called the proto stage of friendship to the main stage. In chapter 1, we saw that movement from the proto stage of friendship to the main stage is achieved by the acquisition of a state of loving in each of the people involved in the relationship. This state is achieved in part by choosing to act out our goodwill towards our prospective friend. Our trust of the other person is also an important part of the development of a state of friendship. The trusting part, however, has less to do with *my own* choices and actions, and more to do with my

[75] I discuss the concept of "complete" (*teleios*) with respect to friendship in detail below.

observation of my prospective friend's actions, as we have seen. My trust of the other person will gradually grow as I continue to witness actions which, according to my understanding, indicate to me that the other person has a good character, and has goodwill towards me for my character, and not for some other reason.

As I showed in the last chapter, Aristotle held that prohairetic states take time to acquire, and that friendship seems to involve something like a prohairetic state in each member of the friendship. Sometimes, an agent consistently performs the actions which we would associate with an acquired state without yet being in the state in question. The passage from *EE* 7.2 quoted above sketches an example of people who are in this position (1237b17-23): people who wish to be friends, who act as friends do, but who are not yet friends according to Aristotle's account (*EN* 1156b29-32 makes a similar point). The acquisition of virtues is another example of a state being formed over time by repeated action: if I am not generous, but wish to be, I must do the action which the generous person would do. Over time, acting in this way forms my character so that I not only *act* as the generous person does, but act *as* the generous person does.[76] The acquisition of the state

[76] In *EN* 2.4, Aristotle makes the distinction between virtuous actions and virtuous character. For Aristotle, an action could be virtuous by accident, or done on purpose, but from an ulterior motive. He contrasts actions with the products of crafts. Good instances of both can be produced by accident, but the goodness of the craft product is determined solely by its *own* qualities (1105a23-27), while the goodness of the actions is not entirely determined by its qualities. Irwin translates:

> "But for actions in accord with the virtues to be done temperately or justly, it does not suffice that they themselves have the right qualities. Rather, the agent must also be in the right state when he does them. First, he must know [that he is doing virtuous actions]; second, he must decide on them, and decide on them for themselves; and third, he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state" (1195a28-33).

In the case of friendship, we can act in ways which accord with friendship while at the same time failing to have the corresponding state. In other words, in the case of friendship, a person might meet the first and second conditions Aristotle gives, but not the third.

requires time because it takes time to re-order the state of one's soul. As I showed in chapter 1, in the case of friendship, this re-ordering is a movement from a mutual feeling of well-wishing to a state of mutual loving. And so, two people could consistently act in a similar or identical manner to friends in the main stage of friendship but do so without having yet acquired the state characteristic of friendship.[77]

In our central passage in *EE* 7.2, Aristotle also makes it clear that the people who are engaged in the friendship can be mistaken about the status of the relationship (1237b18-20). They can think they are friends when they are not actually friends, on his account. For people who are engaged in the process of *becoming* friends, the desire for friendship and the feelings of goodwill come *prior* to the actual establishment of the friendship. And so, an undiscerning person might prematurely suppose his relationship is a full-fledged friendship, even though neither he nor his friends have acquired the requisite state. It is also possible that *both* people might trust one another without warrant. In each of these cases, at least one party has made some error about the true nature of the other person's character.

In order for two individuals to pass the test of time on Aristotle's account, as I have described it, they need to progress from the early stages of the relationship (where they desire to be friends and act this way) to the later stages of friendship, where they are

[77] If two people do act identically to people in the main stage of friendship, this likely means that they are not far from acquiring the corresponding state. In most circumstances, people fail to live in a perfectly virtuous way. So too, it is unlikely that people will always act in the best possible way towards their prospective friend.

Whiting (2006, pp. 281-3) argues that imperfect friendships can often include many of the features characteristic of perfect friendship, while still being imperfect in their nature. In the chapter 3, I return to this possibility.

confident in one another without circumstances revealing something about the other person which is antithetical to the original reasons (or current reasons, whatever they are) for pursuing the friendship. I say antithetical because I think it is reasonable to add that not *every* circumstance which reveals something less-than-excellent about my prospective friend will destroy our budding relationship. People acting in ways which point to less-than-perfect characters might raise concerns, or questions we hope to have answered later, without overwhelming our already-present goodwill towards them.

What we can see from these considerations is that time is a test which proves to be *unreliable* in some cases. Growing accustomed to a person and trusting her without the right sorts of experiences can lead to cases where we baselessly trust a person. Even if we are careful and only trust a person of whose character we have good experiences through observation in circumstances which directly reveal her character, we might still know her for a long time without correctly understanding what her true character is. The moments which plainly reveal part of a person's true character come along at an undetermined rate. Hence, friendships which would not last if our friend were tested more adequately can undeservedly persist for some time. In cases such as these, it is possible for each person to be well intentioned and to truly believe that the friendship is genuine.

People are also fallible when assessing each other, as Aristotle was no doubt aware. If that is right, he must think that people may intend to become friends for virtue, while in fact achieving only an imperfect friendship. Since people can be mistaken about what is good, people who *are* mistaken will unknowingly overbalance pleasure or utility in their assessment of other people as good. Moreover, since people can be mistaken about another

person's true character, they can unknowingly form friendships with people who are less than perfect, despite thinking them to be of good character.[78] In either case (and we have every reason to suppose that actual friendship may form under some mixture of these errors), the friendship will be imperfect without the agent knowing so at the time. Thus, these relationships are imperfect friendships in which the agent is not knowingly or deliberately using the other person as an instrument for her own pleasure or utility. Agents who make these two kinds of errors cannot *help* but form imperfect friendships, regardless of how they are motivated, or what their intentions are.

3. Friendships Incomplete in Time

Aristotle's description of "complete friendship" can also provide us with evidence that, for him, the motivation of individuals can be uncoupled from the reality of the friendship they achieve. In this section, we will see that the perspectives and introspections that individuals involved in a friendship have or make can be different from the perspectives or analyses an external observer such as Aristotle (or we) might have or make.

Aristotle sometimes refers to "complete friendship" (*teleia philia*: 1156b7, 1158a11) as a way of demarcating the best instances of friendship.[79] Friendships between

[78] There are, of course, many other ways in which a person can be in error. For instance, a person could also be mistaken about what friendship *is*. A person might think that friendship is a kind of mutual exchange of pleasure or utility. This would neatly fall into the reading that Broadie, Badhwar, Nehamas, and Pakaluk give of Aristotelian imperfect friendships. Once again, my goal is not to deny the existence of these sorts of friendships. But being in error about what friendship *is* differs markedly from the errors I give above – those are errors about the good, or about the other person.

[79] In the *EE* Aristotle uses the phrase "primary friendship" (*prōtē philia*) in the same way as he uses the phrase "complete friendship" (*teleia philia*) in the *EN*. See 1236a29, 1236b2, 1236b15, 1236b24, 1237a10,

good people, who love one another for their own sake, and on account of their virtue will have complete friendship (1156b7-9). But Aristotle also maintains that friendships of utility and pleasure can properly be called friendships, though presumably they are not complete in every way.[80] This suggests that these friendships fulfill Aristotle's definition of friendship. That is, they are relationships characterized by known, reciprocated loving based upon something about the other person perceived as good. What they lack is one or more features of *completeness*. The most obvious feature of completeness that friendships of utility and pleasure lack is the actual, unqualified goodness of the other person (or, at least, the friends do not love the other person *because* of their actual, unqualified goodness).[81] Relatedly, a relationship might also lack the feature of proper knowledge on

1237a32, 1237b5-8, 1237b35, 1238a30, and 1241a24. Although he is referring to the same thing in both cases, there is a noticeable difference between something being primary and something being complete (or perfect, as a more traditional translation would have it). In the *EE*, Aristotle is clearly thinking of a central, definitional case of friendship from which all other relationships called friendships appropriately derive their name. Meanwhile, to say that a friendship is completed, or perfected, is to say that a particular relationship has achieved a state which fulfills all the aspects of the definitional account.

[80] In the *EN*, it is not entirely clear whether (i) Aristotle considers friendship as properly divided into species, where each kind satisfies the definition he gives in 8.2, but which differ in the object of love (1156a6-10, 1157b1-5), or (ii) there is a central case of friendship and utility- and pleasure-based friendship are so-called because of their similarity to the central case (1156b33-1157a3, 1157b25, 1158b6-11). For a discussion of this issue, see John Cooper's (1977a). In the *EE*, Aristotle is more consistent with his division of the kinds of friendship. He claims that primary friendship (*prōtē philia*) is the main case, and that friendships of utility and pleasure are called friendships in a derivative sense. However, he is also clear that, just because these friendships fail to include everything pertaining to friendship in the primary sense, it does not follow that they are not properly called friendships (1236a16-32, 1236b12-26).

[81] In "Two Ideals of Friendship," (1990), David O'Connor argues that when Aristotle says that friendships of utility and pleasure are *incidental*, he means that there is something about the agent who loves that is malformed such that she is pre-disposed to love things for pleasure or utility. This is a non-standard reading. The more standard reading of Aristotle is what I gave here. What is incidental is something about the person who is *loved*. That is, A loves B because of a feature of B. But the *fact* that A loves B because of something incidental does, in fact, teach us something about A. For, as we have already seen, Cooper (1977a) and Whiting (2006) maintain a not-uncommon view that for Aristotle some people's love of pleasure or utility is sufficient to produce *eunoia* towards people who please or benefit them.

the part of either person. I might not know your true character, and you might not know mine. (Of course, for a friendship to be complete in knowledge, if this is indeed a good way to think about it, each person need not know *every* particular thing about the other person; rather, they must be certain of the other person's character, or at least the important features of it).[82]

But Aristotle also suggests friendships can be incomplete in *time*. In *EN* 8.3, he characterizes friendship between two people similar in virtue as complete friendship (1156b7-9), which seems to suggest that he identifies instances of complete friendship as instances of friendship between virtuous individuals. He suggests that such friendships are rare, since the people involved must spend plenty of time together and grow in trust of one another (1156b24-29). At the beginning of the subsequent chapter, 8.4, Aristotle refers back to this kind of friendship: "This sort of friendship, then, is complete both in time and in other ways" (1156b33-34).[83] Complete friendships are complete in time, I have claimed, because the relationships have been tested enough for each member to trust that the other person is as he or she appears. For a friendship to be complete in *every* way, it must also have traversed the requisite amount of time. For a friendship to be *incomplete* in time, then, it would be a friendship which has not passed the test, as I have described it.

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[82] In her introduction to *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader* (1993), Neera Badhwar points out that it could be argued relationships which are "beset by blindness" might not be called friendships at all (pp. 7-9). What this view fails to account for is the real, persistent state of loving that I have for my friend. This state is oriented towards the other person *on account* of my blindness. It is *not* oriented towards the non-existent entity who I *think* my friend is. Thus, the beliefs which ground my friendship are unsupportable, but the friendship itself is still real. On the other hand, I think it is correct to think that my beliefs about my friend must be, in Badhwar's terms "largely veridical" (p. 9) in order for the friendship to properly exist.

[83] Αὕτη μὲν οὖν καὶ κατὰ τὸν χρόνον καὶ κατὰ τὰ λοιπὰ τελεία ἐστί… The *hautē* on line 33 is singular, and it is clearly referring back to the end of 8.3.

The fact that Aristotle distinguishes completeness in time from other kinds of completeness reveals an unstated but significant aspect of his theory of friendship. On the one hand, there are what I have called "proto-friendships," which are yet to be tested by time in the manner I described in section 1, and in which the prospective friends have not yet achieved a state of mutual loving. On the other hand, complete friendships in an absolute sense are virtue-based friendships where the two individuals *have* reached a state of mutual loving and have reliable knowledge of each other's true character. There is an intermediate possibility to be found between these two cases; namely, a case in which the friendship has *not* been sufficiently tested to reveal the true character of the other person, but *has* been tested to the point where both parties trust the other, and where the two people have successfully acquired a state of mutual loving. We can think of this as a kind of chronological incompleteness: the time spent together has proved sufficient to establish the friendship, but not yet sufficient to reveal the true character of each friend. The two people, in this case, are in what I have called the "main stage" of friendship, but their friendship is not complete in *every* way, and so it falls short of Aristotle's ideal. If the friends were to discover the true character of the other, it might put great strain on the relationship (if their character was not good in the ways required for complete friendship), perhaps to the point of dissolving it. And so, the fact that friendships can be incomplete in time suggests that two individuals can have a state of friendship with respect to the other, which is one element of a completeness denoted by my term "main stage of friendship", but *fail* to capture the other elements of completeness for Aristotle's ideal case of friendship.

We can see now that there is a second way that we can understand how time tests a friendship. The first way is the manner I have already described, where each person grows in trust for the other by observing the other's actions over time. This sort of testing is internal to the relationship, insofar as it is the test each person makes *of the other person*. The second way we can understand the test of time is by taking an external view of the relationship. That is, given sufficient time, will the relationship last? Put another way, would these two people remain friends if they each fully knew the other's character? This is the position Aristotle is in when he is discussing friendship in the *Ethics*, but it is *not* the position individuals are in with respect to their own friendships. When one or both friends are mistaken regarding the true nature of the other person, the friendship might satisfy the test of time according to the individuals within the friendship but fail the test from an external view.

On my reading of Aristotle, chronological completeness in an *internal* sense is achieved by the two individuals coming to trust one another, while having all other requisite elements of the friendship. Two people achieve this by repeatedly acting out their goodwill towards each other, and by observing the other person's actions. But for a friendship to be complete in every sense, the relationship must also pass the test of time in an external sense, and passing that test depends upon the two friends being free from serious error in their assessment of one another's characters and having a relatively good understanding of the other person. Only then would the relationship satisfy Aristotle's idea of complete friendship. Ultimately, this kind of friendship can only exist between good people, according to Aristotle, since only good people are unqualifiedly lovable in themselves

(1157b25-29).[84]

The internal sense of chronological completeness is another illustration of the fact that it is possible for people who have pleasure- or utility-based friendships to truly have a state of loving towards the other person, and have (to their mind) appropriately tested the other person so as to be confident of the other person's true character. In other words, people in these relationships believe themselves to be in complete friendships, even though they might not be. Whether they are or are not depends on whether they truly have good characters, and whether they possess sufficient knowledge of each other's character.

Consider one of Aristotle's primary examples of pleasure-based friendships. Young people, Aristotle claims, predominantly have friendships of pleasure because young people are easily moved about by their feelings (*EN* 1156a31-34; *EE* 1236a38-1236b1). He claims that young people are especially prone to erotic passions and are quick to fall in love, and quick to fall out of love (1156a31-1156b4). Now, if Aristotle meant that young people seek out pleasure for themselves, consciously engaging in eroticism, then we would be correct to conclude that Aristotle's view has some serious problems, since this picture of youth is deeply cynical and difficult to plausibly maintain. However, if we read Aristotle as meaning that young people *seek* real, deep, human relationships and that their unconscious or semi-conscious *preferences* for pleasure impede, disrupt, and frustrate their relationships with

[84] How good people must be to have this kind of friendship is subject to debate. The precise way this should be worked out in our understanding of Aristotle is beyond my purpose here. My point is only that for a friendship to be complete in every way, they must be good people who are engaged in a relationship that satisfies all the conditions for being a friendship, and which has all the good qualities that Aristotle expects.

each other, then his theory is offering what is arguably a keen insight into human experience.[85]

Now, as we have seen, these pleasure-based friendships persist as long as they do because the two people are to some extent *ignorant* of the true quality of the relationship, or of the content of each other's characters. There are many ways we can be ignorant about these things. I might mistakenly choose to be friends with you because I consider you to be good, when you are nothing of the sort. Or I might choose to be friends with you considering you to be good, but my preference for you is in fact due to something pleasant about you. Thus, we can be ignorant about the *other person*, and we can also be ignorant *about ourselves*. What we undertake to achieve is not always what we do, in fact, achieve, and we can be persistently ignorant of the difference between the two. We might set out to have good friendships with good people, achieve middling results, but consider our relationships to be excellent.

When evaluating a particular friendship from an external point of view, we might notice that the two friends are failing in something fundamental or important for friendships of the best kind. We might notice, for instance, that they value pleasure too highly, or that

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[85] Consider Whiting's (2006) treatment of this same passage. Drawing from Cooper (1977a), she writes:

> …Because young folk tend to pursue what is pleasant, they may (as a matter of psychological fact) tend to wish and do good to those they find pleasant… Aristotle may simply be citing the common tendency of young folk to do all sorts of crazy things for their friends, without much regard to their own future interests… This is why, as Aristotle explains in *Rhetoric* II.12-13, it is so much easier to take advantage of young than of old folk, who tend to be so jealous of their own interests that they do not even enjoy one another's company. These chapters explicitly oppose the sort of calculating attention to one's own advantage that Aristotle takes to be characteristic of old age to the sort of non-calculating attitude he takes to be characteristic of youth… (p. 286)

they commonly argue when one or the other is not providing the benefits that their friend expects of them. All this might very well happen while the individuals involved in the friendship claim that they are the best of friends. What is happening here? According to Aristotle, these two friends have achieved a real state of mutual loving, a genuine friendship, they trust one another, and they have passed each other's tests (such as they are). But we can know, or at least suspect, that they have failed to properly test one another, and are not friends in a complete way.

Aristotle is not necessarily or only saying that these people are knowingly motivated by self-interested reasons, exchanging pleasure for pleasure, utility for utility. This might be true, but there is more to be said. These relationships are of a lesser sort because these relationships have not yet developed (and many of them *cannot* ever develop) into the best sort of relationship: virtue-based friendship (or "complete" friendship). These non-complete relationships are incomplete in part because the cause of love (pleasure or utility) does not properly pick out the other person himself, regardless of whether the parties to the friendship genuinely seek each other's good. For these sorts of relationships, if the time came for them to be tested in such a way as to prove their quality, the relationship (which is to say one or both people in the relationship) would fail the test, and the relationship would falter. Such a failure would signal, to one or both parties, that the friendship was less stable than they had previously thought.

In this section, I have argued that in our analysis of friendship we should distinguish between the internal perspective of a friendship that the individuals involved in the friendship would apply to themselves, and an external perspective or analysis which may,

at times, diverge from the internal perspective. Further, this distinction is at work in Aristotle's understanding of friendship. Aristotle's discussion is largely from an external perspective, but he uses examples (such as the propensities of young people) and ideas (such as completeness in time) to illustrate the difference between what people see when they are engaging in a relationship and what we might see in observing their relationship. While there might be no difference between what people in relationships see and what external observes see, such as in the case of the best sorts of friendship, or in cases where both friends knowingly and intentionally use the other for pleasure or utility, there is nothing in Aristotle which suggests to us that he thinks this is the only way friendships occur.

4 Friendship's Dissolution

In section 1, I noted that, for Aristotle, once the exchange of pleasure or utility falls out of pleasure- or utility-based friendships, the friendships themselves soon dissolve (*EN* 1156a19-22, 1156a31-34, 1157a14-16, 1165b1-4). As we saw above in section 1, the typical reading of Aristotle suggests that each friend is motivated to be friends with the other because of the pleasure or utility they have received, and because of the pleasure and utility they expect to receive. On this reading, if a friend no longer expects to receive what she considers good, she will choose to dissolve the friendship. I do not think that this reading accurately captures Aristotle's view of how friendships end.

Just as friendships do not come about suddenly, for Aristotle, they also do not usually pass away suddenly. Most of Aristotle's comments on the dissolution of friendship

occur in *EN* 9.3. There, Aristotle focuses on whether we should dissolve friendships when our friends do not remain the same in character. His conclusion is that it is not absurd to end the friendship, but that in some cases it is worthwhile to persist in the friendship in the hope that our friend will improve (1165b23-31).

The fact that a friendship often continues after the original reason for the friendship passes away might appear strange at first. For instance, if two people are friends because of each other's goodness, but one person becomes vicious, then it seems that the whole reason for the friendship has passed away. If the two individuals continue as friends beyond that point, there must be some additional reason for the friendship persisting. And so, what needs to be explained here is the possible case in which two individuals drift apart in virtue, or become less pleasurable or useful to one another, or discover that their relationship is founded on something other than goodness, *and yet remain friends* for at least some time.

That Aristotle thought friendships sometimes persist after a rift forms is clear from his discussion. Aristotle poses the following problem:

> But if we accept a friend as a good person, and then he becomes vicious, and seems so, should we still love him? Surely we cannot, if not everything, but only the good, is loveable… Then should the friendship be dissolved at once? Surely not with every sort of person, but only with an incurably vicious person.[86] (1165b13-18)[87]

[86] Although I have followed Irwin's translation here, it is important to note that the final sentence is posed as a question in the manuscripts, and not a statement: ἢ οὐ πᾶσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀνιάτοις κατὰ τὴν μοχθηρίαν; (1165b18). Ross's translation (2009) is closer to the Greek: "Or is this not so in all cases, but only when one's friends are incurable in their wickedness?" Whether the sentence should be a question or not is irrelevant to our purpose, because immediately afterwards Aristotle suggests that the question deserves an affirmative answer.

[87] Consider as well Aristotle's straightforward comments at 1158b35-1159a5, where he claims that people who become separated by virtue, vice, wealth, or something else can remain friends for a time, and that the

Aristotle seems to primarily have in mind relationships where the other person is originally good, but then falls into vice. However, we need not think that his statement here *only* applies to virtue-based friendship. There is no guarantee that we are *correct* when we "accept" a person "as good" (*apodexētai ōs agathon*). Indeed, Aristotle is careful to include the condition that the other person becomes vicious *and seems vicious* (*genētai de mochthēros kai dokē*). It is this second condition of *seeming* vicious, more than the first of becoming vicious, which needs emphasis here. For a rift in the friendship to develop over the separation in virtue, the superior friend must witness the counterevidence to what she at first accepted – the goodness of her friend. In the time that the friendship persists, Aristotle emphasizes that the better person should attempt to rescue or reform the worse person, so far as she is able (1165b19ff).

There is more evidence that cases in which the friendship persists after the original basis for the friendship goes away need not only arise when there is a change in virtue. In Aristotle's first discussion of the kinds of friendship at the beginning of book 8, he mentions that the friendship of lovers can sometimes persist after the "beloved's bloom fades" (1157a8-9). He says: "Many, however, remain friends if they have similar characters and come to be fond of each other's characters from being accustomed to them" (1157a10-12). Thus, even when the original reason for the friendship passes away, sometimes the two friends continue the friendship, but along new lines. In this case, the friendship continues

length of time they remain friends is indeterminate. If the friendship dissolves solely because of the separation, a *wide* separation is necessary.

because they have grown accustomed to each other.[88] These relationships presumably go through some transition – the lover does not cease to find the beloved pleasurable in a day, and the beloved would, presumably, have a continued interest in being loved. But when the basis of the relationship goes away, it seems natural, from much of what Aristotle has said, that the relationship would cease. These relationships, then, follow a trajectory similar to the case mentioned above: the foundation of the friendship passes away, there is a recognition of this fact by one or both parties, and yet they successfully remain friends *despite* this fact.

If we step away, for a moment, from Aristotle's theory and consider our own experience, we can see quite easily that friendships in which the original basis of the friendship goes away will not always dissolve right away. Instead, when two friends are engaged in a dispute, or when one friend is disappointed with another, a typical first response will be to attempt to find some resolution to the issue. We continue to be friends with another person because we still desire the friendship, we still wish them well. Suppose the relationship of two friends deteriorates in the manner Aristotle describes. One friend, Sarah, notices that her friend John's character has changed for the worse. Perhaps the betrayal of another friend has negatively affected his ability to trust his friends; or perhaps he has developed an addiction; or perhaps he has acquired new friends who over time exert

[88] I suspect this customization is similar to what C.S. Lewis calls "affection" in *The Four Loves* (1960). Perhaps one important difference is that on Lewis's schema mere proximity or association can bring about affection. Aristotle's use of the word *sunētheias* suggests something similar. However, in context, it is clear that there needed to be a prior friendship for the two lovers to *grow accustomed* to one another. On Lewis's account, we can just as easily feel affection for people, pets, or objects with whom we share no special bond.

a negative influence over him. In any of these cases, it is likely that Sarah will notice a change in John's behaviour, and she will become concerned for him, and if she is aware of the source of the change it would be natural for her to try and correct what is wrong. But when the task proves difficult, an external observer might ask her, "Why are you spending so much time and effort?" A perfectly sane response would be "Because he is my friend". Or again, consider two lovers who, having fallen out of love, say to one another "we can still be friends". There is a recognition (or at least a hope) that the relationship, having lost its *raison d'être*, has changed over time, and yet there is something *still there*. When asked why they still spend time together a perfectly sane response would be: "because we are still friends".

The claim "because she is my friend", or "because we are still friends", when considered in an Aristotelian context, can be explained by observing that to be friends is to be in a certain state of character *EN* (1157b28-32; *EE* 1237a30-34). States of character are relatively stable dispositions which are productive of choices and actions, as we saw in chapter 1.[89] These kinds of states are the dispositions with respect to how we *feel* and how those feelings motivate our decisions and actions. And so, on Aristotle's account, in saying that I am doing something *because* so and so is my friend, the "because" is grounded in my current state of character, which reliably produces feelings of well-wishing towards this specific person, and consequently I am inclined to act for his or her good. It should come

[89] See *EN* 2.4 and 2.5 for Aristotle's discussion of states with respect to the virtues of character. While friendship is not a virtue of character, Aristotle's claim that friendship is itself a state bears a remarkable resemblance to his discussion of virtue, and hence, invites the comparison and interpretation I give here.

as no surprise, then, that the way two friends associate with one another will remain relatively unchanged as circumstances change.[90]

The fact that the original reason for the friendship (viewing the other person as good) is no longer present, either because they have changed, or I have changed, or I was mistaken about the friendship or about the person, does not immediately alter the fact that I *now* have the state of character which reliably produces feelings of well-wishing for the other person. As we have already seen, we do not always know what sort of friendship we have with another person. We can be mistaken about our own character, or our friend's character. But this does not mean that we do not develop strong, stable states of loving towards the other person. In fact, it is precisely this stable state of character which prompts so much pain in us when a friendship deteriorates or dissolves. It is painful at least in part because the feelings and actions that I reliably have and do towards the other person can no longer be satisfied or exercised.

Just as the acquisition of the state of mutual loving takes time, so too does its dissolution. That this was Aristotle's view is obvious elsewhere in Aristotle's account. Friends who are separated by distance, for instance, retain their state of being in a friendship, if not the activity of friendship. They remain friends for some time, unless they are separated for too long (1157b5-13).[91] This destruction of the state in each person is brought about through time. Sometimes friends mutually drift apart, and sometimes a rift

[90] The *extent* to which circumstances change, and the feelings two people associate with one another change will, of course, vary a great deal depending on the particulars.

[91] Aristotle clearly uses the idea of a state of character in this passage. He says that each friend is in the *state* which produces the activities of friendship: οὕτω δ' ἔχουσιν ὥστ' ἐνεργεῖν φιλικῶς (1157b9-10).

causes the friendship to be reconsidered, dissolved, or continued along new lines. During the time in which the future of the friendship is in doubt, the state persists.

Consider also the parallel case of virtue and vice. When Aristotle argues, in *EN* 3.5, that both virtue and vice are voluntary in the same way, he is careful to note that, once the state of vice is acquired, you cannot simply *stop* being in that state by wishing it to be so. He compares the acquisition of the state of vice to casting a stone – at one time it was possible to not cast the stone, but once it has been cast you cannot easily retrieve it (1114a16-21). And so, even if the vicious person knows the reasons why he should, for instance, be cautious at the time of his action, he cannot control the origins of his feelings which incline him to be incautious. My claim is that for Aristotle friendship is like this. Even though the superior friend *knows* that the friendship would not form on its current grounds, the fact that it *already has* formed means that she will continue to wish her friend well, at least for a while.[92]

Comparing the state of being in a friendship to a state of character is helpful for explaining cases where two people remain friends even after the basis of the friendship has gone away (in the case of virtue-based friendship) or has been exposed as incomplete (in the case of pleasure- or utility-based friendship). The two friends remain in their relationship because each is in a stable state of well-wishing towards the other person. Each

[92] I am, of course, speaking of matters of more and less. Some people will be able to change their feelings and actions quickly. In fact, one of the marks of the exceptionally virtuous person is to do this quickly and well (see Segvic's comments on *eubolia* in "Deliberation and Choice in Aristotle," In *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle*, edited by M. Pakaluk and G. Pearson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)). But the fact that this is the mark of the virtuous person suggests that, for most people, at most times, this change of character cannot be done so easily, or so quickly. And so, while our states of character might change relatively quickly, it is still a matter of degree – it will take time to do, even if it is a short time.

individual is properly motivated to act as a friend because of the state they are in with respect to the other person. This persistence in well-wishing is evidence against the typical reading of Aristotle, on which our motivations to be friends are the same as the kinds of friendships we do, in fact, have.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued in favour of the view that for Aristotle the motivations that people have when pursuing or engaging in a friendship are distinct from and can diverge from the actual kinds of friendship they achieve. While it is true that some people will knowingly and deliberately pursue friendships with their own pleasure or utility in mind, as is commonly envisioned in commentaries on Aristotle, this is not the whole story about Aristotle's conception of imperfect friendships. Aristotle claims that friends must test one another, that their friendship can be complete or incomplete in time and in other ways, and that friendships often take time to dissolve. This all illustrates that what is happening internal to a friendship might not be what an external observer can correctly surmise about the true nature of the friendship in question.

CHAPTER 3
THREE OBJECTIONS TO ARISTOTLE'S ACCOUNT OF FRIENDSHIP

There is a broad consensus in the recent philosophical literature that Aristotle's characterization of '*philia*' fails to capture what we nowadays understand friendship to be, and that this failure is due, in part, to inaccuracies or inadequacies in Aristotle's moral theory.[93] Within this literature, we can trace three related criticisms of Aristotle which scholars make, either individually or cumulatively, to show that Aristotle's *philia* does not match our contemporary perspective on friendship.[94] The first criticism is that, since friendship is a common feature of our world, but Aristotelian virtue is not, Aristotle's standard of virtue is too high a standard to have for friendship. The second is that Aristotelian *philia* is more about loving certain *qualities* of another person or loving what we *receive* from a friendship than it is about loving the other person for him/herself, and that loving another person for him/herself ought to be what we think of when considering

[93] Julia Annas (1977, pp. 549-550); Alexander Nehamas (2016, p. 14); Howard Kalmer (1985, p. 5); George Nakhnikian (1978, p. 294); Elizabeth Telfer (1971, pp. 225-227). Nakhnikian is primarily concerned with what a coherent account of 'love' is, but he rejects Aristotle's understanding of friendship because it violates what he considers 'love' to be.

[94] Aristotle's discussion of '*philia*' clearly extends beyond our concept of friendship, as is often noted by scholars. See, for instance, Gerard Hughes (2001, p. 168), William Hardie (1980, p. 317), and Terence Irwin (1999, p. 330). Aristotle included many relationships, such as that between parents and children, merely functional relationships, civic friendships, etc. in his understanding of '*philia*'. However, Aristotle himself considers all these kinds of relationships to be kinds of *philia* which are related to the central case. Moreover, the primary question of this chapter, and the focus of some scholars (such as Nehamas, 2010a) is on whether the primary case of friendship tracks our contemporary conception. In other words, is Aristotle picking out the same phenomenon as us, and, if so, is his view *correct*?

friendship. The third criticism is that, contrary to what Aristotle says, it is obvious from our common experience that vicious people have friends. My goal in this chapter is to show that Aristotle's view of *philia*, when it is correctly understood, is capable of resisting each of these criticisms. If I am right, then Aristotle's view is more defensible in its own right and, as it turns out, closer to contemporary conceptions of friendship than is commonly supposed.

To make this case, I will investigate each of the criticisms of Aristotle's view and show that none successfully characterize Aristotle's understanding of friendship. In section 1, I outline what I consider to be an important thematic thread in most contemporary conceptions of friendship. Many scholars contend – rightly, in my view – that any friendship worthy of the name necessarily involves loving the other person themselves, for who they are, and that this fact is detached, at least in some way, from the degree of virtue or moral merit that our friends possess. I will show that this general view of friendship likely underlies and motivates the three objections to Aristotle's view. In section 2, I present textual evidence in the *Nicomachean Ethics* which suggests that Aristotle's evaluative terms for friendship are connected to, but distinct from, the psychological experience that people within the relationship have. I show that reading Aristotle with this distinction in mind offers us a reply to the first and second criticisms of Aristotle I mention above. In section 3, I turn to the question of whether vicious people can have friends. Drawing on recent scholarship, I show that Aristotle's vision of the vicious person does indeed make it impossible for people of *that* sort to have lasting friendships. However, as I will argue, there is good reason to think Aristotle has a relatively narrow group of people in mind when

he speaks of 'vicious people' in these contexts. Hence, far from discrediting Aristotle's idea of friendship, I suggest that Aristotle is right to exclude such people from forming lasting friendships and that most friendships between bad people are not instances of friendship between *vicious* people, on Aristotle's account.

1. The Contemporary View of Friendship

Aristotle's *Ethics* is a common touchstone for contemporary scholars' discussions of friendship. Aristotle provides a useful starting point for such discussions because he quickly and neatly introduces some crucial distinctions.[95] For example, he neatly distinguishes friendships into three distinct kinds. He also distinguishes between loving a person because of himself or herself and loving a person because of the pleasure or utility he or she brings (1156a10-19). Contemporary philosophers pick up this distinction and use it, or one like it, to highlight the difference between loving the other person themselves and loving the other person for some quality they possess, or some benefit they provide. Hence, we seem to have two broad categories of human interaction: relationships which are primarily about the other person, taken as a whole, and relationships which primarily have the qualities or exchange of benefits in view (of course, any relationships might have some

[95] See, for instance, Nehamas (2016, Chapter 1 "A Friend is Another Self", pp. 11-36), Laurence Thomas, Friendship and Other Loves," in *Friendship; A Philosophical Reader*, edited by Neera Badhwar (1993, p. 48), Neera Badhwar (1987, pp. 1-2), Jennifer Whiting, "Impersonal Friends." *The Monist* 74 (1991, pp. 3-4), and Meilaender, *Friendship; A Study in Theological Ethics*, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981), pp. 8-9.

mixture of these things in view).[96] In contemporary discussions of friendship, we typically consider the latter sort of relationships as friendships, properly considered. And rightly so, in my view.

As we will see, one important part of a contemporary view of friendship is that it allows us to set aside (even if only temporarily) questions about the goodness of the other person, their relative level of virtue, or the moral quality of their behaviour. Instead, it seems that the people we love as friends do not need to be perfect, or even especially good. Rather, we might think that humans have an ability to love which can make up for the fact that the person being loved is not perfect. I suspect that this general attitude of contemporary thought on friendship is what motivates the three kinds of objections to Aristotle's view I outlined above.

We can see this general attitude at work in recent work on friendship. For example, Alexander Nehamas, in his book *On Friendship* (2016), argues that:

> …[Aristotle], and, by extension, the philosophical tradition make a very strong assumption about the nature of friendship: only good people can be friends. Genuine or perfect *philia*, he tells us, is limited to the virtuous: bad people can never be friends, good friends can never be bad people, and no friendship between them can ever cause harm. (p. 14)

[96] There is, of course, an important difference between the criticism that Aristotle's view involves instrumentalism (loving a person for the good they provide) and the criticism that Aristotle's view entails loving people for the qualities they possess. The former is a worry primarily about whether utility- and pleasure-based friendships properly count as friendships. The latter is a broader worry that Aristotle's view as a whole misses the mark on what about another person qualifies them as a friend. By holding these two kinds of worries together, my intention is not to treat them as the same, but to draw attention to the contemporary insistence that our view of friendship should be about the other person *themselves*, and not a narrower consideration of their qualities, nor a narrow consideration of the goods that come to us through our relationship with them.

Nehamas does not wish to follow Aristotle and the philosophical tradition in this assumption. For Nehamas, friendship is better explained by a weaker claim, that our own peculiar affections and desires prompt us to view another person *as* good, and we become friends with them on that basis (p. 28). Being friends with a bad person is entirely possible, on this view. Consequently, it is also perfectly possible for real, genuine friendships to be founded on, and to promote, vicious behaviour (pp. 195-196). But most crucially, Nehamas believes that genuine friendship depends more on the intentions, feelings, and attitudes of each individual than on what they do, or who they in fact are (p. 198).

Other scholars agree. For instance, Howard Kalmer (1985) also claims that people might be attracted to one another for personality traits which are less than moral.

> Befriending people sometimes see traits of character in one another they find desirable; so desirable, in fact, that seeing them leads to a strong affection. Aristotle said something close to this. He said that good and only good character is naturally attracting and at the heart of true friendship; that if a person sees a good feature of another person's character, he will naturally be attracted to it.
>
> Aristotle wasn't perfectly right. Not only good character is attracting. People can be attracted to the less-than-good in others as well. For example, you may like the thoroughness of a Machiavellian type and you may understand it for what it is. Perhaps you would actually like to be more that way yourself. Or perhaps you just like to see it in others. In any case, not only good character leads to strong affection; the unsavoury sometimes titilates [sic] us too. (p. 5)

What Kalmer presents here is the view that vices, and not only virtues, can be the basis of our affection and goodwill for another person. He agrees with Aristotle that the character traits of our friends are what draw us together, and he agrees that character traits provide a stable and lasting basis for the friendship. However, Kalmer insists that we can be attracted

by vicious people, and that the viciousness can properly form the basis of a friendship, which runs at odds with Aristotle's insistence that vicious people cannot be friends, except perhaps to the slightest degree (*EN* 1159b7-12, 1167b9-16, *EE* 1237b30-35).[97] However, as we will see, unlike Kalmer, Aristotle does not think of vices as stable character traits comparable to good character traits like virtues. Hence, it is impossible on Aristotle's account for vices to serve as a lasting basis of friendship. Ultimately, Kalmer agrees in some ways with Nehamas's assessment: I might want to be friends with a bad person (my intentions), I might be attracted to him or her because of what is bad in his or her character (my feelings), and our friendship, if we develop one, will be genuine.

Julia Annas and Elizabeth Telfer commit themselves to a slightly less bold claim than Nehamas and Kalmer. While Nehamas and Kalmer claim that we might be friends with people *because* of some of their bad qualities, Annas and Telfer each insist that we can be true, deep friends with someone *despite* their having some bad quality.[98] Annas argues that Aristotle's mistake on this point follows from his view that we love a person as a "bearer of desired qualities" (p. 550) rather than as an individual. Presumably, if we love a person as an individual, and not merely because they have some desired qualities, we will be more open to overlooking their bad qualities. Thus, while our friends presumably must

[97] At *EE* 1238a33ff Aristotle seems to speak about bad men being able to be friends with one another, and being able to form imperfect friendships (especially of utility) with better people. Notably, Aristotle uses *phaulos* as the main term to denote the bad person. This is opposed to *kakos*, the term most often used in *EN* 8 and 9 to describe vice. In any case, Aristotle clearly thinks that vicious people cannot be character friends, friends for virtue, or friends with someone else for who they are.

[98] Annas (1977, pp. 549-550), and Telfer (1971, pp. 225-227). No doubt Nehamas and Kalmer agree on this point, too.

have *some* connection to the good, our love for them is not as directly tied to the good qualities they exhibit as Aristotle supposes. Telfer, meanwhile, thinks that there "seems no *necessary* incompatibility between fondness, liking, and a sense of a bond, on the one hand, and disapproval of some qualities in a person, on the other" (p. 227). On Telfer's account, friendships require both (i) shared activity and (ii) the "passions of friendship", which are things like affection and desire for one another's company (pp. 223-7). So long as all the conditions of friendship are adequately met, two individuals can be friends.[99] All of these conditions are consistent with one or both people having bad qualities that the other finds undesirable, frustrating, or wrong.

I believe that one key thing that Annas, Kalmer, Nehamas, Telfer agree on is that we ought to uncouple our account of friendship from our account of morality. This is not to say that friendship is entirely amoral. Rather, the idea is that friendship is a good, but not always a moral good. My friend is a good to me, but not always for moral reasons, and not always with moral outcomes. I take this idea to be characteristic of the contemporary philosophical understanding of friendship.[100] Moreover, in the view of many contemporary scholars, the fact that Aristotle apparently does not uncouple these concepts is a detriment to his theory, since it apparently flies in the face of what we can observe firsthand: people

[99] Telfer goes on to add a third necessary condition which is jointly sufficient with the first two for friendship. Namely, "…an acknowledgement of and consent to the special sort of relationship" that is present in light of the relationships satisfying the first two conditions of shared activity and passions of friendship (p. 230).

[100] It is worth noting that this thematic thread that I argue is present in philosophical discussions (particularly in commentators on Aristotle) might not be present in a systemic empirical investigation of the phenomenon in the world. We might conjecture that it *would* be present, but that conjecture would need to be tested as a hypothesis in a study which, of course, is well beyond the scope of this project.

being attracted to one another and being friends *despite* – and perhaps even, *à la* Nehamas and Kalmer, *because of* – serious flaws in their character and behaviour.

Some scholars have maintained that Aristotle does not uncouple these ideas because he does not have the concepts necessary to make the proper distinctions. George Nakhnikian (1978) believes this to be the case:

> …there is a truth about these matters that is important to articulate, but Aristotle cannot express it. He lacks the requisite concepts. The truth is that there is such a thing as loving a person for his own sake. It involves perfect good will with no thought of expected returns and no requirement that the person loved be a good human being. (p. 294)[101]

When he speaks of "a good human being", Nakhnikian does not mean 'good' in a strictly Aristotelian sense. A good person, for Aristotle, is a person who possesses and acts out the virtues. For Nakhnikian, by contrast, a good human being is someone who lives up to the moral law. And so, just because my friend does not always act in the best way, and even if she often acts in the *wrong* way, my love for her ought to remain (largely) unaffected by her poor character. For Nakhnikian, not *all* friendships will be like this; there may very well be friendships which are closely tied to the actual goodness of the two parties. What Nakhnikian insists on here is the possibility that perfect goodwill can exist in a relationship wherein my goodwill is sufficient for maintaining the friendship on its own. But what his view suggests is that real friendship can, and does, depend more on my will and intentions than it does on my actual character or the actual character of my friend.

[101] George Nakhnikian, "Love in Human Reason," (1978).

Let's now revisit the three criticisms of Aristotle I outlined above and connect them to how many contemporary scholars think about friendship. First, many contemporary scholars argue that people can have real, genuine friendships while being aware of, and even disapproving of, the other person's bad qualities. That is, a person does not need to be virtuous or morally good to be a friend. And so, the objection is that, to the extent Aristotle maintains that they *do* need to be virtuous or morally good, he is in error. Second, contemporary scholars often think that friendship is about loving the other person as an individual, and not about loving him or her as the bearer of desirable qualities or because of the goods that he or she furnishes. Once again, Aristotle appears to be at odds with this perspective. Third and finally, vicious people can have friendships, and the friendships themselves can even be based upon some of the vicious qualities in each person, and so Aristotle is wrong to claim that vicious people cannot be friends.

2. Goodness and Friendship

The main evidence in the *Nicomachean Ethics* in favour of the view that Aristotle thinks genuine friendship is rare is in the first few chapters of *EN* Book 8. In *EN* 8.2, Aristotle notes that there are three things which are lovable (what is pleasant, what is useful, and what is good), and that what we actually love is what *appears* good to us, and not necessarily what truly is good (1155b21-27). Aristotle then divides friendship into three kinds of relationships which come about *because of* (*dia*) each of these three things (1155b27, 1156a5). He then outlines what each kind of friendship looks like and makes some comparative remarks about each. Notably, he makes a distinction similar to the one I

outlined above, between friendships which are "because of" some quality the other person has (such as pleasantness or utility) and friendships which are "because of" the other person himself.[102] He goes on to note that only good people can have friendships of this latter, more perfect kind:

> Bad people can be friends with each other because of pleasure or because of utility, and decent people can be friends with bad people, and one who is neither bad nor good can be a friend with anyone, but it is clear that only good people can be friends because of themselves.[103]

From this we might reasonably reach the conclusion that, for Aristotle, only good people can have friendships where each person loves the other for themselves rather than for some quality they happen to like in the other person, or because of some good that the friend provides. Now, Aristotle certainly does think that very few people will truly be good, and he admits that friendship between good people will be a rare thing (1156b24-25). And so, if this reading of Aristotle is correct, few people will have friendships that are primarily about the other person. If this is right, then, since it is only these kinds of relationships which most contemporary scholars think are worthy of the name 'friendship', Aristotle's theory of "true *philia*" will indeed not cover most relationships we typically today call friendships.

However, on my reading of Aristotle as presented in the last chapter, there is a difference between the *cause* of love and the psychological experience of that love in the

[102] Because of usefulness, 1156a10, because of pleasure, 1156a12, and because of the other person him/herself, 1156a15.

[103] 1157a16-20 δι' ἡδονὴν μὲν οὖν καὶ διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον καὶ φαύλους ἐνδέχεται φίλους ἀλλήλοις εἶναι καὶ ἐπιεικεῖς φαύλοις καὶ μηδέτερον ὁποιῳοῦν, δι' αὑτοὺς δὲ δῆλον ὅτι μόνους τοὺς ἀγαθούς.

agent who is loving. In brief, people can love another person *as a person* even when the *cause* of that love is not the other person themselves. And so, on my reading, many (perhaps most) of the *philia*-relationships Aristotle describes will, in fact, satisfy our contemporary conviction that friendships must involve both parties loving the other person for themselves, and not merely loving them for some qualities they have. Consequently, people who are less than truly good, and people who are friends because of pleasure or utility (i.e. people who are in imperfect friendships) will often qualify as friends in the contemporary sense. So, for instance, it is possible that Sarah is friends with Sam because of pleasure, but her love for Sam is still for *Sam*, and not for pleasure. Put another way, both kinds of analysis and description can be applied to the same friendship: it is appropriate to understand Sarah's friendship as being about Sam, *and* for her love for him to be caused by how pleasant Sam is. As we will see, the causes of *philia* Aristotle outlines are related to, but not identical to, the psychological experience of the people in the relationship.

I believe that this distinction between the cause of affection and the psychological experience of loving the cause of our affection is one Aristotle himself had in mind, though he does not explicate it in his discussion of friendship. Making this distinction in our reading of Aristotle is perfectly consistent with his text and line of argument. Moreover, there is a good textual support for attributing this distinction to him. What I specifically have in mind is the pattern of preposition use which he employs in his description of the structure of friendship: loving relationships that exist *because of* (*dia*) pleasure, utility, or

goodness,[104] loving a person *according with* or *by reason of* (*kata*) either the other person him/herself or by coincidence,[105] and loving another person *insofar as* (*hē*) he or she is pleasant, useful, or good.[106]

Let's look at Aristotle's use of each of these prepositions in turn and see what they mean for Aristotle in the context of his discussion of friendship. He uses each preposition in *EN* 8.3 (in his first discussion of the three kinds of loving and of how they relate to the three different species of friendship) and so it is an instructive passage for our purpose:

> Those who love because of utility (*dia chrēsimon*) love others not for themselves (*kath' autous*), but insofar as (*hē*) some good comes to them from the others. It is similar with those who love because of pleasure (*dia hēdonēn*); they do not like witty people because they have a certain character, but because witty people are pleasant to them. People who love because of (*dia*) utility feel affection because of (*dia*) the good to themselves, and those who love because of (*dia*) pleasure feel affection because of the pleasure to themselves, and not insofar as (*hē*) the loved person is who he is, but insofar as (*hē*) he is useful or pleasant. So then, these friendships are coincidental (*kata sumbebēkos*), for it is not insofar as (*hē*) who the loved person is that he is loved, but insofar as (*hē*) he

[104] In the last chapter, we saw that, according to Whiting, *dia* in this context has the force of efficient causation for Aristotle, and not final causation (2006, p. 285). I believe that this is the correct reading, and, as I will go on to argue, Aristotle's use of *dia* in these cases is best understood exclusively as demarcating the efficient cause of love in friendship. For examples where Aristotle speaks in a general way about the causes of love, see *EN* 8.2, especially 1155b27 and 1156a3-5. For examples of Aristotle describing the kinds of friendships as being *dia to chrēsimon*, or *dia to hēdu*, or *di' arētēn*, see: *EN* 1156a14-15, 1157a1, 1158a18, 1162a25, 1162b1, 1162b6, 1165b1-2, 1167a11-12, 1169b26; cf. *EE* 1236a32, 1236b11-12.

[105] For examples of friendships according with the individual themselves, see 1156b9, 1156b21, 1157b32; for examples of friendships according with coincidence, see 1156a16, 1156b11, 1157a35. Aristotle also describes friendships as being in accordance with virtue or goodness: 1156a11, 1156b2, 1156b7, 1156b20, 1157b4, 1157b6, 1157b32, 1158b7, 1158b12.

[106] Aristotle often employs the adverb *hē* to describe the outer limit of the similarity between two things, as I will discuss below. For examples, see *EN* 1156a10-11, 1156a16-18, 1156b8, 1157a31-32, 1157b3, 1161a1, 1166a11; *EE* 1237b1-5, 1238a35-7, 1238b1 (note that the text is corrupted here), 1238b10-14.

> furnishes some good, in the one case, and some pleasure, in the other case. (1156a10-19)[107]

Aristotle uses *'kata'* to distinguish loving someone for themselves (*kath' autous*) and loving them for the goods gets from associating with them (*kata sumbebēkos*). In several other places in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle contrasts loving someone according to virtue (*kath' aretēn*) and loving someone according to coincidence.[108] He seems to take this as the same contrast as that between loving someone '*kath' autous*' and '*kata sumbebēkos'*.[109] Since he uses loving someone according to themselves and loving someone according to their virtue interchangeably, it seems natural to read Aristotle here as thinking of loving someone '*kata sumbebēkos*' as being one or the other of loving them '*kata chrēsimon*' and '*kath' hēdonēn*'. Thus, on this reading, there are only two main categories of friendship: (1) him/herself-friendships, where we love the other person herself and the friendship is virtue-based, and (2) coincidental-friendships, which break down into two subcategories of (2a) pleasure-based and (2b) utility-based friendships. If this is true,

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[107] οἱ μὲν οὖν διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον φιλοῦντες ἀλλήλους οὐ καθ' αὑτοὺς φιλοῦσιν, ἀλλ' ᾗ γίνεταί τι αὐτοῖς παρ' ἀλλήλων ἀγαθόν. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ οἱ δι' ἡδονήν· οὐ γὰρ τῷ ποιούς τινας εἶναι ἀγαπῶσι τοὺς εὐτραπέλους, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἡδεῖς αὑτοῖς. οἵ τε δὴ διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον φιλοῦντες διὰ τὸ αὑτοῖς ἀγαθὸν στέργουσι, καὶ οἱ δι' ἡδονὴν διὰ τὸ αὑτοῖς ἡδύ, καὶ οὐχ ᾗ ὁ φιλούμενός ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ᾗ χρήσιμος ἢ ἡδύς. κατὰ συμβεβηκός τε δὴ αἱ φιλίαι αὗταί εἰσιν· οὐ γὰρ ᾗ ἐστὶν ὅσπερ ἐστὶν ὁ φιλούμενος, ταύτῃ φιλεῖται, ἀλλ' ᾗ πορίζουσιν οἵ μὲν ἀγαθόν τι οἵ δ' ἡδονήν.

[108] See *EN* 1156a11, 1156b2, 1156b7, 1156b20, 1157b4, 1157b6, 1157b32, 1158b7, 1158b12. Julia Annas (1977, pp. 529-550) and Alecander Nehamas (2010a, p. 244) agree with this reading, that loving someone for his virtue is the same as loving him for himself. They understand this to be a deficiency in Aristotle's thought. We will return to this topic in the next chapter.

[109] At 1156b7-8 Aristotle says that complete friendship is between good people in accordance with a similarity in virtue (*kat' aretēn homoiōn*). The discussion of complete friendship beginning here is clearly meant as a comparison to the friendship following from coincidence (*kata sumbebēkos*) introduced at line 1156a16. Aristotle even circles back to the contrast a few lines later at 1156b11.

then Annas could be correct in her reading of Aristotle, where loving someone '*kath' autous*' and '*kat' aretēn*' is ultimately more about loving the other person as the bearer of desired qualities than a robust idea of loving someone for themselves. For virtue-based friendships are only loving the other person *insofar* as (*hē*) he or she is virtuous. That is, they are instances of loving the other person for his or her virtue, not for him- or herself.

The trouble with this view is that in the *EN* Aristotle does not ever refer to utility- or pleasure-based friendships as being "according to utility" (*kata chrēsimon*) or "according to pleasure" (*kath' hēdonēn*).[110] Instead, he consistently refers to these friendships as being "because of utility" (*dia to chrēsimon*) and "because of pleasure" (*dia to hēdu*). So, while it seems plausible to read Aristotle as viewing friendships which accord with another person herself and friendships according with virtues as identical, it is less plausible to read Aristotle as viewing coincidental friendships as identical to friendships which accord with pleasure or utility.[111]

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[110] In the *EE*, Aristotle does speak of friendships as being *kata to chrēsimon* and *kata to hedu* alongside *kath' aretēn* 1239a1-2), where he employs *'kata'* to means something similar or identical to '*dia'* (cf. 1236a31-32). Anthony Kenny, in his translation (2011), translates either kind of expression as "based on". Thus, "*kata to chrēsimon*" and "*dia to chrēsimon*" are both "based on utility". It is unclear whether either kind of expression ought to pick out some different way a friendship can be "based on" utility, pleasure, or virtue. However, there is no passage in the *EE* discussion which parallels our main passage (1156a10-19), which uses these prepositions in contrasting ways. And, as I have shown, Aristotle is consistent in the way he employs *'kata'* and '*dia'* in the *EN*, where each usage maintains the contrast present in 1156a10-19. I suggest, therefore, that there is good reason to suppose that Aristotle's intended meaning is separate between the *EE* and *EN*. Either Aristotle's view evolved between the two texts, or he is (arguably) speaking more loosely in the *EE*, and more precisely in the *EN*.

[111] One passage in the *EN* appears to speak directly against my interpretation here. At 1162b22-23 Aristotle uses the phrase "*tēs kata to chrēsimon philias*" which, on my rendering reads "friendship according to utility". An objector might claim that this is an instance of "*kata chrēsimon*" which could parallel "*kata sumbebēkos*" as the contrast to him/herself-friendships and virtue-basted friendships. However, this is not the case. Aristotle's use of "*tēs kata to chrēsimon philias*" is meant to distinguish two kinds of utility-friendships: one kind is a *character* kind (*ēthikē*), and the other is a *rule* kind (*nomikē*) (116ab23). Each kind corresponds to two methods of being just, one which is unwritten, and the other which is explicitly stipulated (1162b21-22). The unwritten kind of being just is fulfilled by the character-based utility-

What can we make of this discrepancy? I submit that Aristotle's categorization suggests that his use of the preposition '*kata*' marks only the distinction between (i) loving the person for who they are, or (ii) loving them according to something incidental, or accidental. So, for instance, judging that friends love *kath' hautous* would be judging that the love they have for one another is in harmony with who the other truly is; similarly, judging that friends love one another *kat' aretēn* would be the judgement that the love they have for one another is in harmony with the virtue that the other truly has, which, for Aristotle, amounts to what is most significant about who they are. On the other side of the distinction, judging that friendships are *kata sumbebēkos* would be judging that the love that some people have for others is in harmony *not* with who the other people truly are, or with the virtues they have, but rather with something that is incidental to who they are as a person, such as the fact that they are pleasant or useful to each other. So, in these cases, friend A loves friend B because she *appears* truly lovable, but that appearance is the product of circumstances – she happens to be acting in a way that is pleasant or useful. Good people are both pleasant and useful but bad people might be too, and so we might accidentally affirm the consequent and believe that, since a person is pleasant or useful, she is also good. But the pleasure or utility these people furnish is *not* some quality that they *have*, but some

friendship, where each friend is friends with the other person, and they exchange goods in an easy-going, non-precise way (see 1162b31-34). The written kind of being just is fulfilled by the rule-based utility-friendship where each person exchanges goods based upon explicit conditions, as in a contract (see 1162b28-31). Since Aristotle clearly intends "*tēs kata to chrēsimon philias*" to set up his distinction between these two ways that friends can be utility-based friends, it is unlikely that he is also employing the phrase as a contrast to "*kata autai*" and "*kat' aretēn*", or as a parallel to "*kata sumbebēkos*".

good which they give to others.[112] So, it *happens* that they furnish some good, and the friendship is in accord with this happenstance. And so, whether B really is lovable is irrelevant to A's love of her; it is the effect of the association to which A responds, and not B's character or some quality she possesses.

This is why it would be wrong for Aristotle to say that friendship is *kata to chrēsimon* or *kata hēdonēn* ("according to the useful" or "according to pleasure"). For, it is not the useful or pleasurable *qualities* of the other person with which the friendship accords, but rather the usefulness or pleasure that is furnished *by* the other person. For instance, if I meet another person who shares my love of Shakespeare, and we bond and spend time reading through his plays together, the basis of my friendship – the 'because' – is pleasure, and the friendship accords with the pleasant *activity* we do together and which she enables me to experience. It does not necessarily accord with the pleasantness of her character *per se*. What Aristotle's use of *kata* is *not* doing here is establishing what it is *about* the other person that makes us friends with him or her, the reason for the friendship, the motivation for the friendship, or anything else besides. For these, we need to look at what else Aristotle says about friendship. The upshot of this is that, in cases of friendships which are *kata sumbebēkos* (according to coincidence), a relatively small change in circumstances might affect the friendship, but in cases where the friendships are *kat' aretēn* (according to virtue), small changes in circumstances will likely not affect the friendship. So, for instance, my

[112] So much is clear from the main passage above (1156a10-19). Aristotle clearly thinks that it is the good that is *provided*, and not the quality of the person themselves to which a person's love accords (1156a10-12). His example of witty people (1156a12-14) demonstrates this. The witty person's character being some way is not what our love accords with. And so, we do not love witty people *because* they are witty. Rather, people love them because witty people are pleasant *to them*.

relationship with my barber is *kata sumbebēkos* since he furnishes me with a utilitarian good and our association is brought about by circumstances, and not his character. If he were to cease being a barber, or if he moved his business further away from me, the friendship would cease. Meanwhile, if, in addition to furnishing me with some good, my relationship with my barber extended to a love and enjoyment of his character, our friendship would persist through minor changes in circumstances that would cause the friendship to perish if it were merely *kata sumbebēkos*.

Aristotle uses the expressions "because of utility" (*dia to chrēsimon*), "because of pleasure" (*dia to hēdu*) and "because of goodness" (*di' agathon*) to express the causal role that utility, pleasure, and goodness play in friendships (1156a10-15, 1156b19). Aristotle believes that the pleasant, the useful and the good (where virtue is understood as the good qualities of character) are the *cause* of loving.[113] However, as I argued last chapter, we do not need to identify the causal role of pleasure, utility, or goodness with the *intention* or motivation of the person loving. Rather, the presence of pleasure, utility, or goodness *causes* a love in the agent *for the other person*, and the agent is motivated to become friends with the other person on the basis of that psychological fact. On this reading, A loves B because of the coming together of two coincidences: first, A is disposed to respond in a certain way when he encounters that which is pleasurable or useful; second, B exhibits behaviour which A takes to be good because of the pleasure or utility it provides to him.

[113] There is a debate in the scholarly literature over whether Aristotle believes these lovable objects form the efficient *and* final cause of the loving, or whether they form *only* the efficient cause of the relationship. For an example of the former view, see Cooper (1977a); for the latter, see Whiting (2006). My reading of Aristotle is that lovable objects are typically only an efficient cause of love. Some relationships will, of course, also take utility or pleasure as a final cause of the relationship.

What is *not* suggested by Aristotle's use of the preposition '*dia'* is that the goal A seeks is the pleasure or utility B furnishes for A. The cause of the love may be distinct from the goal of the lover. It might also be distinct from loving the other person themselves, or loving them coincidentally. Thus, it is Aristotle's use of '*dia*' which involves the perceived or actual qualities of the other person, and not his use of '*kata'*. We should not move, as Annas and Telfer do, from the claim that "A loves B *because* of *(dia*) some quality in B," to the claim that "A's *reason(s)* for loving B are qualities B has" where "A's reasons for loving B" are the kinds of things that A might say if asked why they love B.

To show why this matters, it will be helpful to consider some examples which show the conflation of the cause of the friendship and the agent's reasons for entering into it. For instance, Annas (1977), citing the same passage as above, claims that for Aristotle "to like a friend because of his virtue is to like him for what he is in himself, whereas to like him for his usefulness or pleasantness is to like him for attributes that he could lose and which are therefore not part of what he essentially is" (pp. 458-550). We can see here the move between loving someone *because* (*dia*) of a feature and loving someone *for* that feature.

As an instructive analogy, consider someone (Chris) who takes a special enjoyment in eating a pleasurable food (say, doughnuts). From an objective standpoint, we can easily observe that the *cause* (or at the very least *one cause*) of Chris's enjoyment in doughnuts is the physical features that doughnuts have. They are calorie-dense, sugary foodstuffs. These qualities signal to Chris and most everyone else that doughnuts are good to eat. But from Chris's perspective, his reason for enjoying doughnuts is not the richness in calories, nor the presence of sugar, nor some summation or concatenation of those qualities. His

reason for enjoying doughnuts is better summed up by appealing to his positive psychological experiences: he finds them delicious; perhaps he likes the texture of the flaky icing; perhaps he likes the ritual of having a doughnut as a reward after a successful morning of work. These reasons are all brought about *because* of what doughnuts are, but it is the psychological reasons, and not the qualities of the doughnuts themselves, that Chris directly considers when he is selecting his afternoon snack. No doubt, if doughnuts *lacked* these features, Chris would not seek them out. And if doughnuts once had these features, but *lost* them, Chris would similarly lose his former love for them, as he would no longer enjoy eating them, even if he did not know why.

It is, of course, entirely possible that certain qualities of the doughnuts *are* the features that someone looks for in an afternoon snack. I might think "whatever has the most sugar" or "something with lots of calories". Thus, the same features which are causally responsible for Chris's liking of doughnuts *might* be the direct object of someone else's desire for doughnuts. But I contend there is a clear difference between these cases: in the case of Chris, Black Forest cake would be a poor substitute for a doughnut, since it is the doughnut that he likes and not the Black Forest cake, but in the case of a person looking for calorie-dense sugar-filled foods, Black Forest cake and doughnuts might be equivalent. The 'because' of Chris's liking doughnuts picks out something different than the 'for' of his liking. They are, of course, related. But they are not the same.

So too, I argue, in the case of Aristotelian friendship. The pleasantness, usefulness, or goodness of another person can serve as the cause of friendship in both senses. Sometimes, we love our friends because of the pleasure or utility they bring, but not

explicitly *for* the utility or pleasure they bring. Rather, we love them *for* themselves, even though the *cause* of our love is the utility or pleasure. The qualities they possess and the goods we acquire through them form the basis of our psychological preference for them *as people*. In these cases, it truly *does* matter who the person is, and not only what they provide. Nonetheless, just as in Chris's love of doughnuts, it really is the pleasure or utility which caused the friendship, not the other person's *actual* goodness. Meanwhile, some relationships can exist based solely on people looking out for the pleasure or utility that others might give them. In these cases, it matters less who the person is, and more what they provide. Aristotle's use of '*dia'* tracks with the causal explanation of the friendship in the first sense, where we love *because of*, but not necessarily *for*, the goodness, pleasure, or utility. We know – and doubtless Aristotle knew as well – that the same cause of friendship is compatible with a range of different psychological attitudes in the friends towards each other. There is no contradiction in pleasure or utility being the cause of my affection for my friend and at the same time my having the psychological attitude of loving my friend for herself.

Finally, let us consider the role that the preposition "insofar as" (*hēi*) plays in Aristotle's description of friendship. Recall that the love that A has for B either accords (*kata*) with B himself, or with coincidence, as we saw above. When A's love for B accords with B himself, then, Aristotle claims, A loves B insofar as (*hēi*) B is who he is, or insofar as B is *good*.[114] Meanwhile, when A loves B coincidentally, A loves B insofar as (*hēi*) B

[114] These two claims, insofar as he is good, and insofar as he is himself, come at different places in *EN* 8.3, but are certainly capturing the same idea. At 1156a14-16 (our main passage above), Aristotle claims that people who are friends because of pleasure or utility do not love the other because of who he is. At 1156b7-9 he claims that complete friendships are ones where each person loves the other insofar as he is good, and

furnishes some good (in the case of utility) or pleasure for A (1156a14-19). Here, again, we might be tempted to envision A deliberately calibrating how much to love B, based on A's best appraisal of B's goodness, or on A's best appraisal of the goods or pleasures he gets from B. But I suggest that there is another way we can understand Aristotle's insistence that we are friends *insofar as* or *to the extent that* the other person is good or pleasant or useful, one which does not require us to imagine friends deliberately calculating how much or how little to love one another, or reflecting deeply about what they love in one another based on what they get from each other.

On the interpretation of Aristotle's view that I prefer, A will have a greater preference for becoming friends with B the more B exhibits behaviour which A takes to be good, and A will continue to wish B well insofar as B continues to exhibit the behaviour which made A become friends with B in the first place. All this will hold true with or without the awareness of the friends. Thus, Aristotle's use of '*hē*' in these contexts expresses the extent of the friendship, *not* in the terms in which the friends themselves would understand it, but rather in terms of an external perspective.[115] So, if A is friends with B *to the extent that* B is pleasant, then (1) pleasure is the *cause* of A's goodwill towards B, and (2) *only* B's provision of pleasure is the cause of A's goodwill. So, if B were to cease providing pleasure to A, then there would be no continuing cause for A to have

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the friend is in fact good in his own right. Immediately afterwards, he says that these friends wish each other well because of who the other friend truly is, and not coincidentally (1156b9-12).

[115] This is consistent with Aristotle use of '*hē*' elsewhere in the *Ethics*. For instance, when Aristotle is making his critique of Plato's theory of the forms, in *EN* 1.6, he claims that insofar as each man is a man, there will be no difference between them (1096b2-3). Here, he uses '*hē*' to demarcate the limit of similarity and dissimilarity between individuals.

goodwill towards B. If there is no continuing cause for goodwill, then the friendship cannot last. It will cease either immediately or over time. In fact, in cases in which B ceases to furnish A with some good, and thereby removes the cause of A's goodwill, it is entirely possible that A will not be able to articulate *why* he no longer loves B. Instead, he may explain his change in goodwill by appealing to vaguer reasons and descriptions, such as that B is "no longer fun to be around", or "has changed".[116]

Let's sum up the discussion so far. Aristotle articulates his analysis of friendship in terms of the actual cause of the friendship, which may not match the terms in which the friends themselves understand it. These causes each allow for a fairly wide range of psychological experiences of the friendship on the part of the friends. Although the terms that Aristotle uses ('*kata'*, '*dia'*, and '*hē*') are importantly connected to the psychological experience of friends and to the intentions that they have, they are all more closely connected to the objective causes and structure of the relationship. On my reading of Aristotle, we like someone because of qualities we take them to have (and which they might, in fact have), but we might not have a direct understanding that *these* are the things which spur us to love the other person as a person. In fact, on my interpretation, Aristotle thought that people typically have a psychological experience of loving *the other person*,

[116] Admittedly, Aristotle speaks of friendships caused by pleasure and utility as relationships where the individuals are friends to the extent that they are pleasant or useful to one another. Since he speaks about both in the same breath, as it were, it is natural to read him as being pessimistic about pleasure- and utility-based friendships, and to read him as saying that *all* relationships caused by pleasure or utility are *only* friendships to the extent that each friend remains pleasant or useful. However, we need not read Aristotle in this way, as I have shown. Moreover, it makes sense for Aristotle to present his case in clearcut, simple cases, so as to show where the joints are between different kinds of relationships, without having to drill into all the details and various examples of relationships we might find in the world.

not of loving the qualities that the other person possesses. What causes me to love my friend does not entirely, all on its own, determine the quality of my friendship. It certainly does *constrain* the quality of the friendship. For instance, if I love someone because of pleasure, I will only be able to love the other person as she is in a qualified way. But these qualifications need not be *known* by me for them to constrain the quality of my friendship.

In light of these observations, I submit two main conclusions. First, nothing in Aristotle's theory excludes the possibility that people who are friends because of pleasure or utility can, in fact, be friends in the contemporary sense of the term, given the usual contemporary understanding of what friendship entails. That is, people who have become friends because of pleasure, and who are friends coincidentally, can still have the psychological experience of loving the other person for who he or she is. They are, of course, *mistaken* on this point. They *in fact* love the other person because of pleasure. However, this does not preclude them from sincerely proclaiming, either to the other friend or to the world at large, that their friendship is excellent, deep, fulfilling, moral, or has any other nameable salubrious quality. Indeed, people who are mistaken on this point could even be among those who insist that instrumental friendships or friendships based upon utility or pleasure are not real friendships.[117]

[117] It is also worth noting that people who are involved in these kinds of friendships might have excellent reasons for thinking that their friendships are exemplary. Notice that A's love for B might involve many of the same features that excellent friendships between two good people characteristically have. They will not, of course, have these features in virtue of the *reality* of the friendship, but that does not prevent some of these features from appearing. Jennifer Whiting (2006) argues that 1157a20-33 shows that imperfect friendships can include some of the defining features of perfect friendship, though they do so only coincidentally, and not in virtue of what the friendship truly is (pp. 282-3).

My second main conclusion is that people of a less-than-virtuous character can, indeed, be friends *kath' hautous* ("according to themselves") or *kath' aretēn* ("according to virtue"), on Aristotle's account. It might at first seem contradictory to suggest that people of middling virtue can be friends "according to virtue", or to suggest that people's friendships can accord with the other person when there is little objectively lovable about the other person. However, there is no contradiction in the way that Aristotle has set out his terms. First, people do not need to have very much objectively lovable about them for them to be loveable in *some* way. Most people have a mix of good and bad qualities, and often they lie somewhere between the extremes of virtue and vice. Friends who love one another according to who each person is might love each other in accordance with those few lovable qualities they *do* have. Second, whatever quality it is that causes one person to love another need not be *objectively* lovable at all, but only *subjectively* lovable for the person who is loving. Aristotle only claims that people love what they *perceive* to be good. They do not always love what is *truly* good. So, insofar as some person actually has the qualities that *we* understand to be good and seems to be good in that way through his behaviour, and we love him because of that, we are in fact on the road to loving him "according to himself" (*kath' hauton*). For these two reasons, people who are less that fully virtuous *can* have the kinds of friendships Aristotle describes as "according to themselves" *kath' autous* and "according to virtue" *kata aretēn*. [118]

[118] My argument here aligns with John Cooper (1977a). Cooper suggests that the best way to describe these friendships is as "character friendships" since the friends love one another for who they are (their character), even if their character is less than fully virtuous. What I am drawing out here is that Aristotle's characterisation of these friendships as being virtue-based is not in contradiction to the more detailed

There is no doubt that Aristotle makes judgements (and perhaps sometimes harsh ones) about the relative quality or worth of some kinds of *philia* compared to others. Some kinds of relationship are better than others. But also, better people have a much higher ceiling for how excellent their friendships can be. Two different character friendships might be of better or worse quality depending on the relative merits of the people involved. Similarly, we might find that individuals in imperfect friendships might exhibit excellent qualities which accord with virtue-based friendships. But all this coincides with what some scholars already admit about Aristotle's view of friendship, and his view of ethics more generally: namely, that his view is aspirational. You do not need to be fully virtuous to be a good, decent person, nor do you need to be fully virtuous to have good, decent friendships. What Aristotle outlines as the best, most complete friendship is an ideal to which real friendships can be objectively compared.[119]

If I am correct in my two conclusions here, then we have an answer to the first two objections with which we began. Aristotle does not restrict friendship (as we typically conceive of it today) to the fully virtuous. And he does not claim that all people who are in utility and pleasure friendships love their friends only for their qualities, not for themselves.

3. Vice and Friendship

analysis of his view which suggests that these virtue-based friendships need not involve complete virtue in either friend.

[119] This is the view of Pakaluk in his commentary on the *EN* (2005, p. 271).

If everything we have said about Aristotle's view so far is accurate, people can love one another for themselves as people even when they are less than fully virtuous – and even, to a certain extent, when they love each other because of pleasure or utility. Why then does Aristotle insist that vicious people cannot be friends? As we have seen, Aristotle does not deny that people of less than virtuous character can be friends because of virtue. However, he *does* explicitly deny that vicious people can be friends in any robust way.[120] Is Aristotle's view here so implausible? I suggest that, when it is rightly understood, Aristotle makes a good case that vicious people cannot be friends except in the most denuded sense of the term. Hence, his view is essentially correct, and compatible with contemporary accounts of friendship.

As most contemporary scholars would agree, Aristotle's conception of virtue and our idea of what is morally good do not perfectly coincide.[121] Hence, Aristotle's claims that only good people can be friends cannot be the claim that only morally good people – as we understand them – can be friends. Aristotle does still claim that we love our friends for their virtue, and for him virtue is something stable and definite. However, as we have seen, how virtuous a person must be in order to satisfy Aristotle's account of friendship is unclear. And so, it is ultimately not clear what specific relationships Aristotle would deny are friendships based on one or both parties being "not good enough", or "not virtuous".

[120] Specifically, Aristotle claims that base or vicious people can only be friends to a slight degree. As we will see later on, he thinks vicious friendships are even more impoverished than imperfect friendships. See 1157a16-20, 1157b1-5, 1159b7-12, 1166b2ff, 1167b9-16, 1172a8-11. Cf. *EE* 1237b30-35.

[121] See, for instance, Nehamas (2016, p. 27).

In truth, Aristotle never claims that only (fully) good people can be friends, as we have seen. Instead, Aristotle insists only that *vicious* people *cannot* be friends, except to the slightest degree. In what follows, I will argue that on Aristotle's view vice is not contradictory to his view of the good, but instead, is only contrary. That is, for Aristotle, not all badness of character is viciousness. And so, Aristotle would not deny that some people *we* consider to be immoral might be friends. He would also not deny that some people who are not (fully) good on *his own* standard might be friends. All he actually denies is that vicious people, given his understanding of the nature of vice, might be lasting friends.

This brings us to the crucial question: what is Aristotle's view of vice? Here, I follow Jozef Müller's work in his article "Aristotle on Vice" (2015).[122] Müller argues that the Aristotelian vicious person lacks the ability to form or to follow ethical principles. On Müller's reading, it is wrong to think that vicious people have a consistent but mistaken view of the good. Rather, the cause of vicious people's misery (1166b6-28) is the simple fact that the goods they pursue ultimately fail to satisfy them.[123] Müller thinks that according to Aristotle vicious people simply *do not have* a consistent or worked out view of what the good life looks like. Hence, he characterizes vicious people as "…not [having] any worked out conception of the good or the fine to begin with. They adopt what presently seems good to them (that is, what they find pleasant) without asking themselves whether it

[122] Joszef Müller, "Aristotle on Vice," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23 (2015).

[123] Müller distinguishes between two possible readings of Aristotle's view of vice (p. 460). On one view (principled vicious person, or PVP) the vicious person has a fairly well defined view of the good (which she takes to be pleasure), and she makes a principled pursuit of the good as she sees it. On the second view, which Müller believes to be correct (conflicted vicious person, or (CVP) the vicious person is unprincipled in her view of the good and, consequently, she is deeply conflicted in her pursuits.

is in fact fine or good for them" (p. 472). They do not, in other words, reflect on whether the apparent good immediately in front of them fits in with, or contributes to, some overall conception of the good life. Vicious people hate their own lives because, after they adopt what seemed good to them, they regret their actions because *now* they desire something different, and often something contrary. So, for example, a vicious person might over-indulge in alcohol because, whenever a drink is before him, he desires to have it. The next day, he hates and regrets his decisions, desiring a cure to his hangover instead, and perhaps wishing that his life was different in such a way that he did not over-indulge in alcohol.[124]

There is good textual evidence for this view of vice in Aristotle' account of friendship. Aristotle's account of friendship is immediately adjacent to his claim that vicious people cannot be friends:

> A. "Vicious people do not have stability, for they do not remain similar to themselves; they become friends for a short time, enjoying each other's vice. Useful and pleasant friends remain so for longer, so long as they provide pleasure or benefits to one another." (1159b7-12)[125]

[124] Müller notes the similarity of this condition to that of the akratic agent (p. 460). In fact, on his view, the vicious agent does not mirror the virtuous agent at all, but is, in some ways, more similar to the akratic. The difference between the vicious person and the akratic is that the akratic agent *knows* what he or she wishes to do, but fails to do it. Thus, the akratic agent can and does have ethical principles, but cannot follow them. Meanwhile, the vicious person does not even form those principles. In the case of the drunk, if he is vicious, it would not occur to him that drinking over and over was a bad thing to do, and, where you to point out the future pains of the hangover, it would not impact his current desires to consume the drink before him. He does not form a decision on how much he will drink, or how much is too much to drink. Meanwhile, the akratic would be conflicted in the moment, and part of his later regret would be knowing that he failed to live up to his decision to not drink so much. For discussions of Aristotle's views on *akrasia*, see Jozef Müller's "Aristotle on Actions from Lack of Control," *Philosopher's Imprint* 15 (2015), and Hendrik Lorenz's "Aristotle's Analysis of Akratic Action," in R. Polansky (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[125] οἱ δὲ μοχθηροὶ τὸ μὲν βέβαιον οὐκ ἔχουσιν· οὐδὲ γὰρ αὑτοῖς διαμένουσιν ὅμοιοι ὄντες· ἐπ' ὀλίγον δὲ χρόνον γίνονται φίλοι, χαίροντες τῇ ἀλλήλων μοχθηρίᾳ. οἱ χρήσιμοι δὲ καὶ ἡδεῖς ἐπὶ πλεῖον διαμένουσιν· ἕως γὰρ ἂν πορίζωσιν ἡδονὰς ἢ ὠφελείας ἀλλήλοις.

> B. "Being harmonious is impossible for base people, except to a slight degree, just as they can only be friends to a slight degree; in matters of benefits, they seek a larger share [than is fitting], but in matters of hard work and public service they fall short [of what is fitting]." (1167b9-12)[126]

Both of these passages provide reasons why vicious people cannot be friends. In each passage, Aristotle cites the unprincipled character of vicious people as the reason their attempted friendships are doomed to failure. There are two ways that the instability of a vicious person affects her ability to form friendships, both of which distinguish her from people who become friends because of pleasure or utility. First, what causes the friendship to occur is not reliably the same for her as it is for other people who become friends because of pleasure or utility. Witty people, for instance, remain witty, and may continue to enjoy wit in other people. But vicious people are not consistently interested in the same source of pleasure and will hate what they recently loved. Consequently, a truly vicious person, for Aristotle, might start out by enjoying another person's wit, but then come to dislike the other person for the same quality in short order. So, while a friendship caused by the pleasures of wit might not be as stable as a friendship caused by virtue, it is still more stable than the pseudo-friendships caused by the vicious person's latest interest or whim. Second, for Aristotle, vicious people cannot maintain their friendships for long without falling into behaviour which uses their friends as means to get at the objects of their newest and most pressing desires. Passage B above makes this clear. Vicious people continually cause

[126] τοὺς δὲ φαύλους οὐχ οἷόν τε ὁμονοεῖν πλὴν ἐπὶ μικρόν, καθάπερ καὶ φίλους εἶναι, πλεονεξίας ἐφιεμένους ἐν τοῖς ὠφελίμοις, ἐν δὲ τοῖς πόνοις καὶ ταῖς λειτουργίαις ἐλλείποντας·

offense against their would-be friends by over-demanding and under-contributing.[127] In lasting friendships, there is some kind of equality between the two parties in the exchange of goods.[128] Since vicious people are unable to recognize or enact that equality, other people will shun them as friends. Indeed, because of their own skewed view of benefits, vicious people will come to shun one another as much as or even more than decent people shun the vicious.

So, if we accept Müller's view of Aristotelian vice, as I believe we should, then it paints for us a different picture of Aristotle's views on the relationship between friendship and vice. On this reading, Aristotle held that many people who are vicious might take real joy in each other's company and may even continue to like one another over a brief amount of time, so long as each person happens to satisfy the other's ever-changing desires. But this cannot continue for a prolonged period: vicious people do not remain similar to what they were, and they behave in ways that insult and alienate their would-be friends. Eventually, and seemingly inevitably, the synchronicity of their enjoyments will come apart and they will no longer have a reason to like one another.

Recall that for many contemporary scholars the fact that we acknowledge the possibility of loving people who have bad qualities or think we can love people *because*

[127] There is more evidence of this at *EN* 1169a13-18. There Aristotle observes that vicious people harm others by their actions, and they harm themselves too.

[128] Aristotle's discussion of equality and friendship is spread over four chapters: *EN*. 8.7, 8.8, 8.32, and 8.14. In brief, people who are unequal in one or more ways can be friends so long as that inequality is harmonized by the goods exchanged in the friendship. For instance, a person who is wiser may be friends with a fool, so long as the fool reciprocated the shared wisdom with honour and praise. For a parallel discussion, see *EE* 7.3 and 7.4.

they have bad qualities marks a difference between Aristotle's picture of *philia* and our own contemporary understanding of friendship. But vice, for Aristotle, is *not* synonymous with having just any bad qualities, or the contrary to a condition of virtue per se, but only with being in a particular kind of bad condition. Aristotelian vice is not the *only* bad condition a person may be in. The examples Nehamas gives us, which show immoral people being friends, or friendships leading to immorality, are *not* cases of friendships between vicious people in the Aristotelian sense, strictly understood. Rather, instances of bad people being friends, such as Nehamas's example of Thelma and Louise (2016, pp. 189-96), are instances of bad-but-not-truly-vicious people who have formed some kind of friendship.

What, then, can we say about Aristotle's view of *these* kinds of friendships, where bad-but-not-vicious people are friends? At the end of his article on Aristotelian vice, Müller presents an option which, I think, when applied to friendship, satisfies as an answer. He suggests that people who have a *wrong* conception of the good, but who follow through on their views, have more in common with *continent* people than with vicious people (pp. 473-474). This view has some textual support. Consider, for instance, Aristotle's discussion of clever people in *EN* 6.12 (1144a23-1144b1). There, Aristotle distinguishes cleverness (*deinotēs*) as a capacity which is common between prudent people and some evil or unscrupulous people. People who are clever are excellent at achieving their goals in action. If the person is evil or unscrupulous, they are able to achieve the goal of their actions like the prudent person achieve theirs. So, whatever *does* appear good to them, they can pursue

in a principled and effective manner.[129] Consequently, it makes sense that people with skewed views of the good, so long as they share that view, can become friends on Aristotle's account, based on the perception that the other person is good in that same way. No doubt these friendships, for Aristotle, will lack some of the highest and most excellent qualities of friendship. But these relationships might still include many of the good qualities that friendship can have and might even be better than some other friendships in comparison.

In sum: the possibility of immoral people forming friendships, either despite each other's immoral qualities or even *because* of them, does not mark a difference between the contemporary understanding of friendship and Aristotle's views. Instead, these friendships fit neatly into Aristotle's account of other kinds of friendship. The only kinds of friendships which Aristotle denies are possible are lasting friendships between vicious people, where vicious people are understood to follow a pattern of life on which their unprincipled pursuit of immediate pleasures makes their interest in other people unreliable, and where their pursuit of those same pleasures continually offends and alienates their would-be friends. Leaving aside the question of whether truly vicious people (in an Aristotelian sense) actually exist, I submit that we have every reason to suspect that such people would, in fact, be unable to maintain friendships over any significant amount of time. For this reason, I believe Aristotle is right to claim that vicious people cannot be lasting friends. However, it

[129] Aristotle parenthetically notes that vice is what perverts a person's view of the good and produces incorrect views regarding the principle of action (1144a34-36). This might lead us to think that the clever person and the vicious person are one and the same. However, I do not think we need to assume that a person acquires all of her bad views right away, nor all of her vices right away. As a person becomes more vicious, her view of the good deteriorates, and her ability to fashion correct view of principles erodes away.

does not follow that people with some bad character traits—or even those with twisted views of the good—cannot be friends, on his view.

4. Conclusions

The three objections we have considered, all of which are commonly made against Aristotle's view of friendship, do not succeed. First, Aristotle's view of virtue and friendship does not set too high a standard for friendship. Aristotelian virtue-friendship and friendships which accord with the other person can be understood as common, and are not restricted to cases where both parties have attained perfect virtue. Second, for Aristotle, loving another person him/herself is perfectly consistent with the cause of our love being some quality he or she has (such as goodness), or some benefit or pleasure we receive. And so, Aristotelian friendship is *not* more about loving another person's qualities than loving *them*. Aristotelian pleasure and utility friendships, which (as all agree) Aristotle thinks are common and available to a wide range of people, can satisfy the common intuition that friends must love the other person for themselves, and not for some quality they possess, or for the utility or pleasure they furnish. On Aristotle's account, two people may very well believe, emote, and act in accordance with their love for the other person, even though what originally caused them to love the other person, and what continues to cause that love, depends upon some pleasure or utility which the friend provides. Finally, Aristotle does not deny that immoral people (in the contemporary sense) can be friends, only that *vicious* people can be friends. He regarded vice as a particular condition of badness which precludes any constancy of character, and which continually manifests as offensive, anti-

social behaviour. Given this understanding, we have every reason to agree with Aristotle's pessimism about the prospect of friendships between these sorts of people.

If the interpretation I have presented in this chapter is correct, then it turns out that Aristotle's view of *philia* is, in fact, much closer to contemporary views on friendship. No doubt, there is much that is different in Aristotle's account of *philia*, and the objections I have responded to here do not exhaust the worries that one might have with Aristotle's theory. Nonetheless, these three major criticisms of Aristotle's view fail upon analysis. Hence, scholars are wrong to draw a sharp line between Aristotle's claims about friendship and our contemporary understanding of the phenomenon. And they are also wrong to reject his theory as a plausible theory of friendship worth taking seriously today on that basis.

In fact, the compatibility of Aristotle's views with contemporary views on friendship in these respects suggests that his view is more compelling on its own merits than is commonly supposed, and that there might be more that we can glean from it for our own accounts of friendship today. For instance, the distinction between the causes of love and the psychological experience that people have while loving their friend, which I have maintained is present in Aristotle's view, is worth taking seriously. Specifically, I believe that it can help us see the merit in some of Aristotle's other claims, such as his claim that all friendships are based on goodness, and his general view that the best kind of friendship stands for us as a standard to which individual relationships can be compared. We will go on to investigate this question in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4
FRIENDSHIP AND GOODNESS

One main feature of Aristotle's theory of friendship which contemporary philosophers typically leave out of their own discussions of friendship is the idea that friendship is grounded in the goodness of the other person's character. Aristotle himself thinks that friendships based on the goodness of the other person are the best, or primary sort of friendship (*EN* 1156b7-12, 1156b24, 1157b25-26, *EE* 1236b2-3), and as we saw in chapter 3, relationships which focus on the other person himself or herself are what typically qualify as worthy of the name "friendship" in contemporary discussions. However, contemporary philosophers typically reject Aristotle's idea that friendship is grounded in the goodness of our friend's character. There are many reasons for this. A major reason is that, as we saw last chapter, many modern philosophers reject the idea that friendship is restricted to good people, a claim that Aristotle seems to endorse, even if only in a qualified way. Another reason why scholars might reject Aristotle's claim that friendship is founded on goodness is well summarized by Alexander Nehamas when he says that contemporary philosophers simply do not accept an Aristotelian version of "the good," or his conception of human nature.[130] Aristotle had a substantive view of human nature (a view not commonly held today), and his conception of what is good for humans is tightly connected to this view. And so, while it might be fine to insist that friendship is

[130] Alexander Nehamas (2010a, pp. 243-244).

grounded in the other person *themselves*, it is not entirely clear what this means when we say it outside of Aristotle's specific view of goodness and human nature.[131] As Nehamas says: "… in all cases [friendship] involves what, for lack of a better term, we describe as loving our friends 'for themselves.' The problem is that we don't yet know what that means. That is what we need to understand" (2016. p. 106). I think that there is something important in Aristotle's insistence that friendship is founded on the goodness of the other person's character. I believe that it is a point which we ought to incorporate into our own philosophical understanding of friendship, and one which will help answer the worry Nehamas expresses.[132]

In this chapter, I will explore what it means for a relationship to be founded on the goodness of another person's character. I will also argue that we ought to think of friendship, at least in its best and fullest forms, as a relationship of this kind. My suggestion that we should understand friendship in this way is inspired by Aristotle's views, but I do

[131] Neera Badhwar discusses this idea directly in her article "Friends as Ends in Themselves" (1987). She understands loving another person as an end in themselves as being roughly identical to the idea of loving someone *for* themselves, or loving them for who they are. Her claim is that we love our friend as an end in herself when we "love her for her intrinsic worth, for the worth that is hers by virtue of her personal nature, and not unconditionally" (p. 23). There are echoes here of what I will go on to argue in this chapter. However, the "intrinsic worth" and worth which a person possesses by virtue of her "personal nature" does not match goodness in a eudaimonistic sense (which is the view I go on to argue for) since, for Badhwar, the intrinsic value of a thing is relational – where the specific qualities of one individual comprise one side of the relation, and the individual who *values* those qualities is the second. Thus, the intrinsic worth of something is heavily determined by the quality of love that the *lover* has for the object of her love (n. 4 pp. 2-3). The intrinsic value of a thing depends on the relation it has to me, the lover of it, and *how* I love and value it. No doubt this is an important feature of friendship, and important for understanding the difference between instrumental love and end love. But this does not clearly suggest that the person is *good*, only that I value her for who she is and love her as such.

[132] Nehamas provides his own answer to this worry in the course of the chapter (Ch. 4 "And So On") and fills out his account of friendship over the course of *On Friendship*. We will return to his answer below. My own arguments are meant as additional, rather than arguments against his view.

not provide a direct defense of Aristotle's position in every detail. Hence, my view is Aristotelian, but not Aristotle's. For example, I suggest that we need not follow Aristotle's idea of "the good", nor strictly follow his idea of human nature, to embrace the claim that goodness of character forms the basis of friendship. The Aristotelian approach to friendship that I propose here provides us with a clear, robust answer to the question why we love our friends, and also to the question of what it means to love them for themselves.

1. Goodness as the Ground of Friendship

Aristotle believed that all friendships are based on the good in some way. Either a friendship is based on the goodness of the other person, that is, of their character (these are the most complete, or best friendships, according to Aristotle), or it is based on the utility or pleasure that the friends provide for each other (which are good in a way, or at least apparently so).[133] Additionally, Aristotle thinks that we can love our friend incidentally or for himself.[134] As we have seen in previous chapters, a friendship can in fact be based on the pleasure or utility that the other person brings, while each member of the friendship

[133] Aristotle's discussion of goodness and friendship is in *EN* 8.2 and 8.3 and *EE* 7.2. Specifically, see 1155b17-21, and 1236a7-15. It is worth noting that for Aristotle, the attraction of pleasant objects is not always the same as something that is good. For him, especially in the *EE*, the good is an object of the will, but pleasure the object of our desire. Hence, he claims that they are two different things in the passage I cited (1235b24-30). But it is evident from his discussion that pleasure is still a *kind* of good, even if it is not good without qualification. And so, my reading that, for Aristotle, all friendships are founded upon the good *in some way* still equally applies to friendship which are founded upon pleasure. In cases where the friendship is merely about the satisfaction of each person's desire for pleasure, the individuals are simply accepting that their desires are what is good for them. This is no doubt a mistake, but it fits comfortably into what Aristotle thinks, and what I will go on to claim.

[134] See *EN* 1156a11, 1156b2, 1156b7, 1156b20, 1157b4-6.

believes himself to be loving the other person for who he is. As I have also argued in the preceding chapters, relationships which are knowingly based upon the exchange of goods or pleasures hardly count as "friendships" in the modern sense of the term, though they still bear some resemblance to friendships, and are sometimes referred to as such. And so, Aristotle's view captures something we can regard as a feature of every relationship we call a "friendship" today: a relationship which includes a state of love and well-wishing towards the other person *themselves*, and not merely as some means to another end. I am friends with you in virtue of who you are or who I take you to be, and you are friends with me in virtue of who I am, or who you take me to be. This, as I understand it, accords with the typical contemporary view that I discussed last chapter – a general view which I believe is correct.[135]

What Aristotle's view presents to us is the reality that the causal explanation for why these two individuals are friends is, ultimately, grounded in the goodness of each other's character. For, if one or the other of the parties to the friendship is only apparently good, but not actually good, Aristotle takes this to spell doom for the relationship down the line – perhaps not immediately or cleanly, but inevitably. That is, it will spell doom unless the friendship can be established along new lines which, if it were, would once again would be grounded on something good in each person's character (or another apparent good).[136]

[135] As we saw in the last chapter, friendships which are based upon the exchange of goods or pleasure can still meet this important benchmark for contemporary friendship. They can be friendships where each of the participants is friends with the other *person*, and not just friendships born out of a desire to get at the pleasure or the good that the friendship furnishes, as we saw in chapter 2.

[136] I say "some of the good in each person's character" because it seems clearly possible that I might be friends with you because you are good, but that my friendship with you does not have *everything* that is

Aristotle gives us several such examples in his *Ethics*, such as when erotic friends grow older and may establish a friendship along new lines (1157a6-14), and when friends who grow apart in virtue remain friends through one party encouraging the other in virtue (1165b17-22). These short-lived friendships are still friendships, on Aristotle's account, but friendships only in a denuded sense of the term. Relationships of this sort can be thought of as having a pseudo-quality of friendship; they are real friendships, but they lack all the features that a friendship in the unqualified sense of the term would have.

Pleasure and utility friendships are less ideal on Aristotle's view because they are founded on lesser goods, and not on who the other person is himself. Aristotle views these relationships as less stable because the goods that each friend furnishes for their friend may come and go, and the friendship only survives to the extent that the pleasure or utility continues to be furnished, as we saw in the last chapter (1156a16ff). Additionally, it seems that for Aristotle, people who are pleasant or useful, but whose character is unsettled, underdeveloped, or poorly developed, will often have their character *change* over time, and with changing character their behaviours will also change, and so too will their needs and desires.[137] These changes in a person's needs and desires, alongside changes in her behaviour, will likely produce many instances where the goods her friends can furnish her no longer satisfy her needs and desires, and where her behaviour similarly no longer

good about you in view. I might not know how courageous you are, but your generosity and patience are part of what makes me friends with you.

[137] Aristotle thinks that utility-based friendships are the least stable, and the stability of pleasure-based friendships is in between utility- and virtue-based friendship, all things being equal (see, for instance, 1157a3-14).

satisfies them. And so, once again, there is a kind of impermanence to the relationships that such people will form. None of this is to say that their relationships will always fail, or that their relationships will fail quickly. Rather, the point is simply that their relationships will *tend* to fail more, and to last for shorter periods of time, than virtuous peoples' friendships, all other things being equal.[138]

One important element of pleasure and utility friendships that we saw in Chapter 2 is that, in some cases, our hope, expectation, and belief is that we are involved in the best kinds of friendship, but these attitudes are disconnected from reality. As we saw there, I might be mistaken about myself, what I tend to pursue in my relationships, what is worthwhile, and so on, or I might be mistaken about my friend. In all such cases, I think it is fair to say that our hopes, expectations, or beliefs are that the other person is a *good* person. Part of the reason why time is a test of friendship is that it can reveal whether our friend truly *is* the kind of person we think worthy of being a friend, or not. And so, even in the case of imperfect friendships which are based upon utility or pleasure, there can be an expectation that our friends are good, and good for us. In such cases, there is a sense in which the friendship is grounded in goodness, since the continuing reality of the friendship will, at some point, depend on the actual goodness of the other person's character. And so, even if a relationship is caused by pleasure or utility, it might still depend on the goodness

[138] It is an important point to stress that *not* all things are equal. In our observations of human relationships, there will probably be many sorts of relationships where people with worse characters happen to sustain relationships for longer and in a more successful manner than people with better characters. Indeed, since judging character is a deeply fraught issue on its own, judging relationships and what might be right to wrong in them, will likely prove to be even more difficult. While focusing on the philosophical account of what friendships are grounded in ought to help us in diagnosing our and other people's relationships, I think it is important to note that this is not the ultimate aim of this chapter.

of the other person's character, since the expectation of each friend is that their friend is good.[139]

Relatedly, Aristotle thinks that there is a difference between what we perceive as good and what is truly good (1155b23-27). What I take to be goodness in you, and what my character and understanding predispose me to enjoy in other people, might not, in fact, be what is truly good. There are many sorts of examples here. For example, Howard Kalmer (1985) speaks of someone who is fascinated by another person's Machiavellian ruthlessness, and who desires to be more like that himself (p. 5). Some people might delight in the rough, assertive machismo of a man because they think it exemplifies true virtue; some people might be attracted to others because they share niche political views; some people might be attracted to people who can speak authoritatively on literature or religion, or some other topic of shared value, mistaking confidence for wisdom or depth of character; some people might be attracted to anyone who affirms them or notices them. According to Aristotle, what people *actually* desire is what *appears* to be good to them (1155b25-26). Clearly, people might be right or wrong about who or what is good, or good for them, but, as Aristotle also observes, they cannot, in the moment, change what appears as good to them.[140] Further, people can be mistaken about whether the person before them conforms

[139] Incidentally, this helps to account for various ways that friendships develop and progress. For instance, sometimes, we might be friends with another person for pleasure, but, through our association with them, come to love them in a deeper, richer way. Or again, I might think of myself as friends with my friend because he is good, but be shocked to discover that he is not, that the quality of friendship I assumed to be present was, in fact, a pseudo-quality. This could prompt our relationship to decline, but it might also trigger conversations, interactions, and activities which help us to discover more about one another, push for positive character growth, and establish our friendship on those new grounds.

[140] See 1114b1-3. Aristotle's moral psychology is a complicated topic. For our purposes here, it is only necessary to note that what appears good to me now is something over which I do not have direct control. For Aristotle, our view of the good is shaped and developed by our upbringing and the complicated

to the good that they appear to exhibit. Overall, then, the distance between a person's perception of good and the actual good, and between their perception of this person and the person's true character, allows for many cases of partial knowledge, and the opportunities for many mistakes to occur. If my presentation of Aristotle's view is correct, there are many possibilities for relationships in which the participants understand themselves to be in friendships that qualify as friendship in a contemporary sense, and which either are or appear to be friendship based upon goodness.[141]

If we are to take Aristotle's suggestion seriously – that the best friendships are based upon the genuine goodness of the other person's character – along with the view that I have suggested, that even many imperfect friendships operate as and appear to be perfect friendships to the people involved in them, then how are we to understand this idea that the relationship is "based on" or "grounded in" the goodness of the other person? I understand this claim to be that *my* relationship to my friend (and reciprocally, my friend's relationship with me) depends in some crucial way on her actual goodness of character. If the crucial, grounding element is absent or defective, the relationship will fail, either directly or over

outcome of our previous actions and acquired habits. See Myles Burnyeat's excellent discussion in "Aristotle on Learning to be Good," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).

[141] John Cooper (1977a) famously departs from Aristotle's terminology and uses the term "character friendship" to denote all cases where the basis of the relationship is the good qualities of the other person's character, whether the person is fully virtuous or not. He says that "the expression 'character friendship' brings out accurately that the basis for the relationship is the recognition of good qualities of character, without in any way implying that the parties are moral heroes" (p. 629). On Cooper's view, Aristotle understands virtue-friendship in *moral* terms (p. 623). However, it is a widely acknowledged fact that Aristotle's categorization of what is good includes more than what contemporary discussions of ethics regard as moral goodness (see, for instance, Badhwar and Jones (2017)). And so, Aristotle's virtue friendship and Cooper's character friendship might be closer than Cooper suggests.

some period. When the foundation of the building erodes, the building will fall; perhaps not at once, and perhaps not *all* at once, but it will fall. Aristotle himself seems to be thinking along these lines when he claims that, in the case of imperfect friendships, the friendship will dissolve once the pleasure or utility one friend provides for the other disappears (1156a19-21), and again that perfect friendships where one member becomes vicious will eventually dissolve (1159a3-5, 1165b20-31).

Of course, not every case where genuine goodness of character is lacking will result in an immediate destruction of the relationship. Instead, the idea that every friendship is founded upon the goodness of the other person allows for cases where the friendship is founded on *very little*, or cases where the destruction of the friendship takes place over time. And so, cases where two individuals are friends, but where there is nothing or very little that is good about either of them, do not on their own constitute a refutation of the thesis that all friendships are grounded on goodness of character. Aristotle takes it to be obvious that worse people will enter relationships that are more unstable and that those relationships have a higher chance of being less deep and fulfilling. It makes perfect sense to acknowledge that, while relationships of these sorts exist and can be called "friendships" in a loose sense of the term, there is something faulty about them. By contrast, in the cases where there is *nothing* good which grounds the friendship (if such cases exist), these so-called friendships are nothing of the sort, even if they temporarily bear the name.[142]

[142] It is important to remind ourselves, alongside observations of the sort just made, that human relationships are not divided into faultless relationships and relationships not worth having. Even though a friendship might have some, or many faulty elements, and even if a relationship we *thought* was a friendship in the fullest sense of the word was anything but, it does not follow that the relationship was worthless, or that it was not worth having.

The goodness that my friend must have for us to be friends is not something entirely subject-dependent. My friend's character must *really* be good in some way(s), if we are really to be friends, and my love for her must really be grounded on that goodness (and so too my character and her love for me) for our relationship to pass as a friendship at all, at least in an unqualified sense of the term. This is the crucial element I believe is lacking in most contemporary theories of friendship, and the element I insist we should maintain in our own philosophical account of friendship. There are numerous, important ways I will qualify this claim, which I believe will show it to be less dramatic than it might first appear to be. Nonetheless, *actual* goodness of character, where goodness is a subject-independent phenomenon, is a necessary feature of unqualified friendship.

We might be tempted to think that "goodness of character" refers to one kind of thing which everyone should aspire to have, and which will appear similar or identical in each person who has it. It is not clear how Aristotle thought of this issue, but we should be confident in the reality that goodness of character is something varied and progressive. It is varied in the sense that one and the same good quality can appear slightly different in different individuals, and it is progressive in the sense that people can share in some excellences of character, or some degree of excellence, while failing to be perfect in that way, or while failing to be perfect in other ways.[143] What this suggests is that there needs to be some compatibility of goodness between myself and my friend for our friendship to

[143] Aristotle would, I believe, agree at least with the latter part, that goodness is progressive. He acknowledges that friends can help in one another's moral progress, as we saw in Chapter 1, and as scholars like Nancy Sherman have described. See Sherman (1989, p. 142) and *EE* 1245a30-34.

work. This idea tracks with Aristotle's thought. He says that our friends should not only be good, but good *for us*:

> A man is good without qualification by being good, but he is a friend by being good for someone else, and he is both good without qualification and a friend when these two coincide, so that what is good without qualification is what is good for the other. If he is not excellent without qualification, he may be good for someone else by being useful. (1238a4-8)[144]

To be good without qualification is not enough to ground a friendship. Instead, there needs to be something *about* the goodness of the other person which makes the goodness of the other person *available to you* as being lovable. Goodness in an unqualified or abstract way is not what Aristotle has directly in view when he considers friends who are friends because of goodness, nor should it be what we have in view. First, we do not fall in love with abstract goodness, but with people whose characters are good in some way. Second, the unqualified goodness present in another person is certainly necessary for our friendship to be ultimately founded on goodness, but it is not what directly brings about the friendship, nor is it what the friendship is most proximately founded upon. Instead, my friend's goodness must be good *for me* (and conversely, my goodness must be good *for my friend*).

Notice that my friend being good *for me* is not the same as my friend being *useful*. It is only in instances where the friend is *not good* that Aristotle stresses that my friend can still be good for me by being useful. Usefulness is a kind of goodness, but it is not identical to every kind of goodness. When friends are friends on the basis of goodness, it is not the

[144] ἀγαθὸς μὲν γὰρ ἁπλῶς ἐστι τῷ ἀγαθὸς εἶναι, φίλος δὲ τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀγαθός, ἁπλῶς δ' ἀγαθὸς καὶ φίλος, ὅταν συμφωνήσῃ ταῦτ' ἄμφω, ὥστε ὅ ἐστιν ἁπλῶς ἀγαθόν, τὸ τούτου ἄλλῳ, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἁπλῶς μὲν σπουδαίῳ, ἄλλῳ δ' ἀγαθός, ὅτι χρήσιμος.

usefulness of the other person which makes them appear as good in the manner we just discussed.[145] Aristotle's idea of usefulness or utility (*to chrēsimon*) is narrower than what we might think of when we use such terms as "usefulness" or "utility." The reciprocity in friendships of utility seems to be that both people take turns giving and receiving favours, or that they exchange items of value, especially what Aristotle would call "external" or "bodily" goods. There is something obviously correct in typical contemporary examples of utility friendships focusing on the relationships we have with barbers, mechanics, political allies, and so on. We could add to these relationships which have no obvious social structure like barbers or mechanics do, but where the two friends live next door to one another, and happily help one another with projects, or are available when one moves town, and so on.[146]

But these kinds of useful exchange are not what happens when my friend is there to comfort me or give me counsel during a difficult time, or when my friend helps me understand the moral value of being generous, or when my friend joins me and makes it easier for me to volunteer my time to a charitable cause. While it is certainly "useful" (in one broad sense) for my friend to be there for me to discuss my difficult situation, or to provide moral counsel, or to help me in developing my virtue, or to help motivate me and to join me in virtuous action, these are not what Aristotle means when he speaks of what is

[145] Good people are, of course, useful too. So, a fuller picture would be to say that the usefulness of good people is not the *only* way in which their goodness is expressed to me in a way that signals compatibility.

[146] Aristotle himself distinguishes what we might call a "loose" friendship of utility from a "strict" friendship of utility (1162b21-25), where in the former case, we exchange favours but do not keep an exact account of who owe who or by how much. The latter case is much closer to a legally binding contract, where every favour owed is kept track of. These latter relationships would hardly count as friendships to us nowadays, but the former clearly do.

useful (*chrēsimon*). Instead, in these cases my friend is being good for me in a deep, personal way. And it is *these* kinds of advantages which make my friend good *for me*. I have my own character, which will be more or less responsive to good things when they are presented to me, and I will be more or less responsive to the various *ways* that a good can be presented to me. Through her actions, my friend will exhibit her goodness and present it to me in a way that is good for me, in that it makes me a better person. It is my friend, and not anyone else I know, who motivates me to volunteer for charity. It is my friend who sparks an interest in being generous in this or that way. It is my friend who provides the counsel and support that I find sensible or comforting when I am in doubt or distress. So, that my friend is unqualifiedly good in some way is necessary if we are to be friends, but what is most important for our friendship, and to me, is that she is good *for* me in a deeper, more personal, way. The good that my friend is for me roughly tracks what Aristotle would classify as goods of the soul, as opposed to goods of the body or external goods (which are the goods my hairdresser and neighbour provide by their service).[147]

Michael Pakaluk (2005) helpfully summarizes what Aristotle means when he thinks of something being "good for us" in the way I suggest: "…Aristotle thinks that goodness is objective: each kind of thing actually has a characteristic work or function; something becomes *good* in fact if it has those attributes that enable it to carry out that characteristic work well; and it is *good for* a kind of thing that it be good and carry out its function well"

[147] For a discussion of Aristotle's views on goods of the soul, the body, and external goods, see John Cooper's article "Aristotle on the Goods of Fortune," *The Philosophical Review* 94 (1985, especially pp. 176-178). See also Matthew Cashen, "The Ugly, the Lonely, and the Lowly: Aristotle on Happiness and the External Goods," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 29 (2012).

(p. 261). The key element here for present purposes is not that Aristotle thinks goodness is objective, or that he thinks each kind of thing has a characteristic work or function. Instead, what I wish to focus on is the fact that, for Aristotle, goodness for human beings is directly connected to his eudaimonic outlook. For Aristotle, flourishing (*eudaimonia*) is the ultimate goal people strive for in their lives, and what helps us flourish is what is good *for* us (even if we do not accept Aristotle's view that flourishing is *the* goal of our life, it is obviously still an *important* goal, and one to which friendship is tightly bound). With respect to friends, our friends are good for us when they enable or help us to flourish.

How our friends help us to flourish can be extremely varied. Nancy Sherman (1989) shows that, for Aristotle, having friends is an intrinsic part of living a good life, and the good life is *communal* more than it is individualistic.[148] Our friends provide us with the opportunity to act virtuously, and to observe good actions. Friends help us to develop and exercise virtue. Acting for my friend's by being virtuous towards her is part of what a good life includes. Just as my friend might comfort and console me or help me understand what it is to live virtuously, so too I might do these things for *her*. Doing good for our friends is as much a part of our friendship as is their doing good for us. Our friends also share our successes and defeats in life, which adds triumph to the former, and consolation to the latter (cf. p. 135). Similarly, we experience the success of our friends, and experience their challenges and defeats. This sharing in virtue and in life experiences brings out, as it were, the true brilliance and shimmer of a life well lived.

[148] See "The Shared Life" in *The Fabric of Character* (1989 pp. 118-156), especially pp. 127-136.

We can describe and extend the basic point that friends contribute to a flourishing life in a myriad of ways which are characteristic of friendship. Our friends can provide psychological goods of comfort and support, as I mentioned above. Our friends can also provide a sense (and reality) of meaning and belonging. They can bolster our sense of esteem and confidence in ourselves and in our various pursuits in life.[149] And our friends provide these things in a way which is unique to friendship (or nearly so) because of the status they have in our lives and the value we attribute to their presence. I might take comfort in a stranger's words, or might be made confident by the same, but I value my friends' words and deeds in part because they are my *friend's*. These goods that friends provide us are, like practicing virtue and living together as mentioned above, constituent elements of the good life. Depending on who I am, what my character is, and the distance between how I currently live and a life of flourishing, my friend will be good for me insofar as she helps me to flourish now (as I am able), or through our relationship, progress with me towards a life of flourishing (and so too are we good for our friends).

Any of these goods can, of course, also be supplied through other relationships in our life. Family members, therapists, social clubs, and church communities can each help us progress in and give exercise to our virtue, provide us with a sense of belonging, lend psychological comfort and support. But my claim is not that character friends *alone* provide these goods, but rather that conveying these goods is *characteristic* of character friends, and that, where other sorts of relationships might provide one of these goods but not others

[149] Nancy Sherman makes a similar point (140).

(such as therapists, who may give psychological support, but not a sense of community, or an exercise of virtue), our friendships tend to include most or all of these elements.[150] And so, our friends are good for us in a way which is characteristic of friendship in that they provide for us the goods intrinsic to a flourishing life through the goodness of their own characters.

It is also important to note that, for Aristotle, the goodness of character that friendships are based upon need not be what we now associate with *moral* goodness, in a narrow sense. It is a widely acknowledged fact that Aristotle's categorization of what is good includes more than what contemporary discussions of ethics typically regard as moral goodness.[151] Many aspects of our lives and many features that our friends possess can be good without any obvious attachment to moral categories such as duty, rightness, and so on. It is undoubtedly true that many (perhaps most) things which are good will connect in some way to what we nowadays consider moral. However, the connections, if they are there, need not be obvious or completely spelled out for us to affirm the goodness of the subject in question. For example, I can affirm that my friend's wittiness in conversation or his joyful competitiveness in sports are good without needing to provide a full account of

[150] It is worth noting, as an aside, that other relationships such as those with family members can also provide meaning, belonging, and psychological support. However, I suggest that either (i) they do so in a way unique to *that* relationship (such as, for instance, the psychological support of loving parents), or (ii) they do so in a way that makes their relationship a kind of friendship. So for instance, two sisters can be extremely close, but much of their closeness can be explained by the fact that they are friends with one another.

[151] See, for instance, Badhwar and Jones (2017).

how each connects to morality. Such an account might be interesting or useful, but it is not necessary for the purpose of understanding how friendship is grounded in goodness.

Indeed, our moral principles are often *not* what guide us in our attraction to, or selection of, friends in our lives (though they might be one of the reasons).[152] What can often happen is that we explore our commitment to abstract principles *through* our lived experience of and with our friends. People can often surprise us and confound our expectations of what we are committed to, what we like, or what we dislike. For instance, people of different political stripes can often be surprised by how this or that person bucks the general perception they have of the other side. And so, if we are to properly understand how relationships blossom, there is much more to say than will be captured by a description of the other person's moral commitments, or her ideas about what she likes, or dislikes. In

[152] In this line of discussion, I am indebted to Marylin Friedman's excellent discussion in her book *What are Friends For?* (1993). For Friedman, friendship is an important counterbalance to our commitment to moral principles. Insofar as our friendships are commitments to other *people*, we are drawn away from the realm of abstract moral principles, which tend towards universality and impartiality, and towards more concrete moral concerns, which are particular and partial (195). For Friedman, there are real benefits to both poles of moral reasoning; both contribute substantially to our moral judgements and actions (195-202). Friedman thinks that friendships test general, abstract moral guidelines by locating them in concrete, human lives (196). People are, in a way, working models for different sets of ethical principles. The people we become friends with act as living witnesses to our own set of ethical beliefs, or they witness to alternative sets. This potentially provides people with liberating alternatives to the lives they originally expect to lead or are expected to lead by social pressure. So, if I become friends with another person because his personality is attractive to me, I become committed to a person who can witness to me and model for me ethical principles which, perhaps, I have previously not considered, or even rejected based on faulty reasoning, prejudice, or some other reason. Importantly, our commitment to the person occurs somewhat independently of (and often prior to) our comprehension of the sets of moral principles that the person embodies. Our commitments to persons do not necessarily need to conflict with our commitment to principles, but in practice they often do. What I find attractive in another person, what makes me be benevolent to them, what aspects of their character I approve of, may or may not correspond to my abstract ideas about how people ought to be. Nonetheless, I will still find the person attractive as a friend.

The features of Friedman's analysis which I take for granted here are that (i) our friends are living, working models of certain moral principles, and (ii) our love for our friends often pre-dates our knowledge of their moral character.

fact, two people who follow the *same* moral principles will likely live out those principles in ways that are slightly different, involve their own idiosyncratic flair of behaviours and attitudes, and could be attractive or unattractive to the people they know on the basis of those behaviours and attitudes. That is, it is not just that we can test our moral principles by involving ourselves in the circumstances of our friends' lives, we can also delight in *how* our friends express the principles which guide their lives. What is good in the abstract will appear varied when applied to the complexity of the world.

Let's consider a couple of examples of how our friend's principles, goodness, and mannerisms can come apart in our analysis and can shed light on how goodness of character can ground different sorts of friendships. For instance, I have a friend – let's call her Sarah – who is perfectly lovely, pleasant, and polite in conversation but who, when the moment presents itself, is liable to insert a comment which is sarcastic towards me or someone else in a world-weary "get over yourself" sort of way. It is certainly a recognizable feature of her character, and one which endears her to me and to her other friends. There is nothing *moral* about her ability to do or not do this kind of conversational trick. And yet, she is putting on display a kind of goodness which is *special* and *particular* to her. She is not the only sarcastic person that I know, nor is she the only pleasant and polite conversationalist I know. But both these elements are brought together in her and expressed in the relationship I have with her, such that it is part and parcel of my friendship with her, and one of the features which made us friends. Crucially, Sarah has a whole set of moral principles which are not precisely my own. Her behaviour is guided in many ways by these principles and has challenged my own view of the world and compelled me to review my

own beliefs and values. And, just as with her conversational sarcasm, the way she lives out her moral principles fascinates and compels me to lean into the friendship, rather than turn away. And so, her goodness is certainly not limited to the moral principles which she believes and enacts. Her goodness includes the elements of her character which first attracted me to her, as well as her principles. Moreover, it is *how* she enacts those moral principles, and how she enacts the simple elements of a relationship, such as lively conversation, planning a trip together, giving and asking for advice, or even being together in silence. To each of these she brings a uniqueness which stem from who she is, and it is in part because of all this that I was originally attracted to become friends with her, and, as I discover more about who is truly is, what continues to attract me to her.[153]

As another example, I have a friend – let's call him Matt – who shares most or all of my own moral principles, at least on paper. Part of what surprises me about Matt is that, despite the apparent similarities that we share when we discuss moral principles, we almost always discover that our conclusions about how to live and what to prioritize are at odds.

[153] In his book *On Friendship* (2016, pp. 125-127), Alexander Nehamas provides an example of his friend Tom who deftly helps him fix a flat tire in the rain while wearing his pyjamas. He remarks that the specific qualities that Tom puts on display in this episode are part of why Nehamas admires and loves him as a friend, but that these qualities themselves are both insufficient for completely describing his friendship with Tom, and that it is not the qualities themselves that are lovable, but *Tom*. There will be more so say about the irreplaceability of friends later, and how our attempts to describe friends often fail to capture the full sense of our friendship with them. However, in this story, notice that it is not just that Tom has "down-to-earth practical sense [which] coexists with a touching, spontaneous otherworldliness" which makes him a friend. Nehamas goes on to say "Even that, though, would fail: it would fail to communicate that no one else could have done what Tom did that morning. And if you reply that fixing a tire in a silly outfit is not such a rare feat, nor something only a friend would do, I would say to you, unhelpfully, that only Tom could have done what he did in that 'particular' way or, equally, unhelpfully, that what matter to me was not just what Tom *did* but who he *is*…" (p. 126). What Nehamas is missing here, in my view, is the significance that it *is* the particular way in which Tom manifested his goodness which makes him lovable as a friend, and which marks him out uniquely against the backdrop of other people who are capable of springing into action to change a tire on a rainy morning.

Since we are both interested in arriving at the truth, it has caused us to work out in conversation and practice the kind of life that accords with the principles we share (oftentimes through argument, and sometimes frustration). As with my friend Sarah, there are innumerable other qualities in Matt which endear him to me, but this one aspect of our friendship reveals that one or both of us have much to discover about how the ethical principles and doctrines we hold in the abstract actually appear when applied to the world. Additionally, the actual behaviours that Matt and I exhibited towards one another were not always what the other would regard as moral goodness. And so, while moral goodness is an important dimension to our friendship, it certainly is not the only one, and is not even the part that began our friendship. Thus, our friendship has been, in part, a theoretical and practical discovery process for how ethical principles translate to the world.

And so, the *moral* goodness of the other person is not necessarily what attracts us to them, but that is compatible with the idea that our friends are still *good* and *good for us* in several ways, and that we are attracted to them for this very reason. First, they help us understand what the embodiment of ethical principles and values looks like, which can lead to the expansion of our own moral horizons and progress. If my friends help me in this way, as Matt and Sarah have, then they are doing something good as a result of *who they are*. In other words, Matt is good in some way, and good for me as a result of the particular way in which he expresses his goodness. Second, some of the behaviours and mannerisms that endear our friends to us are, in fact, their expression of the good elements of their character, and are therefore dependent on the actual goodness of our friend's character. Sarah's goodness of character need not always be about her *moral* goodness, but her conversational

abilities are not outside what we count as goodness. Finally, the way that a person is good will depend on what their character truly is, but the way that a friend is *good for me* will depend *both* on the way she expresses her goodness in action and the actual character that I have. Not everyone enjoys Sarah's conversational style, but I certainly do. The fact that others do not enjoy Sarah's conversational style does not suggest it is bad or not good, just that others are not disposed to understand it as good. Overall, this is a matter of compatibility. I may not be able understand and appreciate the goodness of a person due to the idiosyncratic facts about him or me which preclude us being attracted to one another. Similarly, my friendship with my friend will also depend, in one sense, on the idiosyncratic facts about me and her. But the explanation for our compatibility, idiosyncratic though it may be, will still depend on the actual goodness that my friend and I make available to one another by our actions.

Let's sum up our discussion so far. When qualified and adapted in the ways we have discussed, Aristotle's claim that friendships are grounded on goodness of character appears to be a real candidate for how we should philosophically think about the basis of friendship. A relationship is grounded on the goodness of another person's character when, if the person is *not* good in the ways expected, or not good in a way that is *good for* the other person, the relationship will fail, either immediately or over time, because it lacks a solid ground. When discussing the goodness of another person's character (or our own), we should keep in mind that moral goodness hardly exhausts the possibilities for having a good character, and that there needs to be some level of compatibility between the individuals, such that being friends is good for both. Instead, the key elements we should have in mind

are (i) that our friends' characters truly *are* good, at least in some way(s), (ii) that our friendships contribute to our flourishing (our friends are good and good *for us*), and (iii) our friends' expression of their goodness matches our perception of what is good.

2. Loving Qualities

A major objection to grounding friendship in the goodness of the other person's character is that there appears to be a conflict between loving someone for who they are themselves and loving them for some abstract quality that they possess, or that is present in their character. This worry is aptly summarized by Julia Annas (1977), when she criticizes Aristotle for running these two ideas together:

> We can like a person for what he is, as opposed to inessential qualities, without regarding him as in the least good. Aristotle is wrongly insisting that friendship involves approval of and respect for the friend's character, and ignoring the irrational element in friendship, which can lead us to like and love people of whom we strongly disapprove. And to the extent that he runs these ideas together, he could be said not to have fully attained the notion of loving someone truly as an individual, rather than as a bearer of desired qualities. (pp. 549-550)

We have considered the main idea here before, in chapter 3. What I argued there is that Annas is wrong to think that Aristotle's view disallows friendships which include an express disapproval of some of our friend's behaviours or elements of character.[154] It is

[154] It is not clear how far we should take Annas's claim that we can like a person without regarding him as in the least good, or how much strong disapproval can be present within a friendship. It seems safe to admit that we can *like* someone who is bad, but it seems less safe to say that we can be *friends* with him, while believing him to be bad, once we remind ourselves of all that friendship seems to involve. If he is bad, the chances of there being well wishing, mutuality, trust, choice, and all other elements we listed above seem less and less. Similarly, we can be *friends* with people we disagree with, even strongly disagree with, but there must still be *something* about the other person which qualifies them as our friend. Strong

also important to remember, again, that Aristotle's understanding of virtue, and therefore goodness of character, covers a much broader terrain than the *moral* virtues we typically imagine when thinking about ethics. Wit, friendliness, and other mannerisms, behaviours, and character traits fit into Aristotle's idea of virtue and how the virtuous person will act. And so, the view that Annas attributes to Aristotle, of running together the ideas of loving someone for themselves and loving them as an approval of their character is, perhaps, less wrong than we might first suppose. Finally, and most crucially, I argued in chapter 3 that the *causes* of love, such as pleasure or utility, can be properly uncoupled from the experience of the friends who love one another, and the kinds of activities they engage in.

Alexander Nehamas presents a critique of Aristotle which is similar to Annas's. According to Nehamas, Aristotle thought that the virtue or goodness that a person possesses is fundamental to who they are, and so, on Aristotle account, there is no trouble in conflating loving someone for who they are and loving them for their virtue (pp. 226, 243). But, as Nehamas points out, this conflation only makes sense if we follow Aristotle's metaphysical understanding of human nature, an understanding which is currently far from mainstream (pp. 243-4). What we are left with, according to Nehamas, is the felt conviction that we love our friends for who they are, but that we do not yet have a right way of articulating what, exactly, that amounts to.

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disagreement is something that might go *along with* friendship, add character and complexity to it, even contribute to it in some way, but it cannot be the basis of a friendship. For instance, individuals who are friends despite strong political or academic difference will often say something to the effect of "He is wrong about everything, but he is still a good guy" or "She's great, but I can't understand why she belies this stuff". The acknowledgement present in each of these imagined cases is that there is something good about the person we recognize *despite* their benighted beliefs. The same can be true of behaviours.

Consider Nehamas's closing remarks in his paper "Aristotelian Philia, Modern Friendship?" (2010a):

> What is the difference between loving you for yourself and loving you for your generosity, your good looks, your sense of humour, or (a favourite philosophical example) your yellow hair? Why can I not say that I love you for your money? Why is it that whenever I try to explain why I love you, no matter how much I say, I always feel that I have left the most important thing unspoken? And what is that most important thing, the self, which seems to be the only real object of our love but is always left unspoken? Aristotle could answer these questions, we are still trying. (p. 244)

The problem that Nehamas hopes to solve is that we do not clearly understand what it *means* to love someone for themselves, and that "it turns out to be surprisingly difficult to do so" (106). But this leaves us with without a full explanation of friendship. It seems right to say that I love my friend for his generosity, and it seems right to say that I love him for himself. But in the first case, I have left out too much for my answer to be satisfying, and in the second case, it is not clear *what* I am saying. If we can solve this problem, then we ought to be able to point to specific friendships and recognize and explain them in the general features they exhibit, as well as speak in clear terms about how those general features of friendship play out in the real world.

Whether or not Nehamas or Annas are correct that Aristotle conflates loving someone for their goodness or virtue and loving them for themselves is not directly our concern. I have given some evidence in chapter 3 that for Aristotle there might be some daylight between loving someone for who they are and loving them for their virtue. The question of whether Aristotle's understanding includes this distinction or not is irrelevant to whether *we* should make this distinction. If I am right that what causes one person to

love another can be uncoupled from, and is distinct from, the love that they have towards their friend, then I believe we have a solution to the problem that Nehamas outlines and that we hope to solve. Simply put, we do not need to choose between loving someone for who they are and loving them as the bearer of desired qualities. We are brought to love them (causally) because they are the bearers of desirable qualities (goodness) – or at least we take them to have such qualities – but the result is that we love *them*, and not merely as the bearer of those qualities. This idea does not insist that loving the other person for their goodness, or whatever qualities they possess, be identical to loving them for who they are.

When I say that I love my friend because he is generous, I am naming one good thing about him which is a noticeable aspect of why I love him, but, as Nehamas rightly says, it leaves out too much. One reason it leaves out too much is because it fails to translate my first-person experience of my friend's generosity. Another reason is that his generosity is not a quality which can be truly separated from the complex which is his character, nor can it be cleanly separated from the rest of him in my perception of him. In reality, of course, our experience of loving someone appears seamless and total, and not as caused by one thing, nor as summable by a series of abstract qualities. I grow to love my friend while having as much of my friend in view as my experiences of him permit. There is usually no isolating a single causal element (such as a single feature of his character) to explain why I grow in love – it appears to me as a steady, uninterrupted evolution of loving *him*, and not of loving some specific qualities he possesses. Nonetheless, stating that I love my friend "because he is good" *does* tell us, in a general way, why I love my friend, so long as we pay close attention to what it means to love my friend because he is good.

Saying that I love my friend because he is good includes all the elements we discussed in the first section of this chapter: first, that he truly is good in some way(s); second, that his goodness contributes in some way towards my flourishing (he is good and good for me); and third, that his particular way of expressing his goodness is a match for what I perceive and understand to be good. Given these complexities, it should come as no surprise that describing in detail why we love someone is so difficult. It is not easy to connect all these things together, and we might be unaware of how they connect, or *wrong* about how they connect, even though they *do* connect. But summarising our love for our friend as "because he is good" *does* answer the question of why we love our friend, even if it does not fully describe the reason why in detail or bring everything we might like to mind.

Annas claims that we can love someone despite his bad qualities, or even because of them, and Nehamas also mentions that we can love a quality in our friends even while hating it in others. Are they right about this, and if so, does this present a problem for my view? The fact that I love my friend despite his bad qualities is clearly consistent with loving him because of his good qualities. As I have suggested, we can come to our friend because of his good character, and as a result love *him* as an individual. Loving my friend *because of* bad qualities which *seem* good to me is also consistent with the view I hold, since, as we have already seen, I can be wrong about what is good, or good for me.[155] Recall

[155] Loving a person for bad qualities which seem good to me is not the same as Nehamas's example of *taking* what I find attractive in my friend as being the good qualities he possesses (2016, pp. 28-29). Nehamas's view of how character grounds friendship is located in the person loving and his *perception* of his friend, and not in the actual character that the friend has which would include the more metaphysical claims that Nehamas' hopes to avoid. This is not to say that the other person's character doesn't matter – far from it, but it does suggest that friendship depends more on the "intentions, feelings, and attitudes" of the individual loving than on the actual character of his friend (p. 198).

that my claim here is that in such cases I am also wrong about the reality or depth of my friendship with my friend; there is some falsity in in the relationship which cuts against properly describing us as friends in an unqualified way. And so, loving my friend *despite* his bad qualities or *because* I mistakenly find his bad qualities to be good is still consistent with the claim that I love *him* as an individual, and with the claim that my friendship is ultimately grounded on the goodness of his character.

What about scenarios where I love qualities in my friend that I find annoying in others, either because I know them to be bad in general, but find them endearing in my friend, or because I think some quality in my friend is good, like his laissez-faire attitude, but I find that same quality annoying in other people? Or again, what if I love my friend's generosity, but do not come to be friends with other people who are generous? It seems that situations like these suggest that what I really love is my friend, and *not* the qualities they possess.[156] But once again, we need not choose between the two. That I love a laissez-faire attitude in my friend, but not in other people, does not necessarily mean that I love his attitude only because I loved him first. It could equally suggest that there is something peculiar about how he conducts himself that I find different or refreshing compared to other people I know with similar (but not identical) attitudes. It could also suggest that I *know* him better than I know others, and hence that I see and understand his attitude in a context but simply do not see or understand it in others. I know, for instance, that my aggressive friend (let's call him Patrick) is not intending to be rude when he expresses himself in an

[156] Nehamas suggests scenarios like this to make just this point (2010a, p. 243).

argument, or when he inserts himself into a social situation, and so I judge his actions with that in mind, and also find his behaviour amusing at times. But I understand why other people might find it rude and take offense, and if I did not know Patrick, I might too. Again, one and the same quality shared by many individuals can be endearing in one, but annoying in others, when we have the context for one, but not for the other. Further, if I know that my friend's brashness is due, in part, to his determination to arrive at the truth, then I can understand that the badness of his character trait actually reflects something else that is *good* in him. So too with a friend whom I love because of his Machiavellian qualities, as Kalmer suggests (p. 5). There is something good in the efficiency, the finality, or the swiftness with which he achieves his aims. Or perhaps I approve of the aims, even if I know that the means are wrong. Character qualities are not clear-cut things: they relate to one another and are contextualized by each other, and by other relevant facts about the person in question. In short, my claim is that we can love our friend's qualities when we understand the quality to be bad in abstract, or annoying in others, so long as we find something good in the quality as it is in the friend. Hence, we can still claim that our love for them is grounded in their goodness of character.

And so, the good qualities of our friends *are* the essential reason we like them – our friend is (or at least appears to be) *good* in specific, objective ways that ground our liking of him. These good qualities are what produce in us the feelings we associate with our relationship, and it is these feelings we hope to explain when we communicate to others why we like someone else. The real phenomenon that Nehamas points out – the feeling that I have inadequately explained my liking for my friend – is due to the difficulty of describing

both my friend's *expression* of her good qualities and my feelings about that. My friend is kind, yes, but she is kind *in this way*, and it is partly *that* that I find endearing, or remarkable. Her actions bring about specific feelings in me towards her which I cannot accurately reproduce in language. So, my struggle is to communicate *how* I know that my friend is kind, pulling the explanation out of my past experiences, and telling them to you in a way that makes you come to understand my first-person perspective of my friend's goodness of character.[157] However, the goodness of my friend's character properly explains why I love her, even if it does not serve as a full description.

Before we move on, I would like to address a worry that the view I have expressed here interprets goodness of character as so broad that my claim lack appreciable force. For instance, one might worry that liking a friend who has bad qualities because I either think that they are good qualities or because I like something good about how he *expresses* his bad qualities nearly evacuates the meaning from my claim that our friendship is grounded on goodness of character. However, this is not so. Recall that, for Aristotle, friendships which are grounded on little goodness (or, I also suggest, friendships grounded only on apparent goodness) are inherently unstable, and thereby more likely to fail over time. Moreover, such friendships, while they last, are friendships only in a qualified way. Understood this way, goodness of character as the ground of friendship still suggests

[157] Tangentially, it is probably also worth considering that the reason some people find it difficult to express what they love about their friends might be because they are themselves confused about what is truly lovable, whether their friend is truly lovable, whether their friend's good qualities are actually what is attractive to them, and so on. Not every relationship is excellent. Moreover, some people who are in good relationships might not understand what the good is in a way that they can express in language, nor can some people connect the specific behaviours of their friends to the more abstract discussions of goodness that might satisfy a philosopher.

something philosophically important. What this view rules out is that badness of character can truly and knowingly serve as grounds for a friendship. So too, my view suggests that friendships of good people, where the friendship is grounded on their actual goodness of character, will reliably outperform relationships which are 'qualified friendships'.

3. Irreplaceability

Another worry some scholars have about the view that friendship is grounded in goodness is that, on this view, we would be liable to exchange friends when an equally good or better individual comes along.[158] The basic worry is that, if what I truly love is "the good" and my love for this person merely depends on her manifestation of the good, then it seems that (i) I love the quality of goodness more than people, and hence that (ii) another person who is equally good or better should be interchangeable with, or preferable to, my present friend. But it should be obvious from our experience of human relationships that we do not do this kind of exchange. And so, we might think either that goodness of character is *not* what grounds friendship, or that, however sensible it might be to exchange one friend for a better friend, there are other reasons why we do not, in fact, do this. However, far from being a stumbling block to explaining why our friends are irreplaceable for us, grounding our account of friendship on goodness of character actually provides

[158] Several scholars note the problem of irreplaceability and its connection to Aristotle's insistence that friendships are founded on the virtue or goodness of the other person. See, for instance, Badhwar and Jones (2017).

further reasons why we do not typically exchange one friend for another, and why we ought not do so.

A common contention among commentators on this issue is that my friend is not interchangeable with someone else because we share a history with one another which the newer, equally good person does not share.[159] On this view, it is these past experiences which form part of our affection for our friend, and we cannot simply have a past with new individuals. Moreover, my past relationship with my friend probably produces certain duties which I have with respect to my friend, and so I cannot simply discard the relationship(s) that I do have – I am bound to them by duty.[160] We can think of these considerations as retrospective, since they concern our shared history.

There are also prospective considerations for why we do not regard our friends as interchangeable. Part of the love we have for our friends involves an expectation of having a future *with them*, knowing them better, and sharing more experiences with them.[161] While we might think that any prospective friend might also prompt this kind of expectation for the future, the reality is that our expectation for the future with our friends *depends* on the love we have for them right now, and not on something more abstract, like the recognition that *if* I become friends with you *then* we will (or might) have a good future together,

[159] For instance, see Badhwar and Jones (2017), Whiting (1991, p. 23).

[160] For discussions of duty, see Friedman (1993, chapters 2 and 3), and Telfer (1971).

[161] Alexander Nehamas (2016) thinks that these forward-looking concerns are part of what makes describing why we love our friend so difficult (see chapter 4 "And So On"). He compares friendships to living metaphors – metaphors whose meanings and interpretations are still open – since friendships, too, are open to further exploration, further experience, and further growth.

sharing our experiences and enriching our lives together. And so, the fascination that we have with our friends regarding our future together is *not* interchangeable with other people, however good they might be, and so our friends are not interchangeable.

There is no doubt that these retrospective and prospective considerations provide some basis for why we do not change who we are friends with by "trading up" to better friends. But I think that we can say more about why friends are not interchangeable. In chapters 1 and 2, I explored what it means for friendship to be a relationship in which each party is in a certain stable state (or something like a state), and what it reveals about the process of becoming friends. What is most relevant to the irreplaceability of my friend, I contend, is not only the shared history we have, but also the state of friendship we *now* have, which was brought about by the specific events of our shared history, but which is, of course, not identical to our shared history. I cannot replace my friend because I simply cannot turn a state of friendship on or off in an instant. I might wish to be friends with someone who is as good as or better than my current friend, but that possibility can only be considered through the current state of my character, a character which includes my current friendships as constituent elements of my character, and my friends as constituent in my happiness.[162] I love my friend for herself, and no one else is her. Consequently, just because

[162] My view here is in broad agreement with Nancy Sherman in her article "Aristotle on the Shared Life", 1993). Neera Badhwar (1991, pp. 483-4) thinks that the reason we cannot replace individuals in an "end friendship" (which is roughly equivalent to the character-friends I write about here) is because he or she is an essential part of our own system of ends. In such friendships, Badhwar observes, we love our friends for who they are, their essential features, character traits, and so on. All these aspects which make up who a person *is* are, in aggregate, unrepeatable, and therefore unreplaceable. My point here is different. Even if my friend were replaceable, she would not be replaceable for me, since I have a state of loving towards *her* and not one towards a person who is identical to or better than her.

another person is equally good or even better than my friend, it in no way suggests that I should "trade up". I am not narrowly enamoured with a quality, but with a person, and persons cannot be exchanged. Even if it were true that people of equivalent goodness were interchangeable, it would not follow that my *friend* is interchangeable with a similarly good person. And yet, the reason I am friends with my friend can still be that she is good in some way. And so, goodness can be the cause of my friendship, it can properly explain why I am friends with my friend, but there can be other relevant features (in this case, the state of loving that I have for my friend) which explain why I am not leaving my friend for someone better, even if they are better in the same way that my friend is good.

4. A Clear Standard

There is a further benefit to understanding friendship as grounded in the goodness of the other person's character: it provides us with a normative framework for understanding, evaluating, and comparing different sorts of relationships. Aristotle himself does not shy away from doing this; in fact, he sometimes speaks in harsh and (from our perspective) uncomfortable language about the comparative merits of different relationships, and about what sorts of people can and cannot be good friends.[163] While we might not wish to follow Aristotle down every avenue here, I believe it can sometimes be helpful to use the goodness of the members involved in a friendship, or the activities they

[163] Some of Aristotle's comments seem to suggest that primary or complete friendship is somewhat rare (e.g. 1156b24-25), while other comments speak in pessimistic terms about certain sorts of people developing real friendships (e.g. 1156a31-34, 1157b13-19, 1158a1-10, 1158b33-35)

do together, as evaluative tools for discussing the comparative merits of different friendships.[164]

It is common to note that the kinds of activities friends do together can be extremely varied.[165] Similarly, it is common to suggest that *what* friends do together is of less importance than *that* they do activities together.[166] That is, the kinds of activities in which friends engage are less important for the existence and continuation of a friendship than the fact that, whatever the activity is that they do, they do it *together*. This insight helpfully captures and explains our common-sense experience of doing a wide variety of activities with our friends and experiencing our friendship *through* those shared activities. Alexander Nehamas and Elizabeth Telfer both suggest that this focus on *togetherness* can help explain the content of the friendship without forcing us to appeal to some objective standard of activity which grounds 'better' and 'worse' relationships, as Aristotle's view seems to imply. Nehamas's (2016) view, in his own words, is as follows:

> Being together rather than doing something together: that is surely part of what distinguishes friends from mere acquaintances and people from whom we expect something specific. And though being together is always manifested in doing something or other together, not *every* doing something together will do; or rather, since, as we have seen, no particular type of situation is characteristic of friendship, absolutely *any* doing

[164] Michael Pakaluk, "Friendship and the Comparison of Goods," *Phronesis* 37 (1992) gives an excellent analysis for how Aristotle envisions some goods as being better than others, and by extension, how some friends and friendships might prove to be better on comparison than others.

[165] See, for instance, Telfer (1971); Nehamas, "The Good of Friendship" (2010b) and Chapter 3 "A Structure of the Soul" in *On Friendship* (2016); and Thomas, "Friendship" (1987).

[166] Thomas (1987) does not say this directly, but it is implied in his description of friendship as being a "minimally structured relationship." Friendships are minimally structured in the sense that *what* the friends do together to build and maintain the friendship will be partially (perhaps mostly) determined by the kinds of activities the participants in the friendship enjoy and engage in.

> something together will do – but only if it is part of a series of incidents through which, collectively, friendship is established, cemented, and expressed. (p. 88)

What Nehamas is pointing to here is that the *being* together of friendship, which seems to be a necessary feature, is typically seen through the things that friends *do* together, where what they do together does not seem to matter so long as the friendship is built up through those activities, and the *being* together is made possible. Nehamas is right, of course, that the activities that people do together are important for their friendships and that these activities cannot provide a basis for categorizing relationships all on their own. There is no neat matching of activities and kinds of relationships. Consequently, what is more important for Nehamas is the *way in which* people do things together. In this, Nehamas sounds – no doubt intentionally – very Aristotelian. Analogously, it is not enough for Aristotle that we act as the virtuous person acts, but that we act *in the way* that she acts. We must have the right set of feelings, be acting from a stable and enduring state, and so forth (1105a26-33). Friendship is like character virtue in this respect, as we saw in Chapter 1. The activities that friends engage in together must be expressive of their state of character, or, as Nehamas puts it, the structure of their souls.[167]

It is true, therefore, that in defining what friendship is, we need to look to something behind the actions and behaviours of the individuals, and to see what makes it the case that this activity or that behaviour is an expression of friendship, and not of something else. For Telfer, as we saw last chapter, friendship is grounded in the shared activity that people do

[167] In Chapter 3 of *On Friendship* ("A Structure of the Soul") Nehamas outlines many ways in which the activities we do together as friends is expressive of who we are, and he contrasts this variety with the fact that no set of outward signs or behaviours uniquely signifies friendship.

together when those activities are accompanied by the passions of friendship (affection, desire for each other's company, and so on) (1970, pp. 223-7). Noticeably absent from her view, for our purposes, is the claim that friends must be good. Indeed, Telfer believes that Aristotle is mistaken on this point because, as we saw in the last chapter, she believes that people can be close friends even while one of them disapproves of some aspects of the other person's character, and she also believes that Aristotle would deny this to be the case (p. 227).[168] Laurence Thomas also thinks that shared activity is a hallmark of friendship, but he remains silent on whether or not what is behind the activity of the friends is something grounded on goodness. He instead chooses to focus on the feelings, closeness, and structure of the relationship.[169]

A common thread in the views of many contemporary scholars, which we explored in the last chapter as well, is that our psychological experience of friendship is an experience of being friends with the other person *herself*, and the activities we do together are less important than that they are done *together*. My friend is irreplaceable, and I do not presume or wish to compare one relationship with another or trade one for another. From my point of view, I am not engaging in a friendship so that I get something good, or so that

[168] Telfer goes on to qualify her reading of Aristotle (p. 228). She understands Aristotle as claiming that loving another person for his virtue is the same as loving him for who he is, and this this view is based upon Aristotle's assumptions that virtue is not a changeable fact about a person. (It is possible that Telfer is here making a strong correlation between (i) friendships by coincidence and pleasure- and utility-based friendship, and (ii) friendships for the other person himself and virtue friendships. As we saw in the last chapter, these terms and kinds of friendships do not break down into a clean correlation in Aristotle's account.) She goes on to say that Aristotle's view here captures something of importance, in that our friendship for the other person may alter if *he* alters, and in many circumstances the passions of friendship we have towards him will change as well. What is absent in Telfer's discussion is whether or not the friend is *good* in some way, and whether or not our liking of him is grounded in that.

[169] See Laurence Thomas, "Friendship" *Synthese* 72 (1987), and "Friendship and Other Loves," (1993).

I lead a happy life. Nor do I pursue activities with my friends because, due to my philosophical view of friendship, I think that *these* activities are what real friends do, and *those* activities are what lesser friends do. Instead, I join in activity with each of my friends according to the established friendship we have: with philosophical colleagues I discuss philosophy; with some friends I discuss literature and art; with some friends I pursue our common interest in outdoor activities, such as hiking or canoeing; with other friends I watch sports and play games; with some friends I join in political activism. I do not judge one sort of friendship in my life by the standards of another, so long as each is healthy and fulfilling.

But what gets downplayed in this approach is the actual importance of the activities themselves. The activities we do with our friends clearly matter, as I suspect Thomas, Telfer, Nehamas, and any other scholar would agree. Some activities aim at a good for myself and my friend, and some goods are preferrable to others. While it might matter more that whatever friends do, they do it together, it also matters *what* they do together.

There are at least two ways what friends do together matters. First, some activities are more closely aligned with living a good life. Consider that some activities are wrong, and arguably by their wrongness they mar the friendship. Friends who rob banks together, or who join in morally destructive behaviour together, will, it seems, have worse friendships than people whose activities are morally neutral, or praiseworthy. It shouldn't matter how much the friends engaged in such a friendship extol the excellence and depth of their relationship. We can know and understand that the friendship is spurring them to be worse, and is, for that reason, a bad friendship. It should be obvious, of course, that such friendships might include good aspects, and that these are the parts that the two friends are

pointing to when they extol their relationship. But the judgement that it is a bad friendship is a holistic judgement, not one that requires there to be nothing good whatever about the individuals, or about the relationship they share. On the whole, friends who act together in ways that are properly aimed at living a good life will have better friendships, all other things being equal.

An example can help underline this point. Parents are often concerned about the sorts of friendships their children have, and the sorts of activities they do with their friends. For instance, sometimes parents and caretakers put pressure on children to avoid getting involved with gangs, or spending too much time in arguably wasteful activities. No doubt there is much to say about how correct or incorrect parents and caretakers are in their preferences for or against certain people as friends for their children, or their preferences for or against the activities that their children and friends jointly do. However, the point is that there is something to get right here, even if only roughly so – some activities and associations are bad for children as they grow up, and parents and caretakers are right when they think carefully and discerningly about who their children are friends with and what they do together. All this comes, at least in part, from the felt conviction that certain activities are better – better for their children's development, better for their success in life, and better here and now. Similarly, we should care about the kinds of friends we have, and the activities we do with them.

A second way that what friends do together is important for the quality of the friendship is that some activities are intrinsically more conducive to the formation or depths of friendship than others. While it is entirely possible to become friends with another person

through a notoriously solitary activity like stamp collecting (and I do not doubt there are deep and lasting friendships formed around this activity), we have every reason to suppose that some activities are more reliable as a staring point for friendship. For instance, perhaps going out to social dances or joining and attending a sports club are a better for forming friendship than stamp collecting. Some activities, too, might be better or worse for the closeness and intimacy we experience with our friends. Where social dancing might to good for meeting and becoming friends, sharing a meal, or having literary discussions might prove better activities for growing in and experiencing the intimacy typical of deep friendships. Enjoying multiple kinds of excellent friendship-forming activities and activities which are conducive to closeness and intimacy, would be best of all for forming and growing into deep, lasting friendships.

Someone might reasonably object to the ordering I have given to better and worse activities. What I hope to avoid is the view that any activity is equivalent to others, and that it depends far more on the people engaged in the activity than the activity itself. Which activities are better than which is an obvious point of controversy, and there are likely fuzzy boundaries, asymmetrically excellent elements in some activities we wish to compare, and so on. So too, much *will* depend on the people engaged in the activities. Not everyone enjoys literary discussion, some people bond quite deeply over their shared love of dance, and stamp collectors can be fast friends. But the reality of better and worse activities, where better and worse depends on the activities themselves, and not on the agents involved, is what we should agree on.

This observation provides us with one kind of evaluative metric for the quality of a friendship: namely, a metric of how fitting our activities are for engaging in or expressing friendship. The better and more varied the activities, the better the friendship will be, on average. Or, at the very least, the better the *possibility* for excellent friendship will be. Just because we engage in many activities together, and just because what we do together seems more fitting for establishing friendships, it does not follow, on its own, that we will be deep, lasting friends. Rather, engaging in activities which are more conducive to friendship provides the conditions for the possibility of deep friendship more than other activities, and the presence of these activities in a friendship is a sign of health and excellence.

We can add to this point by re-introducing the moral element that friendships often include. If the activities that my friends and I engage in are themselves moral, such as volunteering at a shelter, working for justice in a political campaign, or perhaps engaging in religious observance (if such things are moral), or if the activities improve our moral selves, such as engaging in philosophical discussion, fraternal or sororal correction, or providing accountability for moral action, and so on, then we can safely say that the friendship is better than if the friends did none of these things. Once again, we should stress that the difference between friendship with moral outcomes and friendship without moral outcomes is not a difference between worthwhile relationships and relationships not worth having. Nor ought it be the goal of every friendship to be of the better sort. Rather, the claim is only that friendships which include these elements are *good* (and, of course, are grounded in the good of the other person), and that, all things being equal, are superior to relationships which lack these elements of goodness.

A major theme here is that the individuals involved in the friendship need to be properly disposed to *engage* in the activities and receive and understand the good associated with them. If I am a poor dancer, or if I hate dancing, then social dancing will not be the best place to develop my friendship with another.[170] If I am deficient morally, and see no value in volunteering at a shelter, then that is something over which my prospective friend and I cannot bond. Once again, we can see that there needs to be compatibility. Who I am, what my abilities are, what my interests and goals are, will all factor into the kinds of activities in which I am able and willing to participate. There will have to be some match with regards to these things in my prospective friend if we are to have a good chance of forming a friendship.[171]

5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have defended the Aristotelian claim that goodness of character is what ultimately grounds friendships. This is a claim which many contemporary philosophers reject, but it is one which they ought to affirm. One reason that we should view friendship as based on goodness of character is that it provides for us a clear and final

[170] There is, of course, the possibility that my friend and I are both poor dancers, and that going out and learning to dance is a part of the friendship. Such improvements in our abilities, and the closeness we achieve with one another by having those experiences is a part of my observation here, and not an objection to it.

[171] Incidentally, the kinds of activities someone is able to participate in, and whether or not he or she is willing to participate in them, are other ways of evaluating their goodness of character. When thinking about how we test our friends, or how friendship is similar to virtue, understanding what activities are good to do, and noticing which our friends do with relish, and which they shy away from, can give us some level of knowledge about their character.

answer to the question "what does it mean to love someone for themselves?". A second reason is that this allows us to philosophically analyse and compare friendships by observing the activities associated with a friendship. We can use this analysis to understand the various relationships in our own lives and the lives of others. Finally, understanding goodness of character as the grounds of a friendship does not make unintelligible the irreplaceability of our friends or the amoral elements of our friendships. On the contrary, regarding goodness as the ground of friendship can help me make sense of *why* my friend is irreplaceable, and of *why* my attraction to her is not always attached to some obvious or explicit morally good quality.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have made several contributions to our understanding of Aristotle and to our philosophical understanding of friendship. Each chapter has been a (largely) stand-alone defence or explication of Aristotle's view, or, in the case of chapter 4, a defence of a key view that Aristotle holds. Taken together, this project reveals complexities in Aristotle's view and defends them as important elements for consideration in contemporary philosophical discussions of friendship. Aristotle is far from a fringe figure for such discussions, but his view is, I have argued, worthy of further and closer examination. Let's sum up the main elements of his view which I have explicated and review why they are worth taking seriously for contemporary accounts.

In chapter 1, I argued that Aristotle understands being in a friendship to be similar in several ways to possessing character virtue. To be in a friendship, for Aristotle, is to have acquired a prohairetic state, or something akin to a state which chooses. Being in this state prompts friends to have consistent and reliable feelings towards their friend and to act for their friend's benefit. Moreover, according to Aristotle, how we acquire friendship is often quite similar to how we develop character virtues. Good friendships are, for Aristotle, something worth pursuing in our lives, and we develop our friendships with our friends by doing the actions *of* a friendship, which in turn *produce* the corresponding state, just as we develop character virtues by performing the corresponding acts.

Whether or not we take on Aristotle understanding of virtue as a state of the soul, I believe that his idea that being in a friendship includes something *like* a state of caring within each person is an intriguing and useful idea to carry forward into contemporary understandings of friendship. Other terms might be more precise or carry less philosophical baggage than "state of soul" (Nehamas uses the term "structure of the soul" to denote something similar). Nonetheless, that friendship involves being in something like an enduring state helps to colour in our explanation of the permanence of friendship, the automatic and deep feelings we reliably have towards our friends, and the grief and sense of personal loss associated with absent or past friends. Similarly, attending to the various ways that friendship mirrors the acquisition and exercise of virtue can help us to understand how to acquire friends and be excellent as a friend. Understanding this pattern of development in friendship and using it as a point of analysis for our own friendships (successful or otherwise) can also assist us in acquiring self-knowledge regarding what kinds of relationships we are psychologically disposed to seek out, what virtues we have or lack which impact the relationships we form, and perhaps more. Ultimately, the state-like aspect of friendship, and its similarity in this regard to virtue, can reveal more clearly what friendship *is* – certainly in our understanding of Aristotle, and perhaps in our own philosophical understanding of friendship today.

In chapter 2, I argued that Aristotle's view has room for a range of instances where individuals are *mistaken* about their relationship, and where their intentions and motivations for friendship uncouple from the reality of the friendships they form. The upshot of this is that some, perhaps many, friendships which are imperfect from the

perspective of an *external* observer can appear as perfect or character friendships to the people involved in that friendship. In the establishment of every friendship, the two involved parties must test one another to prove whether the other person is truly good. But the test that Aristotle has in mind is unreliable, since there is no guarantee that the behaviour of our friends will show their true character, and people are often inclined to be friendly and to act as friends prior to properly understanding the character of their friend. Since friendship involves each individual being in a certain state (or something like a state), and since being in such a state can occur prior to properly understanding our friend's true character, there are many possible instances where the true nature of the friendship is different from the agent's personal perspective on it. Arguably, Aristotle's taxonomy of friendship and his notion of how relationships are tested provides a basic account of something common in human relationships: our friends are not always what they seem, and we can be mistaken about them, perhaps in small and easily overlooked ways, or perhaps in deeply significant and tragic ways, such as mistaking their pseudo-friendliness for genuine goodwill.

Aristotle's view also permits us to read into his account a distinction between what the friendship is *about* (the other person) and what *causes* the friendship (pleasure, utility, or goodness). This crucial distinction, which I defended further in Chapter 3, helps to show that, for Aristotle, virtue-based friendships are certainly possible between individuals of lesser virtue, as other scholars have also maintained. But we can say more. The distinction between what the relationship is about and the cause of love suggests that Aristotle's character friendship is not far from our contemporary understanding of friendship as a

relationship which is primarily about another *person*, and not about some quality he or she possesses.

These nuances and complexities in Aristotle's view, taken together, give us a reading of Aristotle which, I suggest, makes that view more compelling. Although his theory of friendship attempts to provide a philosophical ideal which can be described by an external observer of human relationships, his account includes an impressive amount of room for the various psychological experiences and agent-centred perspectives that we all typically have in our own relationships. Indeed, the complexities in his account, once we recognize them, provide us with ways to defend his theory against common contemporary objections, as we have seen, and cast his thought in a far more appealing light.

I have also argued that Aristotle was right about something important which does not feature in many modern theories – he was right that friendship is grounded on goodness of character. This point is controversial, and it must be qualified in several ways in order to be made philosophically plausible. The most obvious qualifiers are that (i) people need not be perfect for their character to be good in *some* way(s), and (ii) the goodness of their character is not the most *proximate* reason for the friendship – it is the goodness of their character as distinctively expressed in their actions which causes attraction and love. Nonetheless, upon final analysis, every friendship depends on the goodness in their friend's character, where goodness is understood as a subject-independent thing. All relationships are grounded in goodness of character when the goodness of each person's character comprises a real, necessary feature of the friendship's continuance.

If we adopt a broadly Aristotelian idea of friendship as grounded in goodness of character, as I have argued we should, then we gain several advantages for our theory of friendship.

First, this helps us answer the question "why am I friends with this person?" Being able to say "because she is good" provides a natural, reasonable, and defensible stopping point for explanation. As Nehamas rightly points out, however, it does not seem to properly describe *everything* we might wish to include in the answer of "why?". I have argued that, nevertheless, once we properly understand what it means to love someone for their goodness, we *can* be satisfied with the explanation, even if not every element of our friend is captured by it. The first reason is that most friendships involve us loving our friend for themselves, but we are caused to love them because of their goodness. Hence, when we name what is *good* about our friends, we have not fully described our love for them, because we love *them* and not just the goodness which causes us to love them. Second, the good elements we name when describing why we love our friends pick out specific *expressions* of goodness which are unique, or nearly unique, to our friends. *How* my friend is good, and how she is good *for me,* will depend on a wide complex of factors, such as how her various traits connect with one another and are expressed in a way that make her goodness of character available to me as lovable, and how she provides the goods characteristic of friendship which are intrinsic to living a flourishing life (of course, it also depends a great deal on who *I* am, and how my character is formed). Our deepest and more intense friendships do many of these things at the same time and often have a long history of providing such goods in our lives. Consequently, any attempt to articulate or describe why

I am friends with *this* friend will seem like an overwhelming task, hardly started after long effort, and always in need of insisting "and so on…", as Nehamas rightly says.

Second, despite some claims to the contrary, regarding friendship as grounded in goodness of character also helps us understand why our friends are irreplaceable by people of equal or better goodness, abstractly considered. Our friends are irreplaceable because we love *them* on account of their goodness, and not the goodness by itself. Moreover, it is not just that our friends are *good* in the abstract, or even that they have good qualities that cause us to love them, but rather, it is their *expression* of their goodness in their own distinctive ways which makes their goodness available to us as something lovable. And finally, as I have argued, our friendship has been built up over time, and we now have a state (or something like a state) of well-wishing toward our friend, something which cannot simply be done away with once a better person comes along.

Third, regarding friendship as grounded in goodness of character helps us evaluate and compare the relative qualities of different friendships, and to say *why* some friendships might be better, in some ways, than others. If goodness of character is what grounds friendship, and if the goods that our friends provide us as intrinsic elements of living a good life are definitively connected to their goodness of character, then better relationships are made possible or more likely if we or our friends are, or become, better people. People are often reluctant to make these kinds of claims, but it is still an important and advantageous thing to do, if we can do it rightly. Being able to make solid, philosophically compelling determinations of what sorts of friendships provide more in the way of intrinsic goods,

goods which promote the living of a flourishing life, is one important piece of sketching out a portrayal of such a life in our ethical theory.

This last advantage is, perhaps, the most promising area for further development of my view that friendship is founded on goodness of character. First, by developing a standard of comparison for the better and worse sorts of friendship, we may be able to sort the phenomenon of friendship into new philosophical categories which treat the subject in a more fine-grained manner than Aristotle or other philosophers have done hitherto. How, and to what extent, we are able to defensibly compare individual friendships and friendship-types can similarly help flesh out how goodness of character affects the kinds of relationships we are able to form. This may prove useful in describing the extent to which goodness of character is important as a tool for explicating friendship. A study of this sort would necessarily need to spend more time engaging with sociological and anthropological research.

On the whole, then, this project has aimed to portray Aristotle's view as philosophically sophisticated and psychologically plausible in ways that scholars sometimes deny, or in ways that are not directly considered in the scholarly literature. Additionally, it has shown that his view of goodness and friendship can shed some light on contemporary discussions of friendship by providing a satisfying answer to *why* two people are friends, why their relationship is irreplaceable, and whether their relationship is excellent, or falls short of excellence.

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