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Altruism in the Good Life: An Archetype of Virtuous Friendship

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Abstract

What does it mean to live a good life shared with others? The question fundamentally motivates my inquiry into the ancient ethical theories of Aristotle and the early Stoics. Aristotle's account of *eudaimonia* presented in *Nicomachean Ethics* is selected over the early Stoics for the conception of human nature integral to it honors the importance of partiality in human development and flourishing. The altruism central to an Aristotelian's perfect friendships by way of goodwill is defended to demonstrate virtuous people have genuine altruistic concern for the sake of their friends as explained by self-referential altruism. Finally, an archetype of kinds of virtuous relationships is presented and maintained to show the role of altruism in the many relationships an agent may have to their family, friends, and political community.

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To everyone I have come to share my life with, I hope this paper is evidence of how much I value our relationship and how I hope to develop to be a better friend yet.

Altruism in the Good Life

How should I live my life shared with others? The question is central to the project of determining and living a good life. Should I live a life of economic pursuit and lavish wealth? Or perhaps a life of gentle service and humble means? The routes taken to live a good life are so various that thousands of years of thought has gone into mapping the many ways people can live good fulfilling lives in the company of others. The ancient philosophers of western thought began their inquiry into philosophy with these deeply human questions in mind.

The philosophy of Aristotle and the early Stoics is different from contemporary moral theories in that it takes these questions and the personal reflection they emanate from to be the birthplace of philosophy.[1] It is no surprise then that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* begins with an exploration of what common people hold to be the aim of a good human life.[2] His ethical theory is tailored to fit the life of the reflective person aiming to uncover and live a good life. The early Stoics among other ancient western philosophers share a fundamental focus on the shape and contents of a well lived life. Many eudaimonist theories derive conceptions of an excellent, or virtuous, life from their questioning of human nature, human experience, and devoted logical thought. However, great differences exist among ancient virtue ethics because of their differing accounts of human nature, virtue, other-concern, and ultimately happiness.

By comparing the conceptions of a good life voiced by Aristotle and the early Stoics I will attempt to provide a compelling account of the good life and the role of altruism within it. I will outline the differing conceptions of the good life sketched by Aristotle and the early Stoics by highlighting the core differences between the theories. Julia Annas' insightful exploration of

[1] See Julia Annas' *The Morality of Happiness* pg. 27-47.
[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin, 1095a17-31.

the theories' differing accounts of human nature, virtue, other-concern, and happiness in *The Morality of Happiness* guides my comparison. Using the differences illuminated by comparing the two conceptions of a life well lived, I will argue for the Aristotelian version of the good life as the Stoic account of human nature relies on an empirically false conception of human nature.

In the second chapter I will firmly place altruism within Aristotle's ethical theory as it appears in the virtues of generosity, magnificence, and friendliness as well as in a lengthy discussion of friendship in books VIII & IX. Aristotle's account of friendship claims virtuous friendships are the only relationship where genuine altruistic motivation, a concern for the wellbeing of the other for their sake, exists. The self-love mechanism underpinning altruistic concern in the theory has been the subject of contemporary debate over whether or not virtuous friendships actually contain genuine other-concern. By grappling with the Eudaimonist Axiom and self-absorption objection, the truly altruistic content of virtuous friendships is exposed. The importance and role of partiality finds a clear home in the theory as well by defining Aristotle's other-concern as self-referential altruism as argued for by J.A. West. The result is an ethical theory of altruism favoring generous action and goodwill towards a very select group of perfect friendships.

In the final chapter I introduce an archetype of virtuous friendship with the aim of expanding altruistic concern to better encompass the many social communities moral agents belong to. The *Drowning Child* thought experiment integral to Peter Singer's argument for effective altruism directs my attempt to expand Aristotle's altruism to those outside the narrowly defined perfect friendships put forward in the second chapter. The result is a significantly expanded sense of altruism to ones' close connections and political community based on the central features of Aristotelian friendship argued for in the work of John Cooper, Corrine

Gartner, and Nancy Sherman. Hopefully the following paper will prompt the reader to reflect on the life they are living, the life they want to live, and the altruism they should have for others as is so characteristic of Aristotle's philosophy.

Chapter 1: Selecting the Good Life

The apparently distant conception of virtue ethics is surprisingly homegrown: conceived by the reflective person's inquiry into the aim of their own life, sustained by common intuitions following accessible logic, and driven to improve the lives of those who encounter it. The ancient western philosophers did not begin their inquiry as contemporary works do from a judgment of right action; Is it right to pull the trolly lever to save five lives at the price of one? Rather, these theories meet the reader at a place of personal reflection when one considers the past and future direction of life in its entirety.

Ancient ethics begins with individual reflection on the entirety of one's life. Julia Annas conceptualizes this as "life as a whole" which is properly elicited by asking oneself "am I satisfied with my life as a whole, with the way it has to developed and promises to continue?" (Annas 28). Ancient ethical theories have little time for the "dull and complacent" or "immature" (Annas 29) who have not asked of themselves a similar reflective question. Once the mature individual has reached the point of reflection necessary for philosophical inquiry, Aristotle and the early Stoics step in to provide an account of how such an individual should tackle the challenging task of living a good life.

But what does a life well lived consist of? Aristotle begins to aid the pondering reader with an exploration of the goods many seek and the ends we pursue to achieve them. Every action we take is aimed at some good. Aristotle outlines the idea in more detail in the opening

lines of *Nicomachean Ethics* by stating "Every craft and every line of inquiry, and likewise every action and decision, seems to seek some good; that is why some people were right to describe the good as what everything seeks," (NE 1094a1-3). Not only do specific skills such as cabinetmaking seek a certain good, but every deliberate action we take is also aimed at achieving a particular good. Aristotle draws from this intuitive premise to make his well-known argument for an ultimate human good. The line of the argument is worth following in detail as it grounds a basic conception of virtue ethics which can be compared to those of other ancient western philosophers such as the early Stoics.

If every deliberate action is taken to aim at a particular good, then there will be a best good which is achievable through our actions. Any reader steeped in personal reflection will acknowledge that our actions are aimed at achieving some good. We run to be healthy or go to the movies to be entertained. But often our ends are subordinated within higher, more valuable ends. I may run to be healthy, but I likely want to be healthy to enjoy a longer life or to be happy: "for instance, bridle making and every other science producing equipment for horses are subordinate to horsemanship, while this is and every action in warfare are, in turn, subordinate to generalship," (1094a10-13). Reflection on our processes of choice and action reveals that many of the goods we pursue are merely a step towards higher, more encompassing ends. As Annas explains "The immediate ends or aims of these actions don't provide a full explanation of why the agent did them, what she thought good about doing them," (Annas 31).

Aristotle takes the logical next step in saying "Suppose, then, that the things achievable by action have some end that we wish for because of itself, and because of which we wish for the other things… Clearly, this end will be the good, that is to say, the best good," (1094a18-22). If all of our ends are roosted within higher ends aimed at higher goods, then eventually we must

arrive at one final good or keep on ad infinitum. What is this best good, then, which all other goods aim at?

Aristotle begins with two criteria which any best good must satisfy. The best good must be "complete and self-sufficient (NE 1097b21). It must be complete in that it is chosen for its own sake, rather than with the aim of accomplishing a future end. In other words, it must be the end all other ends aim at. And it must be self-sufficient in that "when all by itself it makes a life choiceworthy and lacking nothing," (NE 1097b15). An end of this nature will explain in totality the reflective agent's life. It will encompass all of the actions which the agent takes to reach their goals and will make the agent's life, considered as a whole, worth living.[3] For the ancient philosophers this end is happiness, or *eudaimonia,* a term coined by Aristotle.

It is widely agreed upon that happiness is the common final end all humans aim at in their lives. Aristotle's argument for happiness as the final end begins from common conceptions of what people seek to accomplish with their lives. It is apparent to any reflective agent that they seek to live a happy life. Not only is happiness, generally conceptualized, a commonly accepted final end, but it also meets Aristotle's criteria of being complete and self-sufficient: happiness is chosen for its own sake and a happy life lacks nothing (NE 1097b21). But what makes humans happy in general and the reflective happy in particular? Aristotle outlines the basics of human happiness through his human functioning argument or determination of how humans are.

The final human end of happiness is first crafted by the unique character of human experience. Just as every action has a function that determines good action, the flute's is to play music, each human also has a function. For Aristotle, "the human function is the activity of the soul in accord with reason or requiring reason," (NE 1098a8). Humankind's greatest difference

[3] For further explanation of the self-sufficiency and completeness criteria see Annas 40-42.

from plants and other animals is our ability to think. Our happiness is determined by our ability to reason well or poorly in accordance with our being. As the reader immediately recognizes, our emotions and bodily concerns are one aspect of our greater soul or being. Aristotle's functioning argument leads him to detail two types of virtue which respect this fact: intellectual virtue and virtue of character. The first is derived from pure reason or our ability to reason without the influence of bodily or affective concerns (NE 1098a3-21). The latter is derived from the interaction of reason and affective concerns.

Being a virtuous person means living a good life. Human happiness is the result of a person functioning excellently as a person. The happy, virtuous person will, as Aristotle says, have "feelings at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way," (NE 1106a22). All of these conditions will be met by the virtuous person because they will be functioning excellently as a person with reason and affective concerns. With Aristotle's argument firmly traced, a deeper exploration of the differences between his account and the early Stoics' philosophy becomes possible.

Many of the ancient theories of virtue ethics share several of the foundational characteristics thus established. Each meets the agent at a point of reflection considering their life as a whole. The theories rely on common intuitions and familiar logic to arrive at a final end of human life which is comprehensive of all other ends and self-sufficient in that it makes life worth living. The happiness many eudaimonist seek is importantly determined and defined by the unique human capacity for reason. A person who lives a happy life will excel in their ability to function as a person with reason. Becoming virtuous in thought and character, then, is how I should live my life.

However, there remains a great amount of debate between ancient schools of philosophical thought on four main categories: human nature, virtue, other-concern, and happiness. As Annas goes to great length to detail, each ancient school has its own conception of each of these elements and weighs them differently within their broader ethical theory. The result is starkly different prescriptions for how to live a good life. A comparison of Aristotle and the early Stoics' ethical theories among these criteria exposes the core characteristics of each theory and directs this paper towards the best answer to the question with which it began: How should I live my life shared with others?

A conception of human nature is central to every ancient ethical theory: "Ancient ethical theories appeal to nature to ground their ethical claims," (Annas 135). Annas is quick to distance the appeal to nature in ancient ethical theories from modern naturalist theories of morality which reduce righteous action to what is natural for humans to do (Annas 135). In ancient ethical theories, human nature does not reduce right action to what is natural, but rather tries to establish what human nature is. Human nature, as exemplified with Aristotle's functioning argument, is what one must turn to in order to "determine the proper place of virtue in our lives," (Annas 136). The appeal to nature in ancient ethical theories plays two distinct roles.

First, the appeal to human nature acts as a constraint in determining the base components of ourselves we must work with. Annas states, "Nature is those aspects of ourselves that we cannot change but must work with," (Annas 214). In this role, nature sets the stage for the virtuous person to act on. It does not claim, as modern naturalist theories do, that nature determines right action, but instead provides the core ingredients of a human life which the virtuous agent does "in the right way rather than the wrong," (Annas 214). For Aristotle, human nature is not only a constraint, but can also be seen in a positive light: human nature, or the

natural states and feelings it entails, enable a person to become virtuous "when the agent reflects on her reasons for acting and develops the intellectual basis of real virtue," (Annas 214). This is seen in Aristotle's theory where the virtuous person will do the right thing, for the right reason, in the right way, and with the right feeling of pleasure and satisfaction," (NE 1105a30). Our nature to gain pleasure from sugary foods can become a virtue when we eat them in the right amount, for the right reason, and gain the right amount of pleasure from them. The ancient appeal to nature is then one of pragmatism: human nature sets the bounds of what is possible for a virtuous person by starting with unavoidable components of human life.

In its second role in ancient ethical theory, nature is a driver of ethical development. To the ancient philosophers, it is a natural process for humans to develop as ethical beings. Annas puts this clearly by saying "ethical development, which is not a given but is precisely what is up to us to achieve, is itself natural," (Annas 215). Just as it is natural for trees to develop their foliage, it is natural for humans to develop their reason to best meet their unique human functioning. As virtue is the natural outgrowth of human reason, human nature when taken from a developmental perspective leads us to become more virtuous. The appeal to nature in ancient ethical theories serves as a practical constraint on what a virtuous person can achieve and as a force pushing every human towards ethical development. Eudaimonist theories differ greatly on these two components of ethical theory.

The greatest difference between Aristotelian and Stoic conceptions of human nature is their focus on the developmental nature of ethics and the resulting valuation of virtue. For the early Stoics "it is a firm part of Stoic ethics that our final ends is living in accordance with nature," (Annas 159). To live with nature, however, is not to pursue pleasure, health or wealth

which the Stoics label as "indifferents".[4] Rather part of human nature is human development and the specific development of a person as a rational person. The Stoics arrive at a two-step theory of development where we are first born as fundamentally concerned for ourselves and "guided by instinct to the basic things that our nature needs – food, warmth, security," (Annas 263). With time, we develop our rational capacity as human beings do, coming to understand the motivation behind our actions and to follow rules.[5] The second stage of Stoic development comes when the agent realizes the unique value of virtue in comparison to other goods, the indifferents, including their own being.

In the second and final stage of human development, the Stoic recognizes and realizes the unique value of virtue. Annas explains the second stage, "Finally, we come to a point when, if our reason develops properly, we appreciate that the value of getting things rationally is crucially different from the value of our rational activity itself; it is the reasons we act on that matter, not the consequences of acting on those reasons," (Annas 263). The rational integral to and determining virtuous action is the only determinant of value once a Stoic reaches the final point of development: indifferents are recognized as inferior in kind to virtuous action. Once the value of virtue is properly recognized, "none of the primary natural things is to be sought for its own sake," says Cicero (Annas 264). This includes our concern for ourselves and for others as the virtuous Stoic reaches a place of impartiality. The unique valuing of virtue arrived at by the early Stoics two-stage developmental story is markedly different than Aristotle's conception of virtue.

To Aristotle, virtue is the same kind of good as external goods like money or health, but of a much higher value. To the Stoics, virtue is of a different and altogether more valuable kind (Annas 427-428). For the Stoics, a happy life can be attained in the absence of indifferents as it is

[4] Indifferents are goods such as "health, wealth, power, and so on" discussed in Annas 167.
[5] See Annas on Stoic natural rational development 167-171.

an internal state of virtue. A virtuous Stoic will be just as happy leading a prosperous life as they would being tortured.[6] Aristotle rejects this view, supporting the value of external goods such as wealth, health, beauty, good birth, and friendship.[7] The importance of external goods to Aristotle's is most apparent when he says, "happiness evidently also needs external goods to be added, as we have said, since we cannot, or cannot easily, do fine actions if we lack the resources," (1099a31). A virtuous Aristotelian will not only act in accordance with virtue but will also have sufficient external goods – good birth, good children, beauty – in their life. A basic discussion of concern for others in the two ethical theories demonstrates the importance of their differing valuations of virtue and external goods.

While all eudaimonist theories are formally concerned with the aims of the reflective agent, they expend great focus on other-concern as a core component of virtuousness. Annas establishes how ancient ethical theories are not only concerned with one's own interest proving "Thus the fact that I aim at my final end makes ancient ethics formally agent-centered or self-centered, but does not make it self-centered in content; as the ancient theories are not," (Annas 223). Perhaps the clearest evidence of this is Aristotle's discussion of friendship wherein he frankly states, "one should wish good things to a friend for his sake," (1155b 31). Altruism is a core component of ancient ethical theories, yet its sources and its limits are compared by Stoic and Aristotelian schools.

The Stoics use the term *oikeiôsis,* or familiarization, to describe the source of other-concern. In their view, we first become familiar with ourselves and our self-interest. When we reach the second stage of virtuous development by recognizing our own rationality in relation to

[6] The Stoics' argument that virtue alone is sufficient for happiness means the person being tortured on the wheel is happy. For discussion of the wheel and the early Stoics' acceptance of the claim see Annas 373 & 431.
[7] NE 1099a25-31 & 1099b1-9.

virtue, we also recognize the same rationality in others.[8] Similarly to Kant's argument for the value of humanity, the Stoics arrive at a conception of impartial other-concern where the considerations of even the most remote human should be addressed by the virtuous agent because of their shared rationality.[9] This fact is encompassed in the claim that the virtuous Stoic even cares for the "the farthest Mysain" or the poorest farmer in Asia. (Annas 262). This conception of other-concern is quite demanding: from the perspective of the virtuous Stoic, "we have no reason to stop at, or to be particularly concerned with, attachments to particular other people," (Annas 265) or even to ourselves.[10]

Whereas the early Stoics' other-concern is completely impartial, Aristotle's concern from others is deeply partial. Aristotle views other-concern in terms of *philia,* or friendship, where our other-concern is limited by the type and strength of commitment we have to those around us.[11] Aristotle outlines three type of friendship, the useful, the pleasurable, and the good, and other types of political commitments which determine the correct amount of other-concern we should have. These commitments lead Aristotle to only consider the wellbeing of others for their own sake when we have commitments to them (Annas 249). The importance of commitment is directly tied to our ability to come to care about others in the same way we care about ourselves.

Partiality in Aristotle's theory stems from a compilated notion of self-love to be explained in full in the next chapter. The central feature of the self-love argument is the process by which the virtuous Aristotelian comes to value others for their own sake by relating to others in the same way one relates to themselves. Regardless, the virtuous person cares about the

[8] For a full account of *oikeiôsis* look to Annas 262-276.
[9] Annas compares the early Stoics impartiality to Kantianism 448-450.
[10] Annas explains the Stoics' views on rationality, "Thus from the moral point of view we should give our own position no more weight than that of any other rational being," 174.

wellbeing of others for their sake, but only in the case the two parties share a virtuous friendship. In stark contrast to the early Stoics, Aristotle arrives at a deeply partial theory of other-concern. The differing sources and ethical limits of other-concern between Aristotle and the Stoics lend themselves to differing conceptions of human happiness.

Aristotle's broad conception of happiness as *eudaimonia* or human flourishing importantly revolves around the close friendships of the virtuous agent. A life well lived for an Aristotelian is a life of intellectual and dispositional virtue with a sufficient amount of external goods, close friendships, and political service. A life well lived will primarily be a life of intellectual reflection and political service. Not only will the virtuous spend sufficient time engaging in the most virtuous activity of *theôria* or active contemplation, but they will also serve their political community. As Aristotle says in the first book of NE, "For while it is satisfactory to acquire and preserve the good even for an individual, it is finer and more divine to acquire and preserve it for a people and for cities," (NE 1094b9). Close friendships of virtue built on altruism and acts of generosity are central to the good life for Aristotle as well.[12] There is a great amount of flexibility to lead a life which suits the reflective reader for Aristotle given it follows the outline just given. The Stoic conception of a life well lived shares several similarities, and several drastic differences.

The virtuous Stoic will lead a life of complete rational virtue. The Stoic will train through habituation and practice to slowly approach virtuousness. When finally, the Stoic reaches the natural point of human development, they will come to regard all humans as inherently valuable and equal regardless of personal connection. The Stoic will show no more concern for themselves or close connections than for the most remote farmer in line with impartiality. The

[12] Chp. 2 will examine the importance of altruism in friendship through goodwill, an essential component of virtuous friendships.

Stoic will be generous to all people equally, seeking to do the best action to help all people regardless of commitment. The virtuous Stoic will even be happy in torture as virtue alone is sufficient for happiness.

From similar beginnings, Aristotle and Stoics arrive at diverging conceptions of a good life. While both have their merits, importantly the Stoics similarity to later writings of Kant, the Aristotelian conception of the good life is superior for its focus on the importance of external goods and the role of partiality in altruistic action. It is absurd to consider an individual undergoing the most brutal of tortures happy. This absurd conclusion reflects how the Stoics place a different kind of superior value on virtue in regard to external goods. The placement of rationality as the end goal of human development results in it being the only composite of a good life. The good Stoic will not only be happy in the worst of circumstances because of this belief, they will also show no partiality to those closest to them as a result of their "natural" rational development. Parent, spouses, children, and the closest of friends are no more important to the truly virtuous Stoic than the most remote person. These conclusions which stem from the superior valuing of virtue and the subsequent position of impartiality arrived at stand in contrast to empirical facts about human nature.

The intuitive uneasiness caused by the Stoics' happiness in torture and impartiality conclusions rests on strong empirical claims that the Stoics do not properly account for human nature in their theory. As previously discussed, human nature is of particular importance to the Stoics who urge that becoming completely impartial through fully embracing one's rational capacity is the ultimate development of human nature. The claim, however, is heavily disputed by modern psychology and by the insights it has generated about the inner workings of the

human brain. Several studies question the Stoics' basic assumption that impartiality or separation between rational and affective motivations is possible.

The first Stoic assumption about human nature which is contested by modern scientific research is the ability of people to completely rational. Extensive research on rationality and emotions in decision-making has demonstrated that the two are importantly linked. Emotional states have great influence on the systems of thinking we employ: "Milder incidental states of sadness generally promote a more systematic, data-driven, and analytical form of reasoning, whereas positive mood states generally promote a less systematic, more top-down, but more flexible and creative form of reasoning," (Pham 158). The influence of emotional states on rational decision-making would not be sufficient in itself if it were not for the fact that emotionality is intertwined with nearly every waking moment of our lives: people report feeling at least one emotion 90% of the time (Trampe et al.). Human rationality is greatly influenced by emotional states which are nearly ever-present in our lives. In combination, the Stoics claim that rationality can be separated from affective aspects of our psych is highly unlikely.

Even if it were the case that rationality could be separated from the complicated limbic system largely responsible for emotions, there is not empirical evidence that people naturally progress towards rationality. If the Stoics conception of *oikeiôsis* were correct there would also be empirical proof that people generally become less emotional and partial as they age, progressing to rational impartiality. In fact, the opposite is the case; "However, current psychological research shows that emotion is relatively unaffected by aging or even improves with age, in contrast to most cognitive functions," (Ebner and Fischer). Other findings have demonstrated the size of social networks decreases with age, but the satisfaction gained from these smaller networks increases suggesting age increases partiality to ever smaller groups of

people (Luong et al.). Age seems to have little effect on emotionality and shows people become increasingly concerned with their closest connections over time. Again, the empirical findings of modern science dispute the Stoics conception of natural human progression toward impartial rationality.

Impartial rationality would also be deeply harmful to the proper development and functioning as people as people because of our social nature. Babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) who are visited more by their mother's experience "positive infant arousal and motor development outcomes," (Klawetter et al.). Visitation and skin-to-skin touching have a litany of positive effects for both the baby and the mother including the development of the child The study found that "Skin-to-skin holding was associated with more desirable scores on infant social behaviors and developmental maturity tests" up to a year after release from the NICU (Klawetter et al.). The effect simple touch has on the development of babies speaks to the necessity of close personal relationships for humans to function.

More so, "having fewer social ties is associated with more heart disease, cancer, and impaired immune function," and people with weak social ties die younger than those with strong ones (DiGiulio). There is a reason banishment was often considered a worse punishment than death. A lack of social ties has a marked impact on our bodies' ability to function properly. If we are to function well as humans, we must have social ties which require partiality: if we were impartial, there would be no reason to spend time with any one person over another weakening all our connections. In advocating for impartiality, the Stoics find themselves in conflict with facts of human nature. The ethical theory presented by the Stoics is unacceptable because it is simply at odds with how the human brain works and the role that close relationships play in our development, functioning, and happiness.

Aristotle's ethical theory accurately traces the contours of human nature better while drawing out a convincing idea of a good human life. There is no happiness in torture or in a life of isolation. There is happiness in a life filled with the virtues of character and intelligence and sufficient external goods. Aristotle's virtues provide a good picture of what the virtuous agent does and becomes through habituation. The virtues of character are complimented by Aristotle's activity of *theôria* or active contemplation as the most virtuous activity. Despite Aristotle's placement of *theôria* as the most virtuous activity, many philosophers such as Nicholas White are swift to point to the wholistic conception of a good life. The virtuous agent cannot engage in *theôria* all the time because "a person has a body to attend to, and also must live among other human beings, and so cannot send all of his time on philosophical thinking," (White 250). A virtuous Aristotelian would likely be an active civil servant as fostering the virtuousness of the political community one belongs to is a good of the gods just as *theôria* is. A life of reflection and virtuous action aimed at the fine for oneself and their political community then seems to be most characteristic of Aristotle's ethical theory. When filled in with the external goods and fortune necessary to a good life, there is good reason to say a virtuous person is living a blessed life.

It is clear what the good life means to the reflective agent under Aristotle's ethical theory, but what does it mean to those close to them, their communities, and all of mankind? The virtuous will have close friendships as partiality is central to the theory, but will they have genuine concern for them or other's outside of their personal connections? The question of the virtuous person's commitments to others is evidently important to Aristotle as he dedicates two books to the discussion of friendship. These books in combination with the virtues of generosity, magnificence, and friendliness unearth a complicated and initially paradoxical view of the

concern the virtuous agent has for close personal connections and strangers. Discovering how the Aristotelian should care for the people he or she shares their life with drives the following account of Aristotle's treatise on friendship.

Chapter 2: Aristotelian Altruism in Virtue and Friendship

Aristotle's ethical theory provides a realistic picture of what it means for a human to live a good life shared with others. From his vague discussion of the good and human functioning, Aristotle arrives at a conception of the good life which fairly accounts for aspects of human nature ignored under Stoic doctrine: chiefly the necessity of partiality and the impossibility of happiness in torture. Given the importance of partiality to proper human functioning, it is worth examining Aristotle's account of the relationships we have to others and the integral role of altruism within.

Altruism is a broad term with varying philosophical connotations. In its most basic sense altruism is the concern a moral agent has for the well-being or happiness of another person.[13] It is often referred to in the strong sense meaning that it is solely motivated by concern for the wellbeing of the other and is disinterest in oneself.[14] Because of the multitude of contexts and variations in definition tied up within altruism, Annas prefers to use the term "other-concern" to avoid implicating unwanted concepts. I will use the term altruism as well as other-concern in their general sense from here on out.

Answering the questions of how, to whom, and why a virtuous agent should be altruistic according to Aristotle requires a methodical examination of several of his arguments in *NE.* My

[13] See Kraut in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* for broad discussion of altruism in varying contexts.
[14] ^ 1.1

inquiry into partiality and altruism in the theory will begin with the virtues of generosity, magnificence, and friendliness. These virtues appear to require the virtuous agent to be altruistic to strangers and friends. Aristotle conditions the initial sense of altruism generated by these virtues in his discussion of friendship wherein virtuous relationships are made out to be the only ones containing genuine altruism. Several objections are raised and countered to dispel any notion that the altruism characteristic of virtuous friendships is actually self-interested or overly egoist. Resolving the apparent tension between the self-love mechanism underpinning virtuous friendships and the necessity of goodwill reveals the altruistic content of the theory. The defining of Aristotle's concern for others as self-referential altruism properly incorporates the importance of partiality and the necessity of genuine altruism in the theory. I end the chapter by reintroducing the altruism demonstrated in the virtues to begin to motivate my argument made in the final chapter that genuine other-concern expands beyond virtuous friendship to other relationships sharing its core features.

Generosity is the first virtue considered at the onset of Book IV and is concerned with the proper spending and acquisition of money. Generosity, as with all of Aristotle's virtues is intrinsically valuable and instrumentally valuable: it is worth pursing because it is a virtue and because it meaningfully contributes to one's ability to pursue their *eudaimonia* (NE 1097b2-5). To be generous is to be at the mean between the two vices of "wastefulness and ungenerosity," (NE 1119b28). Generosity is concerned with both the acquisition and spending of money but is more characteristically defined by the giving of money because taking and possessing wealth leaves less opportunity for virtuous activity in spending and giving (NE 1120a9-10). It is evident the method of acquiring wealth is important as Aristotle designates the robber and gambler as

ungenerous (NE 1122a5-14), but the majority of his examination of generosity is concerned the giving of money as it is most characteristic of the virtue.

The generous actions of the virtuous person will aim at the *kalon* and be done in a virtuous manner. Central to the virtue of generosity is the notion that the virtuous agent will aim at the *kalon*, or fine, in his actions. The exact definition of the fine, also translated as the noble, is a debated topic but it is best understood to be right action as determined by the virtuous person.[15] When thought of as aiming at right action, Aristotle's comments on the generous person can be properly understood.

> Actions in accord with virtue are fine, and aim at the fine. Hence the generous person will also aim at the fine in his giving, and will give correctly; for he will give to the right people, the right amounts, at the right time, and all the other things that are implied by correct giving. NE 1120a24-27

As is characteristic of Aristotle, the actions of the generous person are vague beyond the fact that they will aim at the fine and be done in a fine way. The paragraph is illustrative of the manner in which virtues are performed in general and how generosity is performed in specific. They cannot be accomplished by simply following a moral principle or giving to a charitable cause. Generosity must be done for the right reasons and in the right way while being in a proper state in regard to pleasure and pain (NE 1121a1-4). The generous person cannot give because they feel socially pressured to be more generous or because it will benefit them. As being generous is dependent on a great many factors, Aristotle does not provide any concrete examples

[15] See Irwin's comments on *kalon* 328-329.

of altruistic actions. The lack of any concrete examples or clear answers to questions such as who we should be generous toward can be partly overcome when considered in light of his comments on the virtue of magnificence which is narrowly aimed at great gifts.

Magnificence is also tied to the spending of wealth but only on a massive scale. Actions which deserve the label of magnificence are beyond those covered by generosity and as such deserve their own virtue in the eyes of Aristotle. He says of magnificence, "For it seems to be, like generosity, a virtue concerned with wealth, but it does not extend, as generosity does, to all the action involving wealth, but only to those involving heavy expense, and in them it exceeds generosity in its large scale." (NE 1122a20). The largeness of scale then, is what distinguishes magnificence from generosity which as we now come to see extends to all action concerning wealth.

Magnificence shares several characteristic features with generosity. For one, magnificent action is partly determined by the amount of wealth an individual has: the greater the wealth of the individual the greater the gift need be to be virtuous (NE 1122a25-26). It is no surprise that magnificence is also the mean between the vices of stinginess and vulgarity (NE 1122a30-31). The magnificent person will not fret over small details in their giving or be excessive so as to honor themselves by treating a club dinner party as a wedding banquet (NE 1123a 22-23). Magnificence importantly differs from generosity as the discussion of it mentions several examples of magnificent action.

The magnificent actions described by Aristotle color altruistic actions aiming at the fine without meaningfully answering several underlying questions. In addition to large public weddings, hospitality for foreign guests, and a "house benefiting his riches", the magnificent person will make large donations for the furtherment of religious purposes and public goods. The

quality of magnificence is found "in the sorts of expenses called honorable, such as expenses for the gods – dedication, temples, sacrifices, and so on, for everything divine- and in expenses that provoke a good competition for honor, for the common good, if, for instance, some city thinks a splendid chorus or warship or a feast for the city must be provided," (NE 1122b20-24).

The magnificent person will spend on great projects aimed at the achievement of the fine as is fitting to their wealth. Magnificent actions can take the form of a large house or of a feast for the common good of a city. Both of these actions are fine and aim at the fine in Aristotle's account, yet they don't provide a richer understanding of the motives rousing generous action. In addition to Aristotle's urging that the magnificent will give to the city for the common good of the people, there are several comments made in his discussion of friendliness which begin to answer is greater detail how, to who, and why one should be generous.

The virtue of friendliness is the virtuous mean between the flatterer and the cantankerous. While Aristotle's discussion of friendliness occupies but a single page of NE, one comment made therein directs my inquiry into the deeper folds of Aristotelian altruism. Aristotle says of the friendly person, "We have said, then, that in general he will treat people in the right way when he meets them. [More exactly], he will aim to avoid causing pain or to share pleasure, but will always refer to the fine and the beneficial," (NE 1126b27-30). The friendly person will treat people in the right way by avoiding causing others pain and sharing pleasure as is fine. In addition to the similar notion of right action touched on earlier, the virtue of friendliness appears to direct altruism towards all people, not just one's close connections. The virtues of generosity and magnificence suggest a slightly different notion of who is most deserving of our altruism.

Several comments made in the discussion of generosity and magnificence hint at the proper recipients of altruistic action for the virtuous person. In his comparison of generosity to

magnificence, Aristotle is clear to establish the generous as "one who 'gave to many a wanderer," (NE 1122a27-29). The virtuous person will give to strangers in a virtuous way and with virtuous intentions to treat them as the virtue of friendliness requires. Giving to strangers appears to be a part of the virtuous person's altruistic concern. In his discussion of generosity Aristotle begins to condition the altruism owed to strangers by arguing that altruism should first go to one's friends.

The case of the robber and gambler start to name friends as the proper and primary recipients of altruistic action. Both the robber and the gambler are wicked in their taking because they are "shameful lovers of gain," (NE 1122a8). While both are vicious in the way they acquire their wealth, the gambler does so at the cost of his friends: "the gambler takes his gains from his friends, the very people he ought to be giving to," (NE 1122a11-12). The gambler is vicious in part because he takes from his friends who, as the comment suggests, are the right recipients of altruistic action. These comments on the generosity given to strangers and the altruism owed to friends begin to hint at a deeper and more complex version of altruism dependent on partiality.

As the first chapter importantly outlined, Aristotle's allegiance to partiality in living a good life and as a constraint of human nature distinguishes his ethical theory from the early Stoics. The above comments appear to extend altruism to strangers but also hints at the role partiality plays in determining how the virtuous agent is altruistic. To understand how the virtuous agent aims at the fine in their generous action requires a more detailed understanding of the importance of others and specifically what motivates the virtuous agent to be altruistic in thought and action. VIII and IX go to great length to explore the types of connections people have and the altruism underlying virtuous friendships.

Aristotle's examination of the connections people have is conducted in his chapters on *philia. Philia* is often translated as friendship, but it is more aptly understood as personal connections or relationships. In NE *philia* is used to describe relationships between parents and children, siblings, citizens, and even the relation one has to their own being. These relationships vary greatly in their quality and the motivations sustaining them. The broad usage of the term is importantly noted on by Irwin and leads Annas to define *philia* as a commitment to particular people.[16] I accept the broad definition used by Irwin and Annas and continue to use friendship synonymously with personal commitments and close relationships. The many relationships under the umbrella of Aristotle's friendship are of the utmost importance to his ethical theory.

One sign of the importance of friendship is the dedication of two complete books to the topic, to which Irwin notes "more of the *EN* is devoted to friendship than to any of the virtues," (Irwin 330). The large role given to friendship is unsurprising because friendship is a virtue, or is at least intimately connected with virtue, and is necessary for *eudaimonia.*

Friendship is a virtue in itself and is closely tied to the fostering and exercising of virtue. Book VIII begins, "After that, the next topic is friendship; for it is a virtue, or involves virtue," (1155a4). Friendship is a virtue because it can be good in its own right, not in an instrumental sense as it contributes to one's *eudaimonia.* Aristotle is clear that being the recipient of another person's love is a good in its own right and that active friendship can also be intrinsically valuable as is characteristic of the virtues (NE 1159a25). In addition to being intrinsically valuable, commitments to others are also a necessary component of the good life.

Friendship is instrumentally required for living a good life. Not only has the paper already demonstrated the necessity of close personal connections for the proper development and

[16] Seen Irwin 330 & Annas 223-224.

wellbeing of all humans, but it also now begins to detail why partiality is so highly valued in NE. The value of friendship to Aristotle is difficult to overstate: "Further, it [friendship] is most necessary for our life. For no one would choose to live without friends even if he had all the other goods," (NE 1155a8). Not only is friendship highly valued, it is so vital to the achievement of *eudaimonia* that it would be chosen over every other good. The absence of friendships would make *eudaimonia* insufficient. The ways in which the cultivation and exercising of virtue are related to friendship are deeply salient to uncovering the motivation for why and in which manner the virtuous agent is altruistic towards others.

Aristotle distinguishes between three "species" or types of friendship. These types of friendship are primarily differentiated by the type of love which underpins them: love for the pleasant, the useful, and the good. The first two are rather straightforward. Friendships of the pleasure are ones in which both parties receive pleasure from their connection to the other. Friendships of usefulness are the same: each party enters the relationships because the other is useful to them and continues in the relationship until its utility has dried up.

> Those who love for utility or pleasure, then, are fond of a friend because of what is good or pleasant for themselves, not insofar as the beloved is who he is, but insofar as he is useful or pleasant. NE 1156a15

Both relationships of pleasure and utility are labeled as "incomplete friendships" because they are not founded on a fondness for the character of the other as are good friendships. Good friendships, by comparison, are the only fully virtuous type of friendship and are characterized by what is commonly referred to as Aristotle's five marks of friendship.

Initially framed as the commonly shared ideas about what constitutes good friendship, the five marks of friendship are accepted and supported by Aristotle in Book IX. Good friends will (1) have known reciprocal goodwill (2) wish for the friend to be or live for their sake (3) spend time with each other (4) make similar lifestyle choices (5) and share the same pleasures and pains (NE 1166a14-29).

The first and most important component of virtuous friendship is recognized reciprocated goodwill. Good friends will "wish goods to their friend for the friend's own sake," (NE 1156b11-11). Unlike the other types of friendship, good friendships are founded on mutual goodwill or *eunoia.* Good friends wish and take actions for the sake of their friend because of who the other person is: "they have this attitude because of the friend himself, not coincidentally," (NE 1156b11-12). Mutual goodwill encompasses wishing for the continued preservation of a friend, meeting the second mark, and must be reciprocated and recognized as one cannot wish good things to wine. In combination, the last three marks can be understood through familiarity and similarity.

Virtuous friendships require friends to be similar and for them to spend adequate time with one another to become familiar. Virtuous friends will be similar "Hence the sayings, 'similar to similar', and 'birds of a feather', and so on," (NE 1155b35-36) The similarity criteria set forth by the fourth and fifth mark of friendships are necessary so that good friends share similar lifestyles and hobbies. Opposites cannot be virtuous friends in Aristotle's opinion because they are not initially attractive to the other and don't allow the parties to spend adequate time with one another. Similar preferences and lifestyle choices are necessary to being friends together.

Good friends must become familiar by spending time together. Spending time together is a principal component of good friendship for it allows both parties to confirm the virtuous character of the other and is simply required for friendship: "[To find out whether someone is really good], one must both have experience of him and be on familiar terms with him, which is extremely difficult" (NE 1158a14-16). Living with friends is most characteristic of good friendship, so much so, that Aristotle limits the number of good friends one can have to how many a person can live with at one time.[17] To become familiar with a friend means to verify their similarity and to build a relationship founded on the goodness of each agent's character. Unsurprisingly, good friends must enjoy spending time together in addition to wishing well for the other.

In addition to the five marks of friendship, virtuous friendships are long lasting, rare, and founded on equality of virtue. The image of good friendships thus presented supports their longevity. For why wouldn't good friends who enjoy spending time together and wish well for the other remain friends? In comparison to friendships of pleasure and utility, which dissolve when one party is no longer useful, good friendships should last indefinitely as virtue should be accreditive. The many requirements of good commitments to others also make them rare. It is difficult to find others similar to oneself and to spend enough time with them to become familiar and eventually good friends. These components of virtuous friendship are significant implications drawn from its distinguishing characteristics. The equality of virtue between friends, however, is even more prominent.

[17] Aristotle says, "Hence there is also some limit defining the number of friends. Presumably, this is the largest number with whom you could live together, since we found that living together seems to be most characteristic of friendship," (NE 1171a1-9).

Agents engaged in perfect friendship must be equal in virtue. If each party is not of equal worth and equally dedicated to the relationship it will become a friendship of usefulness or pleasure to one of the parties. Aristotle does outline several relationships where a difference in virtue is offset by love offered to the more virtuous party, balancing the scales.[18] Ward points to Aristotle's comments on equality in friendship and justice to highlight "equality 'in the strict sense', in which the subjects are the same and give and receive in equal measure," (Ward 448). The equality required by good friendship is yet another criteria distinguishing complete friendship from those of pleasure and utility.

The many conditions of good friendship, especially shared goodwill, separate it from the many other connections we have with people. Not strangers, friends of utility, or even friends of pleasure seem to contain genuine altruistic concern for the other. Only virtuous friendships appear to have genuine concern for the wellbeing of others. The generous agent may give to the stranger, but there is no reason set forth by Aristotle to believe the agent is motivated by genuine concern for the wellbeing of the wanderer: they may give for other reasons such as justice. The exclusivity of virtuous friendship is well established by the many criteria friends must pass to enter into this rare type of friendship. The many characteristics of good friendship all find their origin in a rather paradoxical, but ultimately sensical, argument for self-love.

The ultimate motivation for goodwill and good friendships is self-love. Self-love is first apparent when considering the marks of friendship: "each of these features is found in the decent person's relation to himself (NE 1166a10). Just as the good friend wishes for the wellbeing of their friend for their sake, the decent person "wishes goods and apparent goods to himself, and achieves them in his actions," (NE 1166a15-16). Every virtuous person has a relationship with

[18] Aristotle's discussion of inequal relationships in Chp. 6 & 7 of book VIII.

themselves. If they are good, this relationship will be a virtuous one. The self-love felt for oneself is then extended to others.

> The decent person, then, has each of these features in relation to himself, and is related to his friend as he is to himself, since the friend is another himself. NE 1166a30

The thought being that as both the agent and the friend are similar in their virtue, lifestyles, feelings, and so on, it is possible for each to come to relate to the other as they do themselves or as "another himself". The origin of altruistic concern in NE is dependent on our ability to come to extend to our friend the same relationship we have with ourselves. The odd extension of self-love begets the critique that no Aristotelian is actually concerned for the sake of the other because it is their self-love motivating altruistic action.

How can the Aristotelian care for others in any real sense when their self-love motivates the friendship? The apparent tension increases when Aristotle insists that "the good person must be a self-lover, since he will both help himself and benefit others by doing fine actions," (NE 1169a12). Aristotle attempts to recharacterize the notion of self-love to alleviate the egoistic tension.

The notion of self-love employed by Aristotle cannot be understood in a common sense. Quite the contrary is the case as the virtuous self-lover does not work to enrich themselves, but rather "acts for what is fine, all the more the better he is, and for his friend's sake, disregarding his own [interest]," (NE 1168a34-35). The fine generally means to pursue what is right or virtuous and often appears in the context of altruistic action. The self-lover does not put their interests over others in the sense commonly attributed to the selfish, but in pursuit of the fine. In

discussing the virtuous self-lover, Aristotle contrasts the pursuit of the fine with the pursuit of other goods

> It is quite true, that, as they say, the excellent person labors for his friends and for his native country, and will die for them if he must; he will sacrifice money, honors, and contested goods in general, in achieving the fine for himself…He is also ready to sacrifice money as long as his friends profit; for the friends gain money while he gains the fine, and so he awards himself the greater good. NE 1169a19-29

The virtuous person then is a self-lover in their pursuit of the fine and will sacrifice traditionally desired goods for the achievement of it. Yet it still appears as though the virtuous person is egoistic in that they are awarding to themselves the best good of all, the fine. Self-love provides a challenging account of the motivation for friendship. The idea that the virtuous person should be a self-lover and love their friends as another version of themselves appears to stand in direct conflict with Aristotle's many urgings that good friendships are dependent on goodwill: that virtuous friends are intrinsically valuable. Even sacrificing one's life, it seems, is egoistic in that it rewards to the virtuous agent the greatest good. The evident tension in Aristotle's theory has generated much debate among contemporary virtue ethicists. I will briefly discuss and counter these objections to demonstrate the clearly altruistic content of virtuous friendships.

The debate has previously centered around the "Eudaimonist Axiom" and now confronts the "self-absorption objection". The "Eudaimonist Axiom" (EA), dubbed so by Gregory Vlastos, claims that in Aristotle's theory "all of one's actions are done for the sake of one's owns *eudaimonia," (*Carreras 319). Following the EA criticism of the neo-Aristotelians, not only is the

fundamental aim of *eudaimonia* one's own flourishing, but it appears even the motivation for having other-concern is in service of its achievement! The "self-absorption objection" coined by D'Souza characterizes such arguments which focus on the motivation of the moral agent. The objection claims the Aristotelian's motivation for action is improperly egoistic as "If why she does what she does is understood in terms of her own *eudaimonia* – where the good of others is included because their good is seen as promoting that of the agent – such an account, so the objection goes, is nonetheless self-absorbed," (D'Souza 477).

Despite these initial claims, authors such as Julia Annas have competently demonstrated Aristotelian virtue to be selfless in content. It is evident even in the sheer amount of time Aristotle spends discussing the proper concern and treatment of others in the virtues and in friendship. Furthermore, it would be absurd to consider dying for one's friends or nation a selfish pursuit. The strategy taken by Annas is one of four considered by D'Souza for overcoming the self-absorption objection.[19]

The two-standpoint approach taken by Annas seeks to separate the motivation of the virtuous agent in altruistic action from the motivation the agent has to be virtuous. To Annas, Aristotle's self-love argument seeks to honor two points. Frist, that self-love is as a matter of fact psychologically primary. That is, we all come to have a relationships and affinity for ourselves first. And second, that true interest in others is not instrumental, but done for the sake of the other. As Annas says, "We start, as a matter of psychological fact, with self-concern; but we can, also a matter of psychological fact, come to extend to others the relevant aspects of that concern,

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[19] The four strategies considered are the developmental approach, two-standpoint approach, the reconceptualization approach, and D'Souza's own altruistic eudaimonist approach. For further discussion of them all see D'Souza's article *Altruistic Eudaimonism and the Self-Absorption Objection*.

and so come to care about their good for their own sakes," (Annas 254). According to Annas, Aristotle just assumes that our initial self-love turns into true concern for other.[20] If these points are taken to be the underlying motivation behind Aristotle's self-love, the two-standpoint argument is sound.

According to the two-standpoint approach, the virtuous agent is truly altruistic in their motivation to care for others as this is what a virtuous person achieving their eudaimonia would do. The agent wishes and takes action to help their friend: "she aims at helping others for their own sake; doing this is also a case for acting out of self-concern in that her life as whole expresses concern for herself as a rational agent aiming at the fine," (Annas 260). From the two-standpoint approach, the good person helps others for their sakes because that is what a good person like them does. When thought of from this angle, Aristotle's comment that someone who "in general always gains for himself what is fine, no one will call him a self-lover or blame him for it," (NE1168b25-29) begins to make sense.

However, D'Souza is quick to point out that critics simply see the two-standpoint approach as kicking the can down the road. The virtuous agent is still primarily concerned with their own *eudaimonia* as it is the ultimate reason for being altruistic to others. For this reason, Michael Stocker says the two-standpoint approach exemplifies a type of "moral schizophrenia" as it tries to hold two contradictory claims as true at the same time (D'Souza 480). The separation, then, between the motivation behind the actions from the virtuous person's perspective and the motivation to achieve one's own *eudaimonia* appears difficult to untangle. The difficulty has resulted in the deeming of Aristotle's theory as formally egoistic but substantively altruistic following the necessitation of goodwill to virtuous friendship. The two-

[20] The assumed ability of the Aristotelian to have genuine other-concern for others is discussed by Annas 225.

standpoint approach when combined with self-referential altruism help place the influence of selfish concern in virtuous friendships.

The egoistic tension in the theory does not appear in its content except as it manifests in the form of partiality. Outlined by J.A. West in his discussion of Aristotelian altruism, self-referential altruism is "a class of altruism in which the agent is indeed concerned for the interests of his friends, but this concern also involves a particular reference to his own interests," (West 43). The acknowledged mixing of self and other interest manifests, in West's view, in the partiality demonstrated by friendship. The virtuous does not become friends with just anyone or those across the world: they become friends with those close to them in disposition and location in part because of the benefits they impart. "Our conscious desire to help others for their own sake represents the altruistic component of friendship, but at the same time the egoistic component is manifested by the fact that this desire is often limited to people who are closely associated with us," (West 47).

Following this line of thought, the egoistic considerations of friendship materialize in the people we choose to be our friends. We are altruistic once friends in the sense that we have goodwill for them, but we are selfish in that they are the ones we have goodwill for. It appears self-referential altruism effectively follows the contours of Aristotle's ethical theory and provides a rational for the role of partiality. With self-love sufficiently covered, the knitting together of the motivations of other-concern and the virtues of generosity and magnificence can begin to answer the altruistic questions raised at the outset of the chapter.

The previous sections have addressed the question of why the virtuous person gives. The virtuous person gives for the sake of their virtuous friends because it is what a good person does. There is much contention over the amount of egoism or self-interest present in Aristotelian

altruism which is best understood in a formal sense: the moral agent gives for the sake of others because doing so is what the virtuous person does. Examining the motivation behind friendship makes evident the role of partiality through self-referential altruism wherein the Aristotelian is altruistic to friends first and strangers second.

Friends of virtue ought to be the first recipients of our generosity as "it is finer to benefit friends than to benefit strangers," (NE 1169b14). Not only is this point made clear by such comments, it is reflected in the structure of the ethical theory. Altruistic action in the form of goodwill and generosity is necessary for friendships and virtuous friendships are the highest valued external good. The virtuous agent pursues friendship because it is instrumentally valuable to *eudaimonia* in this way and because friendship is intrinsically valuable. However, does the same altruistic motivation underlying virtuous friendship also factor into the proper motivation for generosity and altruism in other relationships?

Despite the account of moral motivation being sufficiently prompted in the case of virtuous friendship, there is still uncertainty as to the agent's altruistic motivation towards other friends and in the context of the virtues. The established altruistic content of virtuous friendships introduces genuine other-concern into the theory, but appears to limit it to a very select group of individuals namely perfect friends. Are we to assume all other relationships lack goodwill or altruistic concern for the other? When contrasted with the impartiality arrived at by the early Stoics process of *oikeiôsis*, Aristotle's theory is drastically narrow in the altruistic concern owed to others. But as the virtues of generosity, magnificence, and friendliness demonstrated, the virtuous will also give to the odd "wanderer" and the community in pursuit of the fine. In the following chapter I pull on these threads to argue for an archetype of virtuous friendship allowing the virtuous agent to have genuine altruistic concern outside Aristotle's heavily

conditioned perfect friendships. The characterization of virtuous friendships honors the central features of friendships of virtue and enables one to better explore the limits of altruism in Aristotle's theory.

Chapter 3: An Archetype of Virtuous Friendship

One might've had the notion that an ethical theory in which friendship is motivated by self-love is insufficiently altruistic. Although a plausible interpretation on first glance, the previous chapter dispelled any such notions by exploring the key role altruism plays in virtuous friendships as it is contained in goodwill. The formally egoistic virtuous agent is concerned with the well-being of the people they have good relationships to for the other's own sake. The virtuous will sacrifice their time, money, and even their lives for friends: the content of the ethical theory is undeniably altruistic. The only manifestation of the formally egoist component of the theory comes, as West argues, in the form of self-referential altruism or partiality to those close to us.

Partiality is central to the successful development and functioning of the Aristotelian, but is it too narrow if it requires only having genuine concern for a handful of perfect friends? I subsequently expand Aristotle's altruism beyond virtuous friends using an archetype of virtuous friendships and Peter Singer's *Drowning Child* thought experiment. My expansion of goodwill beyond virtuous friendships is supported by the work of John Cooper, Corinne Gartner, and Nancy Sherman who place the Aristotelian within the complex web of social relationships crucial to their functioning. An archetype of virtuous friendship not only expands altruism to explain the appearance of genuine altruism in the virtues, but also adds clarity to the limits of Aristotelian altruism.

After reading the previous chapter, an attentive reader might reasonably argue the virtue of generosity requires giving for the sake of the other person. Such an argument would look to Aristotle's comment that the generous person "will give correctly; for he will give to the right people, the right amounts, at the right time, and all the other things that are implied by correct giving," (NE 1120a2-28) for evidence. It would be absurd to consider the actions of a self-absorbed giver generous. Not only would this not be considered generous by the reader for its lack of other-concern, but it would also clearly stand in opposition to the virtue of generosity for it would not be done in the correct state of pleasure and pain in relationship to giving. Just as it must be pleasurable to give, the generous person could not give rightly if the motivation for doing so was their own betterment.

The necessity of genuine altruism for a virtuous agent might be exposed by looking at a situation a virtuous agent could find themselves in. Peter Singer's *Drowning Child* (DC) thought experiment can help place the agent within a context ripe for virtuous action. Although Singer's argument is for the duty or moral obligation we owe to those in extreme poverty, the thought experiment is a helpful tool to uncover the motivations of the virtuous agent.

In *The Life You Can Save*, Singer proposes the following thought experiment in support of the second premise of his argument for effective altruism. I have paraphrased it here for length and clarity.

> On your way to work you pass a small pond and are surprised to see a little child splashing about in the water. The pond is only about knee deep, but as you investigate you discover the small child is indeed a toddler unable to keep its head above the water. There is no one else around and it seems likely the thrashing toddler will die if you do not

> act. It will be safe for you to safe the child as the water is only knee deep, but it will ruin your new shoes, muddy your work clothes, and make you late for work. What should you do? (Singer 15 – 16)

Just as students from Peter Singer's class reacted to the prompt, the reader here will surely consider it unthinkable to let the child drown. The cost of a toddler's life cannot be compared to your new shoes, a clean suit, or timeliness. The student and reader would presumably suggest their motivation for saving the child was for its own sake. Can the same be said of the virtuous Aristotelian?

Saving the child's life for anything other than his or her own sake is evidently vicious. If I choose not to save the child in favor of my shoes, I would rightfully be labeled vicious. Much the same if I saved the child's life for the fame it would bring me or because I'd feel guilty if I didn't. The virtuous Aristotelian would surely save the child's life. The moral motivation behind the self-sacrifice, however, could result from less than acceptable moral motives.

Other than in the case of virtuous friendship, it appears the Aristotelian has no concern for others for their sake. The Aristotelian might save the child because it is advantageous to them or because they have agreed as a member of their society to not let children drown. In either case, the agent does not appear to be motivated by genuine concern for the wellbeing of the child because they do not share a virtuous relationship. The virtuous person would definitely save the child's life, but the motivation for doing so must be clearly tied to Aristotle's ethical theory.

Luckily, Aristotle is crystal clear in the case of virtuous friendship that it requires goodwill: wishing and doing good for the sake of others. If altruism necessarily includes the principle that it is done for the sake of the other person, then only virtuous friendship can provide

a suitable account by guaranteeing virtuous action is done for the right reasons. After all, "we have been right to say that one friend wishes good things to the other for the sake of the other *himself*," (NE 1159a10-11). And given West's conceptualization of self-referential altruism where the formally egoistic component of the theory manifests itself in our partiality, it might be reasonable to expand the notion of good friendship to the case of the drowning child.

If the toddler and the virtuous agent were friends of character, then the child would undoubtedly be saved for their own sake. Wishing and taking actions for the continued living of a good friend is the second mark of perfect friendship. Furthermore, the hypothetical situation seems to respect West's self-referential altruism: the agent saves the child in part because the child is close to the person in proximity and likely in other ways as well. Placing the DC thought experiment within the framework of virtuous friendship guarantees that it is done for the right reasons and seems to respect the partiality component of the theory. A guaranteed motivation of altruistic action is satisfied, but in doing so it seems Aristotle's conception of perfect friendship is voided.

Is it possible to ascribe a virtuous friendship to the relationship between the virtuous agent and the drowning toddler? The child violates many of the marks of good friends as they are undoubtedly not as virtuous, hold no goodwill, and share next to no similarities with the agent. Even more troublesome, the child and virtuous have not grown familiar with one another and have not lived together as is characteristic of good friendships. A small child and a fully developed virtuous person lack several marks of good friendship making it impossible for the virtuous agent to save the baby's life for the sake of the toddler. Virtuous friendships too then cannot guarantee the virtuous agent to have the right moral motivations when saving the child. Or can they?

Can the notion of virtuous friendship be expanded to include situations such as the DC thought experiment while maintaining its essential character as laid out by Aristotle? If it is possible, Aristotle's account could satisfy the moral motivation requirement generated by the DC experiment as the virtuous agent would necessarily act for the sake of the child. Yet such an account would have to propose an Aristotelian conception of virtuous friendship detached from several of its distinguishing features. I propose that an archetype of virtuous connections based on three primary components of Aristotle's perfect friendships can characterize a kind of virtuous relationship between the child and the virtuous agent.

An archetype of virtuous friendships can be drawn from Aristotle's theory to guarantee proper altruistic concern in the case of the drowning child. Aristotle's virtuous relationship can be characterized as (1) a relationship where both agents have the potential to develop their virtuousness and (2) doing so requires wishing and acting for the sake of the other person (3) who the agent has a natural or chosen relationship with. These three aspects of virtuous friendship seem most characteristic to his account based on the large focus placed on friendships as areas for moral development and the repeated discussion of goodwill as essential to virtuous relationships. The third component encompasses the discussion of self-referential altruism from the previous chapter and will set the limits of altruistic concern. Thinking of relationships which share these components as a type of virtuous relationship guarantees genuine altruism in the case of the drowning child.

The virtuous archetype thus presented can explain a kind of virtuous relationship in several situations including Singer's *Drowning Child* thought experiment. When presented with the choice of saving the child, the virtuous agent would surely save the child. Both the agent and the child have a chance to increase their virtuousness in the relationship: the virtuous agent

through their exercising of their rational capacity and through the virtues of generosity and friendliness. The child, on the other hand, will also have the opportunity to improve their virtuousness. They will continue living which is most characteristic of virtue. More so, they will gain a virtuous role model to follow and an opportunity to properly thank the agent. The motivation of the virtuous agent must be genuinely altruistic otherwise they would not be saving the child for their own sake. The virtuous agent will save the child without concern for themselves in part because of the closeness of the child to the agent. The location of the child necessitates the child resides close to the agent thus belonging to their community. The situation is similar to many situations people find themselves in where becoming a better person, according to Aristotle's prescription, requires participating in a web of social relationships necessitating concern for the sake of others.

Several marks of friendship appear to stand in the way of the archetype being applied to the DC experiment. Firstly, the agent and the child are not similar or familiar as was sketched earlier. Furthermore, the child is sufficiently less virtuous than the developed virtuous agents, voiding the "strict equality" of perfect friendships. The characteristics making perfect friendships exceedingly rare must be shown to be unimportant and or disagreeable with Aristotle's wider ethical theory to be omitted from a kind of virtuous relationships. Fortunately, several philosophers concerned with the Aristotelian as a social creature belonging to communities of other people support the expansion of virtuous friendships to other relationships similar in kind.

The archetype of a kind of virtuous relationship presented finds its foundation in the work of John Cooper who argues for a similarly expanded notion of virtuous connections. The thread drawn upon by Cooper is a rather intuitive problem presented by Aristotle's account of friendship; Friendship is a necessary component of the good life, yet virtuous friendships of

character are exceedingly rare. Most people who have a “normal mixture of some good and some bad qualities of character,” (Cooper 304) would seem to go through life being consistently used by friends of pleasure or utility. Living a life surrounded by friends of this sort would not appeal intuitively to the reader but would also seem to make the achievement of virtue very difficult if not impossible. Virtue of character, after all, is developed by modeling virtuous role models. If all virtuous relationships require equal virtuousness and a great amount of time spent together among their other various attributes, then nearly no relationship could be built on true concern for the sake of the other. In response to the unsatisfactory outcome generated by the rareness of virtuous friendship, Cooper argues that virtuous friendships must exist with discrepancies in virtue.

Cooper expands virtuous friendships to include those based on some moral component of the other instead of complete virtuousness. Because the perfection of virtue is exceedingly rare, nearly all people will have some virtuous qualities and some vicious ones. If I choose a friend for “his generous and open spirit, while recognizing that he is in some ways obtuse or not very industrious or somewhat self-indulgent,” (Cooper 306) then I would become friends with him for the sake of his moral character. “Such a friendship would belong to the type of virtue-friendship,” (Cooper 306) despite both parties being incomplete in their virtue. The truth of this claim is further evidenced by Aristotle’s discussion of the relationships between people unequal in virtue such as is the prejudiced case between man and wife (NE 1158b14-24). The resulting takeaway is that Aristotle’s conception of virtuous friendship is a perfect one, or one Cooper label’s as between “moral heroes”, but that one should not “mistake the perfect instance for the only member of the class,” (Cooper 308). In doing so the definition of virtuous friendship is expanded to include not just the fully virtuous, but also those with a mixture of virtue and vice.

Cooper goes even further to argue that all types of friendship require "mutual well-wishing and well-doing out of concern for one another," (Cooper 302).

Relying on Aristotle's comments in NE and in *Rhetoric,* Cooper puts forward the argument that all three types of friendship involve concern for the sake of the other in a conditioned sense. The first evidence for this claim is Aristotle's comments in *Rhetoric* cited by Cooper: he defines liking "as 'wanting for someone what one thinks good, for his sake and not for one's own, and being inclined, so far as one can, to do such things for him," (Cooper 302). Similar comments made in NE support the definition and its position as a foundational aspect of all types of friendship (NE 1155b31-34). Yet, at several points Aristotle goes as far as saying that "in erotic relationships (one class of pleasure-friendships) people 'love not one another but their incidental features," (Cooper 305) seemingly contradicting his early definition by making these relationships out to be motivated by self-interest. However, Cooper pushes on to claim that "pleasure- and advantage-friendships are instead a complex and subtle mixture of self-seeking and unself-interested well-wishing and well-doing," (Cooper 305).

The argument Cooper sketches comes chiefly from Aristotle's many comments on linking and friendship throughout his works. The end result is a reconceptualization of the reason why friends of all three types become friends with the other: "For the pleasure-friend will now be said to wish well to his friend for his friend's own sake, in consequence of recognizing him as someone who is and has been an enjoyable companion," (Cooper 311). Friendships of all types, then, importantly include a concern for the sake of the other given, at least in the case of the two lesser types, previously reciprocated benefit (Cooper 311). The other-concern in these types of friendship is importantly conditioned on the friends' instrumental qualities of usefulness or pleasantness as these qualities generated the other-concern in the first place (Cooper 313). The

conditioned well-wishing laid out by Cooper is questioned in the later work of Corinne Gartner as she also argues that "wishing and acting for the sake of another and not for the sake of oneself …. is a core characteristic of *philia*," (Gartner 143).

Gartner works around the conditional component of Cooper's argument to provide an account of other-concern in all types of *philia*. Despite the initial appeal of Cooper's conditional well-wishing, Gartner presents the qualm inherent to Cooper's argument: "We might worry that this self-interested commitment is at odds with what it is to have disinterested concern for another," (Gartner 144). If we care for our friend's sake, so long as they remain pleasurable, any instance wherein our friend became unpleasant would spell the end of our relationship and our concern for them. Gartner pushes on the conditional component of Cooper's argument in her three-pronged claim that other-concern is central to all types of friendships, that Aristotle narrowly defines selfhood and the recipient of well wishing, and in so defines full goodwill or (*eunoia*) as that which aims at the real interests of the person versus their apparent interests.

Gartner builds upon the interpretation undertaken by Cooper to provide a convincing account of what she calls the "commonplace distinction". The distinction is drawn by examining several sections of *NE, EE, and Rhetoric* clearly setting forth wishing and acting for the sake of others as a central aspect of friendship similarly to Cooper (Gartner 146-148). The repeated goodwill claim is enforced by Aristotle's discussion of the base person who only has relationships for their own sake: "Indeed, the base person seems to go to every length for his own sake, and all the more the more vicious he is," (NE 1168a32-33). For Gartner's claim to hold water though, she must also explain the seemingly clarification of friendship in NE VIII 3.

To address these claims, Gartner argues that goodwill in a strict sense only applies to virtuous friends because they have concern for the real interests of the other person, which is

their virtue, rather than for their apparent interests. The narrowly defined definition of self used by Aristotle in combination with his clearly drawn distinction between apparent and real value leads Aristotle to supplement "the common conception of friendship with his own account of value while preserving the core other-regarding aspect of the commonplace view," (Gartner 150). Only virtuous friends have full goodwill for one another as they are virtuous themselves and, in acting for the sake of the other, actually act for the virtue of the other which is their true interest. In apparent contrast to Cooper, Gartner narrows the scope of virtuous friendship and in doing so expands the commonplace conception of Aristotelian friendship requiring other-concern. Gartner's argument is best supported in NE by Aristotle's exemplification of the mother who gives away her child so the child may live a better life.

The mother who gives away her child is characteristic of loving for the sake of another in an unvirtuous friendship (NE 1159a27-33). Gartner notes of the relationship, "The mother who gives her child away is an exemplar of loving because she loves open-handedly, looking to promote and preserve the beloved's good with no ulterior motive, even at apparent cost to herself," (Gartner 151). The mother clearly does not have a perfect friendship with her small child yet seemingly acts only for the child's sake for "She would seem to be satisfied if she sees the child doing well," (NE 1159a32-33). The insightful works of Cooper and Gartner present somewhat conflicting, but ultimately similar arguments for an expansion of other-concern to all types of Aristotle's friendship. These arguments are an important response to the "strikingly pessimistic view of most of our relationships," (Gartner 144) seemingly adopted by Aristotle in NE.

The arguments made by Cooper and Gartner both add support to the archetype of kinds of virtuous friendship. Whether through expanding virtuous relationships to those inequal in

virtue or by demonstrating the importance of the commonplace distinction, both authors expand genuine altruistic concern beyond perfect friendships. Gartner's narrowing of virtuous friendship can be taken in a similar fashion to Cooper's friendship between moral heroes: its rareness creates space for kinds of virtuous friendships like the mother giving away her child as my archetype suggests. Their expansionary efforts help explain the pessimistic view of relationships generated by the many conditions of friendships between "moral heroes". The importance of having many different kinds of relationships sustained by concern for the other is supported by Nancy Sherman who argues for the essential role others play in structuring the life of the Aristotelian.

According to Sherman, friendship is intrinsically valuable because it structures the life of the virtuous agent. While friendship is both instrumentally and intrinsically valuable in Aristotle's theory, its intrinsic value materializes in the shape of the virtuous person's life: "Rather its intrinsic worth is of a much more pervasive sort, providing the very form and mode of life within which an agent can best realize her virtue and achieve happiness," (Sherman 595). The virtuous person cannot be self-sufficient, which is one of the two characteristics of the good life without other people. Aristotle directly combats the idea of an isolated good life in NE 169b5-7, assisting Sherman in defining a self-sufficient life as one sufficient in terms of our relationships. That is "while the self-sufficient solitary may not need others as means or instruments for living (or only minimally so), he will still need others to share ends and design a life together with those ends in mind," (Sherman 596). Sherman details several instances in NE where good friends play a significant role in the life of the other such as when reaching consensus towards reaching certain ends or in the observance of virtuous activity in the other

(NE 1171b32-36). As established by Sherman, our close connections, not just perfect friendships, deeply shape the life we can live and how we conceive of our own happiness.

The virtuous archetype is well supported by Cooper, Gartner, and Sherman who all work to place the Aristotelian within the complex social relationships and structures inherent to any human life. There are many situations a virtuous agent will find themselves in where they can develop their virtue with their connections but only if they have genuine altruistic concern. Cooper and Gartner both argue for genuine altruistic concern in all type of *philia* or close connections, if in a conditioned sense in Cooper's case. These comments reflect the first two components of the archetype wherein agents do not have to be fully virtuous or equally virtuous to be characterized as having a virtuous relationship. Their relationships may be a kind of virtuous relationships providing ample opportunity for the fostering of virtue if sustained by genuine concern for the other. In our friendships, families, college communities, and more, we find ourselves in situations ripe for virtuous action and necessitating genuine altruistic concern. These kinds of virtuous relationships are not Aristotle's perfect friendship between moral heroes, but they are surely constitutive of virtuous development and activity.

The archetype of virtuous friendship firmly embraces the essence of Aristotle's friendships while placing the virtuous agent within a more realistic set of relationships. The third and final component of the archetype, the partiality component, can also help explore the limits of Aristotle's altruism. In all of the above considerations, the connections the agent has been interacting with have been friends or *philia* of some kind. However, *philia* does not end in our chosen friends or our family of birth. It expands to encompass the relationship one has to their political community or *polis.*

By examining the role of friendship in connection with the political community one belongs to the limits of Aristotle's altruism can clearly be seen to encompass the drowning child. Humans are social creatures who form together into families, cities and political communities. While the political community is initially founded to foster mutual advantage, participation on the political community clearly requires relationships with people for their sake. As Aristotle says, people will sacrifice their lives for the nation they our born into or will donate great sums in magnificent donations to public works. The Aristotelian agent will save the child in part then, because of their mutual belonging to the political community. The concept of the political community supports the virtuous archetype presented and demonstrates its validity.

The political community is a complex group of social interactions humans naturally belong to. A component of human nature is political "since a human being is a political [animal], tending by nature to live together with others," (NE 1069b18-20). Romantic relationships, families, "fellow voyagers", and many other loosely termed communities "would seem to be subordinate to the political community, since it aims not as some advantage close at hand, but at advantage for the whole of life," (NE 1160a22-24). Political communities begin with association for advantage as is natural of human association and then are motivated to increase the virtuousness of all citizens.

Political communities require virtuous action as demonstrated by Aristotle's discussion of governing relationships, concord in friendship, and proper self-sacrifice. Perhaps the best evidence of the goodwill shared by citizens in the political community comes from Aristotle's discussion of the types of governments and the species of friendship within them. In the section Aristotle states, "the friendship of brothers is similar to that of companions, since they are equal and of an age, and such people usually have the same feelings and characters. Friendship in a

timocracy is similar to this. For there the citizens are meant to be equal and decent, and so rile in turn and on equal terms. The same is true, then, of their friendship," (NE 116a27). The virtuous connection shared between citizens of the same *polis* adds further weight to the expansionary effect of an archetype of virtuous friendship.

However, the political community is still rather limited in its scope. One must keep in mind that Aristotle's was writing as an Athenian citizen and his political community was that of a city state: "City-states like Athens and Sparta were relatively small and cohesive units, in which political, religious, and cultural concerns were intertwined," (Miller). The similarity and familiarity of citizens in city-states likely better resembles that of an American state than the entirety of the United States. Despite the limited scope, it would not be unreasonable for any member of the United States to have a virtuous relationship of sorts with other citizens based on their mutual identification as Americans. The exact extent of similarity required by citizens of political community to meet the third criteria of the archetype of virtuous friendship is unclear, yet would clearly encompass at least the city and state one lives in.

There can be little doubt the archetype of virtuous friendship does not apply to the drowning child experiment. Both the child and the virtuous agent have ample opportunity to pursue and develop their virtuousness by being genuinely concerned for the sake of the other. What's more is that the child, despite not being a close connection of the virtuous agent, comes to have a chosen relationship because of their mutual belonging to their political community. The fact that the agent and the child belonging to the same political community provides enough mutual identification to engender pure altruistic concern as confirmed by Aristotle. The virtuous archetype accounts for the many imperfect relationships people have and the opportunities within them to develop virtuousness as a being a member of the political community requires.

The inclusion of the political community into the archetype of virtuous friendships can also explain the apparent presence of goodwill in the virtues of generosity, magnificence, and friendliness. In each of the virtues, the action of the virtuous agent is considered within the context of the political community. The altruism showed by the generous, magnificent, and friendly person to their political community can be seen to contain goodwill as citizens of the same community can relate to each other in a virtuous manner. Even in the case of giving to the wanderer, the archetype of virtuous relationship can be observed if one considers the wanderer's temporary belongingness to the political community sufficient for establishing a connection.

For members of the same *polis*, the archetype of virtuous friendship can demonstrate the importance of goodwill in the virtues and in the many relationships shaping the life of nearly every person. The archetype of virtuous friendship combats the pessimistic view of friendship some take Aristotle to have, allowing the virtuous ample opportunities to become a better person by genuinely caring for the wellbeing of their friends, family, and community.

Conclusion

The paper began at the starting place of ancient eudaimonist theories: questioning how one should live a good life shared with others. Contrasting the theories of the early Stoics and Aristotle uncovered the importance of close connections in the latter and the unsound conception of human nature at the heart of Stoic doctrine. A good life necessarily includes our relationships. We are naturally social animals bound by our nature to share our lives in our pursuit of happiness. To Aristotle, our relationships are valuable enough to make any life lacking them seriously inadequate.

How and why we connect with others is equally important to Aristotle's ethics and is deceptively self-interested at first glance. The virtues of generosity, magnificence, and friendliness appear to present a case of genuine altruistic action towards friends, strangers, and the political community alike which is later conditioned by the many criteria of virtuous friendship. The structure of the eudaimonist theory and the odd self-love mechanism underpinning goodwill in virtuous friendships lends themselves to critiques that the Aristotelian is too concerned with oneself and the pursuit of their own *eudaimonia.* Objections such as the self-absorption objection may designate Aristotle's theory as formally egoistic but fail to touch the evidently altruistic content of the theory. A virtuous person will sacrifice money, fame, time, and even their lives for the sake of others they are close to following the definition of self-referential altruism. The genuine altruistic concern the virtuous agent has for their perfect friendships is also present in other types of relationships given they meet the three criteria of an archetype of virtuous friendship motivated in the third chapter.

The virtuous will spare no time jumping into the muddy water of a small pond to save Singer's drowning child. They will save the child as is befitting of the fine and of a virtuous person with genuine concern for others in their political community. The archetype of virtuous friendship can explain the motivations of the virtuous agent and guarantee genuine altruistic concern outside of friendships between moral heroes. Firmly founded on the work of Cooper, Gartner, and Sherman, the archetype of virtuous relationships pushes against the pessimistic view of friendship some argue Aristotle presents and demonstrates how many kinds of virtuous relationships factor into the development and flourishing of the Aristotelian. The sphere of altruistic concern is limited to those we are connected with through natural and chosen identification, pressing the virtuous agent to foster virtue among their connections and their

community. We should be fundamentally concerned with the wellbeing of the many people we share our lives with for their sake as “the happy person needs friends” (NE1169b23-24) to make a life a good one.

I hope this paper has demonstrated that by following Aristotle’s advice we may lead good lives. Lives filled with fine actions and good friendships. Lives outlined by the contours of human nature and defined by our own efforts. Lives filled with altruism towards our friends, our family, and our communities. But this is just an outline the reader must reflect on to fill in the many gaps between what altruism means in Aristotle’s ethical theory and what it means in the good life any of us can hope to live.

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