

**Character Friendship and Moral Development
in Aristotle's Ethics
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Abstract

In my thesis, I examine the role of character friendship for the agent's moral development in Aristotle's ethics. I contend that we should divide character friendship in two categories: a) character friendship between completely virtuous agents, and, b) character friendship between unequally developed, or, equally developed, yet not completely virtuous agents.

Regarding the first category, I argue that this highest form of friendship provides the opportunity for the agent to advance his understanding of certain virtues through the help of his virtuous friend. This process can be expressed in two ways. In the first way, I take character friendship in (a) as a relationship that is based on mutual relinquishing of opportunities for action or giving up external goods based on each agent's needs. This process helps the agents develop their character in certain virtues which have remained slightly underdeveloped than others due to nature (NE 1144b4-7), or development (Politics 1329a9ff). This means, for instance, that if agent A is wealthy and his friend B is a middle class worker and they win the lottery together, A will relinquish his share of money to his friend so that he will be able to practice the virtue of magnificence; a virtue that his previous financial condition prevented him from developing appropriately.

The second process is rather different and new in scholarly debate concerning Aristotle's theory of moral development. I suggest that the completely virtuous agent is able to further develop his character through a process I will describe as *interpretative mimesis*. In this process, the agent receives the form of his friend's action and is able to apply this pattern of behavior in a situation that he thinks is appropriate. I have to highlight though the fact the fact that he does not just ape his

friend's action. Instead, he interprets the action based on his skills and abilities and the demands of the situations he faces. Thus, this pattern works as an extra epistemological tool in the agent's hand in new and challenging moral situations.

Now, case (b) comes on the opposite side of the majority of scholars' view on character friendship. They think that Aristotle reserves character friendship only for completely virtuous agents. I argue that this is not the correct approach, and that less than completely virtuous agents can take part in character friendships as well. This view has the advantage of making character friendship in (b) a tool in Aristotle's hands for his agents of lower moral level to develop their understanding of virtue and its applications. I propose that the route of moral development in case (b) resembles the one in the second process of case (a).

Namely, the agent receives the form of his friend's action and uses it as a pattern in some new situation he has to face. I will not name the process though as "interpretative" or any kind of mimesis. The reason for this is that Aristotle gives us textual evidence (NE 1172a9-14) for an imitative method of moral development only for the second process of case (a). I will take case (b) then as a pattern guide application of my friend's action which we could call pre-interpretative mimesis period of the agent's moral development.

If my arguments are correct then character friendship is much more valuable than scholars thought. Our friends turn out to be examples of good action who guide us through the sweaty and painful path that is called virtue. And this path never stops; even if we have become "moral heroes"; or, put it differently, "masters" of practical wisdom.

Declaration

This thesis was composed by me and is entirely my own work except where I indicate otherwise by use of quotes and references. No part of it has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Andreas Vakirtzis

Note on Publications

Parts of chapter 4 have been published as: Vakirtzis, A. (2013). Aristotle's *Philia* and Moral Development. *Philosophical Inquiry*, 37(1/2), 49-65.

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At last, I want to dedicate my work to my mother who has been suffering from health issues for the last seven years. This is the least I can do for her.

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Introduction

When I first read Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, I was surprised by the fact that he devotes two whole books on friendship out of the total ten of his masterpiece. And I wondered: why is this topic so important to Aristotle? I assumed then that the bibliography and scholarly criticism on this matter must be huge. But I was wrong; nothing of the sort was true; the literature on friendship in the *NE* was significantly smaller than I initially expected. Whatever the reason, however, that explained the scholars' neglect, I decided to look deep into the texts of books 8 and 9 of the *NE* and try to show that Aristotle must have ideas worthy to be taken under serious consideration in his analysis of friendship.

The most important idea that stood out to me in Aristotle's discussion on friendship is that of moral development. Specifically, he emphasizes the fact that, through character friendship, the agents are able to morally develop by their cultivation of virtue (*NE* 1170a12). Also, the agents: "seem to become even better people through their activity and by mutual correction, since they mold each other in what they find pleasing, which is the source of the saying, 'noble things from noble men' " (*NE* 1172a12-14)¹.

Now, when I started thinking about these passages I realized that something deeper must lie underneath. The reason for this is, first of all, that only completely virtuous agents can take part in character friendship. But if this is true, does it not mean that they have reached the highest level of moral excellence where any

¹ For the majority of the English translations of the ancient Greek texts that I use in my thesis I have closely followed <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>, Broadie & Rowe (2002), and Barnes (1984).

continuation of developing the virtues would not be feasible? Apparently, Aristotle must believe that the agent's moral development does not stop after her character becomes mature enough to be worthy of the highly acclaimed characterization, *practically wise*. But can we accept that?

Aristotle says to us that in order for someone to be considered virtuous they have to have all the virtues (NE1145a1-2; NE 1098a17-18). But the unity of virtues that he demands in his ethical theory may vary in different agents, as Sherman (1987: 609) points out. This means that on the one hand, each agent may have all the virtues, and exercise them properly, as external conditions demand and allow. But on the other hand, and as a result of nature (NE 1144b4-7), development², and resources, certain virtues may surpass others in growth.

For instance, in order to portray Aristotle's scheme, we can use a historic example such as ancient Sparta. Now in this city-state, virtues such as honor and courage must have been in the front line of the family and state's focus to help the agent develop throughout his life due to the military character of the homeland's political agenda. Now this does not mean that all the other virtues would be exempted from his upbringing. Instead, they must have been developed to a somewhat lesser degree than courage and honor.

When we accept Aristotle's argument we can see that the practically wise man is not one who has reached some type of maximum, which means that he still has room for conceivable moral development despite having achieved such high levels of moral maturity. It is like an athlete where her personal best is not an unsurpassable

² In Politics 1329a9ff Aristotle argues that different virtues of character traits gain preeminence at different times in an individual's life.

maximum. But how can additional moral development in practically wise agents occur?

I will examine two ways of this process. Both of them take place when the agents bond under mutual appreciation of virtue in each other; namely, when they have become character friends. The first process involves a mutual relinquishing of external goods, and relinquishing chances for practicing virtues between character friends. In this way each agent gives his friend the chance to practice virtues in which he was previously slightly underdeveloped.

The second process involves the agent receiving the form, the pattern of his friend's action. When he receives this pattern, he interprets it, and, based on his skills and abilities he applies it in some similar situation when it arises in the future. Let me get into the details though of each process.

The analysis of the first process will occupy chapters 1 and 2. In these two chapters my main goal is to interpret two of Aristotle's most important concepts in his discussion of friendship: self-love and other-self; and I will connect both of them with the moral development of the agent while engaging in character friendship.

Specifically, in the first chapter I will argue that Aristotle's concept of self-love could be characterized neither as egoistic nor as altruistic³. The reason for this is that we should take the agent who loves himself as someone who loves his reasoning ability most of all. But what does this mean? Should we take self-love to imply egoism or altruism? There are arguments that favor both sides. I reject both of them,

³ In chapter 1, I also argue that cases of self-sacrifice tend to be more altruistic than egoistic. Nonetheless, I emphasize more the case of relinquishing goods to others because, along with my *justice as equality* interpretation of self-love, I show that character friendship can have significant value for the agent's moral development.

and I favor, instead, a mixed motivation proposal that I think reveals Aristotle's true intentions for the self-love concept.

The mixed-motivation argument shows that the agent cares about his interests as much as he does for his friend's. This means that when he relinquishes external goods, or chances for virtuous action to his friend, he does it to gain moral nobility and, at the same time, he cares about the wellbeing and moral development of his friend. Now this happens because, as I will suggest, we should understand the reasoning part of the agent in terms of special justice. My way of thinking is the following.

The agent needs external resources/goods in order to practice the virtues (e.g. money, political offices). He must care about these resources otherwise he might end up underdeveloped in certain virtues such as magnificence, for instance. When the agent is just in the special sense of the term, he must not be greedy or overreaching. This means that he must always take the resources that suit his needs; never more or less. I argue then that character friendship is a relationship that is based on the principles of special justice. Therefore, the agent's love for his reasoning ability is translated as his effort and capacity to divide the external resources with his friend as equally as possible. This means that friends divide these resources proportionately-based on each other's needs, and not arithmetically- e.g. you take 1 and I take 1.

When we accept this argument, we may understand that Aristotle is thinking that if two friends win the lottery together, for instance, agent A who is rich might relinquish his share to his middle-class friend B in order for him to practice the virtue of magnificence; a virtue in which he was slightly underdeveloped due to his

lack of large amounts of money. In this way agent A gains moral nobility *and* gives his friend chances for virtuous action which were previously unavailable.

In the second chapter I try to interpret Aristotle's concept that "a friend is another-self." I argue that the interpretation that I propose is connected with chapter 1. Let me explain. I take the other-self to have an epistemological flavor. This means that the agent does not take his friend as another replica of himself. Instead, he takes his friend as another, yet different and separate self with his own needs for practicing the virtues. And this is where the connection with chapter one's argument emerges.

The agent loves himself as much as he loves his friend since he considers him as his other-self. Therefore, he cares equally for his good as much as he does for his friend's. As a result he wants to be just and equal *to* him and share the goods in a proportionate manner *with* him. And this can lead to the development of certain virtues that have remained slightly underdeveloped as I explain in chapter 1.

With the end of the second chapter of my thesis I finish with the analysis of the first process of moral development in practically wise agents. Now, chapters 3, 6, and parts of chapter 5 have to do with the second process. In chapters 4, 5, however, I will argue that Aristotle believes that character friendship is also possible for agents who are not completely virtuous and that they can morally develop through this kind of friendship. In this way I will try to extend the value of character friendship for the agent's moral development even when he cannot yet be characterized as practically wise. Let me illustrate then briefly the main point of each of the four remaining chapters of my thesis, starting with chapter 3.

In chapter 3 I examine the reasons that lead the agent to desire X and not Y to be his character friend. I argue that the virtuous agent can discern, among hundreds of people that he observes every day, the ones that perform actions in truly virtuous ways. This happens due to the pleasure he feels from such actions. This pleasure is the aftermath of the recognition of the particularity of the other agent's virtuous action in every case that makes him special and attractive to me. This particularity rests on the agent putting in practice his practical wisdom to confront a certain situation and to use every means available in order to hit the mean. I take it though that when the agent performs a virtuous action he does it in his own way. This means that he incorporates his own skills and abilities (i.e. knowledge of a craft, agility, strength, etc.) into the action. And these qualities are admired by the agent in his friend as important means that the practically wise man also uses to accomplish the virtuous action. Now, my point is that all these qualities that attract me to the other agent can lead him and me to bond through character friendship. I will connect this chapter (3) with chapter 6, and will suggest that one can imitate these qualities that he admires in his friend; and this kind of *interpretative mimesis*, as I will call it, helps the agents extend their understanding of the application of the virtues even more. Let us move on to chapter 4 now.

The main strategic goal of chapter 4 is to argue against the proposal which states that only completely virtuous agents can take part in character friendship. Thus, I present the *extended view of character friendship* (EVCF) thesis, as I call it, in order to offer an alternative and more wide-ranging view of character friendship. The whole idea behind the (EVCF) is to show that even less morally developed agents can take part in character friendships apart from the “completely” developed ones.

When we accept the (EVCF) we understand that it works as an implement in Aristotle's hands for his less morally developed agents to advance in the sphere of virtue by taking part in character friendships. In order to make my position more vivid, I try to present two cases where, in the first one, both agents have the same moral level but they are not completely virtuous, and in the second one, one of the two agents has a more developed character than the other (unequal friendships). In this chapter I just give a brief outline of how moral development functions in agents who are good, yet, not completely virtuous. I put forward that the agent can learn from his friend's actions in virtues in which he is weaker than him. I explain more on this process though in chapter 5.

As I previously noted, chapter 5 is useful both for the explanation of EVCF's aspect of moral development and, for the character friendship between completely virtuous agents. In this chapter I will mainly try to show that the moral development in EVCF can be further substantiated and explained by certain Aristotelian theories of psychological and metaphysical background. First, I will suggest that through his theories of agency and change, Aristotle wants a passive power to depend on an active one for its alteration from a privative to a positive state. Next, I will apply Aristotle's metaphysical arguments in the two cases of EVCF that we saw in chapter 4. First, I will examine the case of a more developed agent (A), and a less developed agent (B). I will explain how (B) depends on (A) for her moral development.

On the other hand, I will further examine the case of EVCF between agents of equal moral level; however, in this circumstance the agents are not completely virtuous. I will submit that especially in this case of EVCF the agents function both as passive and active powers. Specifically, they can morally develop by providing a

new level of understanding of virtue to each other which emerges through a perceptual process of receiving his friend's form of virtuous action. I will call this the *balance argument*, and I will argue that this shows the interdependence of character friends for their moral development.

At last, I will suggest that the perceptual-like process that the agent of the EVCF goes through can also be applied in the case of completely virtuous agents that I will discuss in chapter 6. The difference between these two moral levels lies, though, mostly in applying the pattern received in the ideal way. The completely virtuous agent has an advantage over the agent of the EVCF due to his possession of practical wisdom.

After the end of chapter 5, I proceed to the final chapter of my thesis, chapter 6, in order to examine the function of mimesis in the moral development of virtuous agents, and thus look deeper into the second process that I referred to previously. The value of imitation for the moral development of the agents has been extensively analyzed by Fossheim. But his work is limited only to the role of imitation for the children's moral development. I suggest though that Aristotle extends the value and function of imitation to completely virtuous agents as well, based on Aristotle's explicit reference to such a process at NE 1172 a10-14.

I call this kind of imitation as *interpretative mimesis*, and I argue that this process takes place while agents are engaged in a character friendship. This model of imitation has the advantage of eschewing a problem that we can find in Fossheim's argument on imitation in children; namely, that they cannot distinguish between worthy from unworthy objects of imitation. This issue is not a problem in character friendship due to the capacity of virtuous agents to feel pleasure from their friends'

actions, and thus discern between good and bad actions, as I have already explained in chapter 3.

Another difference between imitation in children and imitation in highly advanced moral agents is the way they apply the action received from another agent. Specifically, children tend to “ape” others’ actions. On the contrary, completely virtuous agents *interpret* their friend’s actions. Let me explain.

As I explain in chapter 5, the agent receives the form of his friend’s action. Now, the completely virtuous agent will use this action as a pattern when he thinks it is applicable. He will do so though based on his skills and abilities. For instance, if the agent observes his friend performing a new move that he learned in his karate lessons, this does not mean that he is going to carry it out in the same way as his friend. Instead, he will use this move based on some skills that he has, such as, great strength, agility, etc. And in this way he advances and, therefore, deepens both the understanding and the application of certain virtues. In other words, this move will give him an extra option for action when the situation calls for it. He might use it, for example, when he must show courage in order to save an old person from a mugger. He will act, though, in his own particular way as I previously highlighted.

If the argument in my thesis is correct then it seems that character friendship is not only a heaven of virtue for agents. It is also able to further shape their character and help them morally *develop*. And it turns out that it does not matter whether you are fully practically wise or not. What matters is that your character is constantly evolving. And along with your character, your friend’s character evolves as well.

Chapter 1

Self-love, Self-sacrifice, and Special Justice

1.1 Introduction

When someone first thinks about the concept of self-love, their mind is driven in situations where the agent's primary interest is themselves and not the others. This comes, undeniably, on the opposite side of, for example, moral theories such as Kantianism, Utilitarianism, where the agent must give weight to the interests and well-being of other people. In this first chapter I defend the concept of self-love in Aristotle by arguing that if correctly understood, it can have considerable moral value in the agent's relation with his virtuous friends and his moral development.

In order to follow Aristotle's defense of self-love, I will argue that despite the fact that he might, at first glance, appear to be an ethical egoist⁴, this, however, does not depict the truth of his theory. In order to do this I will answer in three questions: 1) what does Aristotle mean by 'self' in the 'self-love' expression? 2) Does Aristotle's idea that "intelligence chooses what is best for itself" imply signs of egoism? 3) Is the self-lover's attitude in cases of self-sacrifice egoistic⁵?

⁴ On how to define egoism and ethical egoism there are various approaches: 1) Broad (1971: 266) defines 'the extreme form of Ethical Egoism' as follows: 'Each person is under a direct obligation to benefit himself as such. He is under no direct obligation to benefit any other person, though he will be under an indirect obligation to do this so far and only so far as that is the most efficient means available to him for benefiting himself. He is forbidden to benefit another person, if doing so will in the long run be detrimental to himself.' 2) 'Frankena (1973: 18), takes egoism to be saying that: 'an individual's one and only basic obligation is to promote for himself the greatest possible balance over good and evil'. 3) Brandt (1959: 267) treats egoism as the doctrine that "any person ought to maximize his own welfare". In this chapter I will try to argue that Aristotle's self-lover does not fulfill any of these definitions either of egoism or ethical egoism.

⁵ Someone could argue here that this statement seems self-contradictory. We will see though later on in this chapter that someone could take Aristotle to imply that cases of self-sacrifice are nothing but an attempt on behalf of the agent to gain moral nobility. Therefore these acts can be characterized as egoistic which means that they are not sacrifices anyway. I will

Concerning questions (1) and (2), Aristotle's approach of self-love gives us serious reasons not to condemn this concept as the opposite of morality; but this will not be enough. In fact, I will move on to answer question (3) in order further substantiate my position. We will see there that the correct self-lover can: (1) even relinquish honors, money, glory, and, (2) in extreme cases even give up his life for others and especially his virtuous friends.

Now, I will try to show that in case (2) the agent shows signs of altruism towards his friend. By giving up his life he might gain moral nobility, but the goods of the practical life he will miss through his extreme act of beneficence are far greater than the ones he gains. I will contend, that this is based on the greatness of soul that the virtuous agent possesses that leads him to make few but illustrious deeds. Therefore, I will consider these cases as altruistic.

On the other hand, I will claim that in case (1) the agent has a mixed motivation where he wants the good of himself as much as he wants the good of his friend. Consequently, their relationship is not based on some form of extreme beneficence or self-concern such as altruism or egoism. It is based on a sort of balance of self-directed and other-directed interest that is founded on each agent's need for virtuous action and moral nobility. Finally, I will provide an analysis of Aristotle's concept of special justice in order to show its connection with character friendship. I will argue that character friendship is in essence a relationship about justice and equality that is based on the reasoning ability and practice of the self-lover towards his friend and himself.

argue though that this is not the correct approach. Instead, I will contend that the cases of self-sacrifice are actually tending to be altruistic.

1.2. The Virtuous and the Vicious Self-Lover

Let us first start from NE IX.4. A friend is defined there in five ways. All these marks are found paradigmatically in the good person's relation to himself (NE 1166a11-29), but not to a bad person (NE 1166 b6-25).

What I think we should first focus our attention on from this passage is how Aristotle distinguishes two⁶ cases of self-love: the vicious and the virtuous person's self-love (NE 1166a13-29; b6-25). Irwin's analysis on this issue is illuminating:

“Aristotle expects the person with a eudaimonic virtue to be correctly concerned for himself for his own sake, and so to be concerned for himself as a rational agent. (NE1166a14-20). The vicious person ‘is at variance with himself, and has an appetite for one thing and a wish for another, as incontinent people do’ (NE1166b7–8). Some vicious people refrain from doing what they think best because of cowardice or laziness (NE1166b10–11); and those who have done many terrible actions come to hate being alive, and even kill themselves (NE1166b11–13). Their conflicts appear both at a particular time, when they make a decision, and at a later time, when they reflect on the decision they have made.” (1988: 379)

It is very crucial to comprehend correctly this distinction made by Aristotle. Irwin gives us here a complete picture of the two kinds of self-lovers. The main point of this argument is that the vicious person can have neither the characteristics of a friend as outlined in (a)-(e), which signify his relationship to his friend, nor can he have the analogous relationship to himself. This happens because of his instability in making correct rational decisions. This has the effect of making bad decisions both for himself and for his friend. But before moving on let us clear something out. Can the virtuous agent *really* be friends with himself? Aristotle's analysis seems to remind us of Plato. But does it?

⁶ For a similar position on this distinction between the vicious and the virtuous agent in the case of self-love and friendship see also: Brewer (2005: 739)

Self-lovers, in the popular sense, gratify the non-rational part of their soul at the expense of the rational one, that is, the most human element of all. They try to secure the biggest share of competitive goods (NE 1166a33-5). Thus they cannot take part in genuine friendship⁷.

Injustice to self is not possible (NE 1138a18-20); perhaps, only figuratively (NE 1138b5-6) could we understand such a psychological possibility. But Aristotle distances himself from such a psychology (NE 1138b8-11). On the other hand, however, when based on a conception of the soul where one part loves, and the other is loved Aristotle seems to remind us of Plato (NE 1168b29-35). In NE1166b25-7 he says that a base person cannot be friends with himself since he is miserable⁸. We should not forget that Socrates argues about the same point in the Republic in support of his claim that justice benefits the just (Rep.IV +IX, passim)⁹.

Stern-Gillet (1995: 83) argues that, with a brief look, Aristotle seems to be based on Plato's arguments and contends that correct self-love is the proper harmonization of the soul's elements which results in them becoming friendly to each other. And the inappropriate name self-lover stands for the “multiheaded monster¹⁰” of the Republic (Rep.588b-c).

These similarities of Aristotle with Plato on the conception of the soul have led various commentators¹¹ to conclude that the former argues from a Platonic point

⁷ Stern-Gillet (1995: 80).

⁸ The agent is miserable because he has nothing lovable about him (NE 1166b27). And if he cannot love himself, he cannot have friendly feelings for others as well.

⁹ Also see Republic: 588c7-8, 589a2-4, and 589b5-6.

¹⁰ Socrates argues that the desiring part of the soul resembles with a “multiheaded monster” that has to be subdued by the reasoning part of the soul. Now if this part cannot be subdued then the outcome would be the bad case of the Aristotelian self-lover where all he does is to follow his brute desires.

¹¹ Jaeger (1948: 49); Dirlmeier (1964: 551); Gauthier & Jolif (1970: 725).

view of the soul and thus, these arguments are dialectical. Nyens (1948) also argues that the conception of the soul in N.E is somewhere in the middle between Platonism of Protrepticus and the more prime views of De Anima. I do not think though that we should follow any of these scholars. The reason is that psychic harmony in Plato mainly has to do with justice. But we should not connect his ideas with the ones of Aristotle.

For Plato, justice is a unitary psychological¹² occurrence (Stern-Gillet, 1995: 100). It is a relationship among the parts of the soul of the agent. It is best exhibited in philosophers, and it is best understood in the context of an ideal society. Aristotle's main part of disagreement with Plato rests on the way that philosophers should get involved in political matters.

For Plato, the philosopher takes part in his city's political affairs only in extreme and unusual circumstances¹³. The philosopher should normally dissociate from everyday political matters as it seems a waste of time compared to the time he would lose from learning and the dedication to the study of the Good¹⁴. Aristotle rejects these Platonic claims.

¹² Sachs argues that Socrates commits the fallacy of irrelevance. Socrates defends the idea that it is always in one's interest to be just and he presents the just person as one who has a balanced soul. Sachs observes though that what Socrates defends is psychic health or rationality which may lead one to be happy but he fails to defend justice. Thus, he argues that Plato presents Socrates defending psychic health rather than justice. See, Sachs (1963: 141-58)

¹³ At this point I follow Kraut (2002: 100, 174) where he argues that for Plato, the philosopher should only care about the politics of the ideal city (which is rare and uncommon) and not care about the politics of corrupt or defective cities.

¹⁴ The only exception is when the philosopher must "Return from the Cave" (Rep.519-521) in order to serve the ideal city. The philosopher must devote time to the city that educated him, and devote himself to the public service (Rep.520a-d). The philosopher will accept the just nature of this arrangement, even though *grudgingly* (Rep.520). For more on the argument on Rep.519-521 see Kraut's very important essay in Kraut (1991). Reprinted with corrections in Kraut (1999: 235–254).

Stern-Gillet (1995: 79-101) argues though that despite the similarities of Plato and Aristotle on the conception of the soul, the differences are not only greater but really important for their philosophy. For Plato, psychic harmony results to the connection with the Forms. For Aristotle, self-love is the sign of rational choice in a man of practical reason. So Aristotle's view of psychic harmony is more down to earth than Plato's. Therefore, she concludes: "Aristotle's portrait of the true self-lover is that of a serene person who has internalized the values and norms of the moral life and, as a consequence, is untroubled by the discomforts of remorse and regret." (Stern-Gillet, 1995: 101)

But the virtuous agent does not have such conflicts in his decisions. Namely, he is able to come to the right decisions without suffering from cloudy perception on what he has to do. So the agent cares and loves himself as a rational agent (NE 1166a14-20). But if reason is our true self, does this mean that it dictates that it is our good that should come first or that of our friends'?

1.3. Self as Reason and Concern for Others

In NE 1166a17-8 Aristotle argues that the good man has a steady prospect on his life that gives priority to reason¹⁵. As Irwin notes, "Aristotle does not mean here that all the agent wants is to think. What he wants is to actualize his reason in directing his desires and actions; hence he wants to act on his virtuous decision". (1999: 291)

There is a problem though on how we must understand the virtuous agent's love of this part. In NE 1168b29-34 Aristotle argues that the proper self-lover is the one who gratifies and obeys the most controlling part of himself; namely, his reasoning part. But how does this work in the case of our friends' concern? Does the love of

¹⁵ See also NE 1168b30; 1178a2.

our reasoning part make us egoistic or altruistic towards our friends? If it is egoistic, then the agent will care only about his good and neglect his friend. If it is altruistic, then he will care only about his friend and neglect himself. In order to answer these questions we first of all have to move to IX.8 of the Nicomachean Ethics. We will see there the connection of self-love with self-sacrifice.

Aristotle argues that his view of the correct self-lover does not conflict with another “problematic” common belief (*ἔνδοξον*) as Annas (1989: 9) names it. This common belief says that the virtuous man will sacrifice his interests for others. The problem with this common belief is that if read in combination with Aristotle's view on the correct self-lover then the outcome might sound paradoxical. Namely, on the one hand we have the Aristotelian agent who loves himself most of all and, on the other hand, this same agent who follows the common belief and sacrifices his interests for others. This actually sounds paradoxical. But is it? Let us first see the text though, and then we will examine various scholars' reactions. In NE 1169a18-1169b2 Aristotle says:

“But it is also true that the virtuous man's conduct is often guided by the interests of his friends and of his country, and that he will if necessary lay down his life in their behalf. For he will surrender wealth and power and all the goods that men struggle to win, if he can secure nobility for himself; since he would prefer an hour of rapture to a long period of mild enjoyment, a year of noble life to many years of ordinary existence, one great and glorious exploit to many small successes. And this is doubtless the case with those who give their lives for others; thus they choose great nobility¹⁶ for themselves. Also the virtuous man is ready to forgo money if by that means his friends may gain more money; for thus, though his friend gets money,

¹⁶ I translate here *τὸ καλόν* as nobility. I could have translated it as good or beautiful as well. I preferred though the “nobility” translation because on the one hand if I had translated it as “good” then I would have equated the *καλόν* with the *ἀγαθόν* which is not exactly the same thing both in Aristotle and Plato. On the other hand now, the translation of *τὸ καλόν* as “beautiful” could have been an equally acceptable translation as the “noble”. So for me it did not really matter whether it was the one or the other. The most important thing was to differentiate through the translation the *καλόν* from the *ἀγαθόν*.

he achieves nobility, and so he assigns the greater good to his own share. And he behaves in the same manner regarding honors and offices as well: all these things he will relinquish to his friend, for this is noble and praiseworthy for himself. He is naturally therefore thought to be virtuous, as he chooses moral nobility in preference to all other things. It may even happen that he will surrender to his friend the performance of some achievement, and that it may be nobler for him to be the cause of his friend's performing it than to perform it himself. Therefore in all spheres of praiseworthy conduct it is manifest that the good man takes the larger share of moral nobility for himself. In this sense then, as we said above, it is right to be a lover of self, though self-love of the ordinary sort is wrong.” (NE 1169a18-1169b2)

In this passage, Aristotle argues that, if necessary, the agent will give up his interests or even his life to his friends or country¹⁷. But he does not say that the agent will *just* give up his life or his interests to his friends with him taking nothing back. Instead, he will act in these ways but he will gain moral nobility as an upshot of these actions; and not only will the agent gain moral nobility, but, he will gain the largest share of it all. I think though that this is just a first, superficial reading of Aristotle that might lead someone to conclude that he is an egoist or, better said, an ethical egoist. So let us first see Annas' reflexes on this passage. The news is rather bad for Aristotle according to her.

Annas suggests then that on Aristotle's analysis, it might appear,

“...even the ultimate sacrifice, dying for another, turns out to be assigning to yourself more of what matters more...But if self-sacrifice turns out really to be a form of self-love, then we have Aristotle apparently endorsing a basically self-centered model of ethical action even in cases where the agent sacrifices his interests for others...If the cases of self-sacrifice Aristotle describes [here] are really cases of self-love, then all cases of altruism would seem to be cases of self-love.” (1988: 9-10)

A palpable way to meet with this problem is to hold that an act of beneficence can be, at one and the same time, a sign both of favored self-love and altruism. But

¹⁷ Aristotle's reference to the case where the agent may sacrifice his life for his country is of no relevance for my purposes in this chapter. I intend to focus only on the circumstances where the agent may give up his life for their character friends.

this seems to her incoherent: “the agent cannot give as his end in doing something both that he is helping his friends for their sake and that he is assigning both to himself the greater good of acting virtuously” (Annas, 1988: 12).

Pakaluk¹⁸ argues that three difficulties can be separated in Annas' argument: (1) it seems that Aristotle denies the good persons can perform genuine self-sacrificial actions; (2) Aristotle's views on dying for another person, for instance, would make it inexplicable why that sort of act is thought to provide an example of love and friendship; and (3) although friendship requires some sort of self-forgetfulness of oneself, and a full attention to another's needs, Aristotle would seemingly have an agent linger over how much better off he is than are his friends, precisely while he does good things for his friends. (Pakaluk, 1998: 200)

Pakaluk gives (2) to Aristotle. For him, Aristotle does not consider giving up one's life for another as a paradigm of friendship. In IX.9 Aristotle seems to attribute that role in 'living life with another'. Perhaps, Pakaluk suggests, he wants to argue indirectly that acts of benefaction, including those of self-sacrifice, are not the optimum expression of friendship. (Pakaluk, 1998: 200)

Now, I agree with Pakaluk on this point. Acts of benefaction or sacrifice should not be considered as the best expression of friendship. However, I have to add that they are an indispensable part of it. The reason for this is that in cases of “extreme benefaction”, if I may call it this way, the agent shows his friend how much he values him, and he puts even his own life on the line if necessary; and not only that; but he may even lose it if necessary. And as we will see later on in this chapter, I will consider these cases as one's of altruism.

¹⁸ Pakaluk (1998)

Regarding (1) now, Pakaluk argues that it is not clear that IX.8 implies that actions within a friendship cannot be done, truly, “for the sake of one's friend”, while also benefiting the agent, and even benefiting him more¹⁹. But is it actually unintuitive that an action be done for the sake of another and also because it benefits oneself? It is possible, he says (Pakaluk, 1998: 201), “to act for the sake of two others right away; but, if so, why not for the sake of oneself and another?” If anything, he suggests, the alternative is incoherent:

“any theory such as Aristotle's, which makes activity itself an important good, must hold that the agent gains important goods for himself through his actions; and then the only thing at stake is the value of what he gains in action compared to what the other gains, or alternatively, what he gives up.” (Pakaluk, 1998: 201)

I think that Pakaluk is right²⁰. Mixed motivation is not something that should be discarded or charged with incoherence. And, in any case, the way Annas tries to figure out the problem that comes out for Aristotle perplexes things more than easing the tension of the argument.

What she does then is to avoid imputing this idea of the agent to Aristotle. She suggests, as an alternative, that the virtuous person is not aiming *at* his own good when he performs noble actions and gives up various external goods for his friends. The virtuous person benefits himself by acting this way, but his motivation is not driven by the thought of getting most goods in this situation. But this line of reasoning can be avoided when we follow Pakaluk's position.

We will see later that the mixed motivation hypothesis can be substantiated through what I will call “justice as equality” argument. The problem with Pakaluk

¹⁹ Even though I agree with Pakaluk on the mixed motivation approach, I disagree with this part of his argument. The reason is that I take the mixed motivation idea to imply equality between character friends and not any profit in benefaction in one of the two agents.

²⁰ Kraut seems to agree on this point with Pakaluk. See, Kraut, R. (1989: 21-2).

and Kraut's (1989: 21-2) argument is not that the mixed motivation idea does not work but that it is not supported enough. Because even if this idea intuitively works for them it does not mean that it necessarily works for Aristotle as well. We will see though in the section on special justice of this chapter that this is how the agent's mind works at least in case of giving up external goods for his friends.

Concerning (3) Pakaluk (1998: 201) argues that it seems adequate to use a distinction usually drawn between the expected and the intended. It is possible, he says, that an act has some consequence, and that it can be foreseen by the agent to have that consequence, without the consequence's being part of what the agent is aiming at. But if so, he concludes: "it can be the case that actions which are good for others benefit the agent as well; the agent knows this, but his own benefit does not fall within what he is intending for in doing the action." (Pakaluk, 1998: 201)

Pakaluk follows the same line of thought with Stern-Gillet on (3). Specifically, Stern-Gillet (1995: 70-1) argues that the man who makes a noble sacrifice is not acting in order to get the best for himself, that is, moral nobility; this accrues to him only apropos, as a kind of uninterested consequence of action that is done for the friend's sake.

In order to avoid the idea that the genuine motivation for a virtuous act is any personal interest at all, Stern-Gillet contends that the virtuous friend "desires *the* good rather than *his own* good" (1995: 71). This means that for her, the real motivating force becomes a kind of Kantian commitment to the "impersonal requirements of morality." (1995: 70-71) I agree though with Pangle's (2003: 234) criticism to Stern-Gillet that we should not consider anything like that in the discussion of self-love; simply because this line of thought is not Aristotle's.

We previously saw that Annas agrees with both Stern-Gillet and Pakaluk when she says: "...the agent's aim is just acting for the sake of others; in doing this he is in fact getting some good for himself, but this is not part of his aim." (1988: 12) But I do not think we can accept this argument from the three scholars.

In other words we cannot throw away the role of motivation and acknowledgment of consequences in the agent's mind. I think that the agent may still love his friend for his sake and at the same time gain for himself moral nobility without attributing Aristotle ideas such as Pakaluk, Annas, and Stern-Gillet do. Especially Pakaluk seems to lack consistency in his views when he is a supporter of the mixed motivation view, and at the same time follows Annas and Stern-Gillet on the idea where the agent seeks *the good* and not his good.

I will propose that inside a character friendship each moral agent should give his friend what he needs and lacks. On the other hand, he gives *himself* exactly what he needs as well; never more or less in both cases. Thus their relationship is based on justice as equality; and, based on this model each agent morally develops²¹ based on his actual needs and weaknesses in various virtues. We will see though that even this view is not without problems since the agent might even take less than his friend when the occasion calls for such a behavior. But in this way the agent not only serves the needs of his friend for virtuous activity and moral development, but, also, he equalizes with him. In order to show the merits of this analysis we have to look deeper into Aristotle's ideas on special justice. But this can wait for the time being. We first have to look into some more questions that might lead someone to accuse Aristotle of egoism.

²¹ I will expand on this idea in the next chapter and the ones that will follow, but not in the current one.

1.4. Intelligence and Egoism?

In NE 1169a17 Aristotle makes a bold statement, he says” “intelligence ($\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\zeta$) always chooses what is best for itself”. If, however, the best sort of life is not simply self-regarding, how should we understand Aristotle's assertion? Pangle (2003: 176) suggests three possible readings for Aristotle's idea. The first possibility is to read NE 1169 a17 as implying that that the truly intelligent $\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\zeta$ will go after its own wisdom as its exclusive end. The second possibility is to understand this passage as that the mind choosing what is best for oneself, as a state with a number of ends, but all of them properly taken as constituents of one's eudaimonia (2003: 176). The third possibility is for the mind to go after the deepest wishes of the individual in a virtuous and rational way, but without any limits that would demand of these wishes to be *only* for the agent's own eudaimonia (2003: 176).

Regarding the *first* possibility Pangle (2003: 177) says that the view that the mind cares only about its own wisdom, is not out of the discussion, but it calls for treating as just contingent or external many things which are part of our everyday experience. So, she says, if this is correct then “the intelligent mind would consider everything and everyone as either a means to knowledge, an obstacle to knowledge, or absolutely of no concern to it” (2003: 177) Now, there are passages that could support this view (NE1145a6-9; NE1177b1-1178a8, and EE 1249b17-23) but still, it would be too farfetched.

I agree with Pangle's argument on this point. The agent cannot have only wisdom and knowledge in his mind. He cannot disregard or consider everything else in his life as a means to them. He must give weight to the practical and political life as well. Thus Cooper (1986: 172-3) rightly argues that such a reading conflicts with

this chapter, in which Aristotle refers to the mind that constitutes the essence of each man not as theoretical intelligence but primarily as practical intelligence. Therefore, although our mind (*νοῦς*) can also be applied to theoretical wisdom in a narrow sense it is applied to intelligence generally; which covers practical intelligence as well.

Generally, as Cooper (1986: 172) puts it, “it is...not the content of the action but its form that is essential here: when Aristotle says that the good man ‘gratifies the mind’, he means only that, whatever he does, he does it because he has decided upon it by reasoning.”. Thus, Pangle argues that, in this context, the statement that intelligence chooses what is best for itself suggests that the gratification of intelligence applies in some way to all intelligent, deliberate action (Pangle, 2003: 177).

Now, this interpretation could leave space for some concern for others. But it is not clear that it does since, even if we value our practical reasoning aside from our theoretical one, this does not infer that our reasoning takes others’ interests as more important than ours. Thus, even if this interpretation clarifies an important aspect of the value of the mind as practical reasoning despite the theoretical one we cannot yet accept it. So Pangle seems right at this point.

Now let us move on to the second explanatory approach. This possibility seems, according to Pangle (2003: 177), to have a better outlook. Namely, she says that if intelligence always chooses what is best for oneself, this leaves space for the mind to engage into various pleasures and satisfactions as ends (i.e. the satisfaction of helping others and see them prospering). Yet, Pangle (2003: 178) remarks, all of these ends would be eventually pursued as constituents of one’s own eudaimonia.

In this case Allan reads Aristotle in the following way:

“Every point confirms the impression that Aristotle does not think it psychologically possible for a man to choose otherwise than in his own interest, and is seeking...to say what really happens when men appear to subordinate their interest to that of another...Self-interest, more or less enlightened, is assumed to be the motive of all conduct and choice”²². (1952: 187-9)

Therefore, Allan also seems to follow the position that Aristotle puts the self-interest of the agent in the first line when it comes for his relationship with others.

This *second* interpretation, like the first, and even more so, allows room for some sympathy towards our friends’ interests. In contrast to the first one though, it seems to allow caring feelings for the other to be the basis of rational action. This, however, would still be action selected upon calculations of one’s pleasures and pains as Pangle rightly notes. (2003: 178)

If, says Pangle, one chose an apparent sacrifice, it would always be because, circumstances, being what they were, one would see one’s own best prospects for happiness to lie in giving up one thing for a greater one²³. So, Pangle (2003: 178) argues, this interpretation leaves space for consideration for others, but not for genuine friendship.

McKerlie (1991: 85-6), on the other hand, who tries to put together his view with true friendship, seems to befuddle the reader as he even tries to depict as a possible point the “egoistic eudaimonism”, as he calls it, that would include loving another as an end. But, the man who acts merely for his own good, and who wants a eudaimonia that includes friendship, or acting for the sake of the other, must go

²²Millgram agrees on this point: “Aristotle’s explanations of friendship are uniformly self-oriented”. See: Millgram (1987: 376).

²³As we will in the justice section of this chapter this cannot be true when we consider friendship as justice and as equality. The agent does not want greater share for himself since that would be unjust.

against his main beliefs to achieve them. As a result McKerlie's view seems to be creating a conflict of interest in the agent's thinking process that cannot be surpassed. Thus his interpretation, even though imaginative and original, turns out to be unhelpful.

Charles Kahn (1981: 26) points out, that the argument that a rational friend always acts with a view to his own good is hard to renounce because where there is friendship, there is a good for oneself that goes with every good enjoyed by the friend: the good that lies in the pleasure of perceiving one's happiness, particularly when one has contributed to it, and the pleasant outlook for the continued company and affection of a good man who is doing well.

The central problem though remains the one of goodwill, because as Pangle suggests, without it:

“...there could be no intrinsic pleasure in benefaction, no pain in beholding a friend's suffering, except a kind of animal instinct and a fear of suffering the like oneself, and no real pleasure in human company, except the pleasures of triumph, power, and diversion, which Hobbes describes as the roots of human sociability. It is true that to please a friend is also to please ourselves, but pleasing him²⁴ is only pleasing to us because we love him. And if nature inclines us to love, to care for the welfare of others for their own sakes, why should intelligence, which takes its guidance from our true concerns, not choose to pursue their good as well as our own?” (Pangle, 2003: 238)

Now, what seems to be missing from Kahn's approach in his paper “Aristotle and Altruism” is a “truly spontaneous concern for others”, as Pangle puts it (2003: 239), from the agent's friendly behavior. Kahn sees that in the best cases, friends both act for one another's sakes and pursue friendship since friendship is a component of their happiness. He seems to face difficulties, however, when he attempts to make

²⁴ Hardie (1980: 326) regards this argument to be a conclusive refutation of what he calls “psychological hedonism”.

each agent's desire for friendship the ground for his loving the other for his own sake (Kahn, 1981: 30-40). But it is nothing else but a contradiction in terms to love another as an end for the sake of happiness or of anything else, as Kraut (1989: 136-7) observes.

Pangle (2003: 238) says though that there is a way to confront this contradiction. She believes that while we pursue friendships with the intention of being happy, these friendships merely strengthen our natural temperament to feel goodwill and affection, but in themselves, the goodwill and affection are not for the sake of anything.

Thus the reasons Aristotle will give for the importance of friendship in 9.9 will not, as Kahn says, provide “a reason for wanting the welfare of others for their own sake” (Kahn, 1981: 30-1), but merely a reason for supporting, rather than opposing, such want. We can see then that neither the second possible interpretation seems to work. So what is left is the third approach which I would agree with Pangle is the best possible understanding.

So Pangle (2003: 179) goes for the third interpretation and thus argues that for Aristotle, the intelligent mind always prefers what is best for itself as a rational mind, and this means acting consistently, and guided by a full grasp of its own profoundest concerns; concerns which commence but do not end with the concern for the individual happiness of the being whose mind it is²⁵. In addition, she says, reason discovers our wants and concerns but it does not create them out of nowhere. The mind, in choosing what is best for itself, may still choose to give as well to take. (Pangle, 2003:179)

²⁵ And as we will see later on in this chapter, in cases where character friends have to divide goods between them, they look for equality in this distribution.

This seems to be the view of Urmson (1988: 115-6). As he puts it, one may sacrifice one's life for a friend on the grounds that "one would despise oneself for even after if one did not," but it is only "because one values him for his sake that it would be sordid not to make the sacrifice". Pangle (2003: 238) says here that Urmson does not do justice to Aristotle's argument that the noble man loves himself most of all, but he is right to point out that uncalculating²⁶ love of the other for his own sake must trigger any rationally chosen sacrifice.

As I previously said, I agree with Pangle that the third interpretation is the most balanced one among the three alternatives presented and represents Aristotle's thought in the best way. As we will see later on Pangle's argument will be close to what I will call "justice as equality" argument. And I say "close" because" Pangle's argument implies a slight tendency on behalf of the agent to benefit himself a bit more²⁷. My view though demands absolute equality between the agents. Not arithmetical but proportional one as we will see. However we are going to move now to see how self-love works in cases of someone's sacrifice of life for his friends. Is such a sacrifice altruistic or egoistic? We will find out in the next two sections.

1.5. Self-Sacrifice, the Value of Life, and Eudaimonia

²⁶ We will see in the sections that have to do both with, (1) the agent's sacrifice of life, and, (2) the sacrifice of goods, that there is a calculating process that is involved in the agent's rationally chosen sacrifice. But this process is benign since in (1) he finally gives more credit to his friend's life than his own, and in (2) the agent gives as much credit to his own good as to his friend's.

²⁷ She says, as we previously saw, that: the agent's interests commence but not end with the concern for the individual happiness of the being whose mind it is. Now this view of her might infer that that the agent's intention is, first of all, to satisfy his needs, and, give something to his friend as well. My point will be though, as we will see later on in this chapter, is that the agent deliberates on his needs and his friend's to the same degree, since I equate his reason with justice as equality; and justice demands such a thinking process.

In NE 1169a17-24 Aristotle argues that the agent will not only sacrifice contested goods, but, also his life for his friend, if necessary. There seems though to be a problem-*aporia* here which is not obvious but implied (Stern-Gillet, 1995: 104). Namely, in so far as the ultimate self-sacrifice keeps the virtuous from living his allotted span of life, it is possible to stand between him and the satisfaction of one of *eudaimonia*'s conditions, namely completeness of life (NE 1101a14-6).

Stern-Gillet (1995: 104) says that this *aporia* should not be left unexamined. Let us see then some reactions on behalf of the scholars. In order to solve the *aporia*, Gauthier argues that the difference between the two forms of self-love, namely, (a) reproach, (b) love of the mind can be understood as: (a1) vulgar egoism, and, (b1) as virtuous egoism. That is to say, the vulgar egoist seeks gratification at the expense of others, while the virtuous egoist desires only moral beauty disregarding material advantage. So Stern-Gillet takes Gauthier to be both a psychological and an ethical egoist²⁸.

Stern-Gillet (1995: 104) argues that Gauthier's notion of virtuous egoism is unclear. When he treats the concept of self-love and virtue as synonymous, he fails to alleviate the paradox of the self-sacrificed self-lover. If, she says, someone wants to understand Aristotle's point they will have to take under consideration the fact that the agent will, in particular occasions, such as moral rivalry, willingly choose less, or even sacrifice his life for others.

I agree with Stern-Gillet's criticism against Gauthier's approach. We will see later on, through our analysis in the justice section, that the agent may willingly take less than his friend in certain occasions. In addition, I do not think that the agent is

²⁸ Gauthier takes the definitions for ethical and psychological egoism from: Frankena (1973)

entirely neglectful of external or material goods and cares *only* about moral beauty. We will see that these goods that Gauthier talks about in a derogatory way are very significant for the practice and developing of the virtues. In this section though, I will try to confront the second part of Stern-Gillet's prerequisite for the correct approach to Aristotle's argument.

Perhaps the most intriguing approach towards a viable solution to the aporia comes from Engberg-Pedersen²⁹. He reads “acting for the sake of the kalon” as “acting for the sake of others.” By doing this, he suggests that “...noble acts consist in sharing out natural goods. According to the chapter on self-love, it is reason that states how they should be shared out.” (Engberg-Pedersen, 1983: 44)

This view of Engberg-Pedersen resembles Nagel's³⁰ justification of altruism. Nagel argues that rationality can motivate agents to perform actions which are recognized to promote “an objectively valuable end” even when such actions are against their own self-interest. Thus, for Nagel, “to apply a principle to oneself impersonally, one must be able to apply it to the person who one is, in abstraction from the fact that it is oneself” (Nagel, 1970: 109).

Engberg-Pedersen follows this line and says:

“...when a person 'pays no attention to himself', as opposed to doing everything else for his own sake, what he does is to leave out of account 'his own' desires. But the point is not that he pays no attention whatever to himself or neglects all his desires. What he does is just to take account of himself as one among others since the basic problem is that of how natural goods should be shared, reason can find no foothold for a criterion anywhere else than in properties that are impersonal; reason sees that initially all humans have an equal claim” (Engberg-Pedersen, 1983: 44-45)

²⁹ Engberg-Pedersen (1983).

³⁰ Nagel (1970).

So Engberg-Pedersen explains self-sacrifice in the following way. It is required, he says, when “...there is no legitimate ground for ascribing to oneself a claim to the goods that is any stronger than that of any human being who will be affected by the goods being shared out in one way or another”. (1983: 47)

First of all, I have to note here that Engberg-Pedersen's argument lacks textual evidence. In addition, his view does not take under consideration that the discussion of self-love occurs in the framework of friendship. What Engberg-Pedersen takes as an ecumenical moral obligation is really the acknowledgment of a friend as friend that motivates the agent. This last point is also the major complaint that Stern-Gillet (1995: 106) expresses against his view.

What matters then is that some agent X whom the agent benefits greatly is his friend and not just any individual. I would like to add here that perhaps Engberg-Pedersen's idea could be applied in a larger scale type of friendship such the political-civic (*Pol.*1295b) one. However, Aristotle does not talk about anything like that here.

On the other hand, it seems to me that Engberg-Pedersen takes Aristotle's claims on self-love to resemble what Plato calls in the *Theatetus*, the “furthest Mysian”³¹ (*Theat.* 209b). By this phrase, Plato means a concern for someone living far from us with whom we have no connection or relationship of any kind. Benson (1990) seems to follow this line of thought since he argues that concern for people to whom we have no special commitment at all does not appear to be an issue for Aristotle's theory.

³¹ Julia Annas makes this point about the “furthest Mysian”. See, Annas (1993: 253).

Thus Stern-Gillet seems to have a serious point against Engberg-Pedersen's view. I just want to add here that by not discussing the furthest Mysian and sticking to character friendship Aristotle must want to say that it matters who the other is ethically in cases of sacrifice of any kind. What we give him must be according to his worth. If the other is a traitor, for instance, would the agent sacrifice his life for him?

Stern-Gillet (1995: 106) continues her criticism to Engberg-Pedersen by claiming that his view that the *καλόν* principle enjoins universal altruism is not convincing. She says that although his proposal is established on passages where Aristotle displays “fine” actions to pertain self-sacrifice, it contentiously misinterprets these texts by concluding from them that altruism must be the primary motivating force of “fine” actions. (Stern-Gillet, 1995: 106-7)

In the Eudemian Ethics, we see that only those ends are pronounced fine which are both praiseworthy and valuable in and for them (EE.1248b18-23). Stern-Gillet (1995: 70-71) suggests that, acting for the sake of the fine, is not the same as acting for the sake of some seemingly altruistic end which is beyond the act itself. As Sherman (1989: 113-4) puts it: “To act for the sake of the fine...is the end of virtue, but an immanent end-not some additional value posited over and above the value of the virtuous action itself.”

It seems then that the scholars we have seen so far have provided interesting, yet fruitless propositions for the solution of the *aporia*. I think that in order to find the answer to the *aporia*, especially in the case of the sacrifice of life we must turn to a

particular virtue which must take place in such cases; this virtue is greatness of soul³².

1.6. Greatness of Soul and Self-Sacrifice

In this section we will return to further examine a couple of passages which are part of the longer one at NE1169a18-1169b2 that we saw before in this chapter. The first passage is at 1169a18-24. In this part Aristotle argues that the person of excellence will sacrifice his life for his friends if need be, or even, he will give up money and honors for them. By doing these actions he will gain the fine for himself for he will choose intense pleasure for a short time than a mild one for a long time.

Now as I said in the previous section, I will talk about here only for the case of the sacrifice of life and not for the case of giving up goods such as money, offices, or honors for someone's friend. The reason for this is that I think that the latter case can best be explained through the analysis of justice that I will provide later on in this chapter, and not through the greatness of soul argument.

Let us turn back to NE1169a18-24 now. The problem with this passage is that as stated in the *aporia* by Stern-Gillet, if the agent sacrifices his life then he will deprive himself of the chance to fulfill eudaimonia's most basic condition.; namely, the practice of virtue in a complete life. Now the agent might gain the fine from such a sacrifice but he still loses his life after all. There are two questions then that have to be answered here: (1) is such a sacrifice altruistic or egoistic? (2) How does reason work in this case?

³² Regarding the argument about the virtue of the greatness of soul and its relevance in the current discussion, I have been significantly influenced by the commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics of Irwin and Broadie. See: Irwin (1999); Broadie & Rowe (2002).

Concerning the first question I will take the altruistic side. The reason is simple. In NE IX.9 Aristotle gives great value in life and activity when it is connected with eudaimonia (NE1169b31). In this life, our virtuous friend is an indispensable part. How is it possible then for the agent to give up a life of activity that would lead to eudaimonia? It must be then the case that such an action must be considered altruistic. These kinds of actions must be understood as ones of the magnanimous person (NE1124b6-9). This kind of man will not perform many actions but few (NE 1124b26). He will hold back from action except in cases where great deeds must be performed (NE 1124b24-5). The best example that will show, however, that the magnanimous person is not an egoist in the case of sacrifice where he acts bravely. In this passage Aristotle argues:

“And the greater the extent to which he possesses excellence in its entirety, and the happier he is, the more he will be pained at the prospect of death; for to such a person, most of all, is living worthwhile, and this person will knowingly be depriving himself of goods of the greater kind, which is something to be pained at” (NE 1117b10-13)

When we take this passage under consideration, I think that we should start thinking seriously the possibility of Aristotle being an altruist, at least in the case of the sacrifice of the agent's life. The reason for this is that Aristotle says that the agent will actually be pained by the loss of his life since he will deprive himself of the greater goods that life has to offer him. When he does sacrifice his life for his friend he actually performs an altruistic action. That is so because even if he gains the fine for doing such an action, by losing his life, he sacrifices a lot more goods than he gains. This means that he *actually* sacrifices himself for his friend disregarding the permanent losses he will suffer after this sacrifice.

There is though a problem here. On the one hand, Aristotle tells us that the agent will be pained at the prospect of death and the loss of all the greater goods he would gain if he had not sacrificed his life. On the other hand, nevertheless, he will have a short intense pleasure from the actual sacrifice. When we deal with this paradox we will be able to give an answer to question (2) above. Namely, this question had to do with how reason works in cases of sacrifice of life.

The answer to the paradox and thus the way reason works in the sacrifice of life case is the following. First, we have the pleasure of the agent sacrificing his life for his friend. But, he also feels pain from losing the greater goods of life. Now in this case reason must work in the following way. The pleasure that the agent feels from sacrificing his life overpowers the pain and losses he will suffer by losing his life.

This is how the magnanimous-brave person behaves. He will perform few but outstanding actions. His reason dictates him to give up his life, when necessary, for his virtuous friend; even though he knows he will lose the goods of a complete life. We have to note though that this is not something that happens every day in the agent's life. My point is that the agent would not just give up his life for anyone or for insignificant reasons. But if the situation demands such an action the agent will do it.

What remains now for us to clear out is whether the agent is an altruist or an egoist in cases where he might give up goods such as money, honors, or even the opportunity for good actions to his friend. In what comes next we will examine some scholars' reactions. We will see though that in this case the most appropriate understanding is the one of mixed motivation as I claimed previously in this chapter.

1.7. Relinquishing Goods to Others

In NE 1169a27-b1 Aristotle provides the following argument:

“Also the virtuous man is ready to forgo money if by that means his friends may gain more money; for thus, though his friend gets money, he himself achieves nobility, and so he assigns the greater good to his own share. And he behaves in the same manner as regards honors and offices also: all these things he will relinquish to his friend, for this is noble and praiseworthy for himself. He is naturally therefore thought to be virtuous, as he chooses moral nobility in preference to all other things. It may even happen that he will surrender to his friend the performance of some achievement, and that it may be nobler for him to be the cause of his friend's performing it than to perform it himself. Therefore in all spheres of praiseworthy conduct it is manifest that the good man takes the larger share of moral nobility for himself.”

In the passage above we see Aristotle arguing that apart from his life, the agent may also give up money, honors, offices, or even actions to his friends. By doing this he gains moral nobility. Now this case is different than the one we previously discussed that had to do with the sacrifice of one's life for his friends.

We saw there that even if the agent gains moral nobility from such an action of extreme beneficence, we cannot characterize him as an egoist. This happens because the greater goods he will lose from a life of virtuous activity by giving up his life shows that, at least in such cases, the agent has a slight altruistic tension towards his friend. But what happens in the case of NE 1169a27-b1? How does reason work here? Can the agent's behavior be characterized as altruistic or egoistic?

First of all, someone could point to us as an egoistic sign of Aristotle in this passage where he says that even when the noble man gives away honors, he gets for himself what is noble and praised (NE1169a30-1, 35). But I do not think that we should jump in such hasty conclusions. The reason is that we should dig deeper into the difference of value between contested and non-contested goods. Once we do that we might be able to deviate from an egoistic approach.

Aristotle makes a very crucial distinction between contested or “fought-over” goods such as money, honors, offices, and, non-contested goods such as moral nobility. Now the agent will give up the contested goods for his friend and keep moral nobility for his benefit. This could indicate to us that non-contested goods are the only thing the agent cares about. The contested goods are indifferent to him. But is this true?

Before answering the previous question let us first see a comment from Pangle (2003: 173) where she seems to point out something really interesting about the frequency of such self-sacrifices. She argues that if the agent never tries to display his potential and alternatively leaves his friends to win the highest honors, then this kind of self-denial would not please anyone. Rather, she says, the noble man enjoys stepping aside when doing so is honorable, after he has bestowed great benefits on his country and won great honors, as the final, crowning generosity of a great career. (Pangle, 2003: 173)

I think Pangle stresses something here that is in the heart of Aristotle's ethical theory. Namely, the agent who lives the political life needs to practice the virtues as much as he can. This gives him constant chance for practice and moral improvement since he has new challenges to encounter every time. This would be inevitable if he constantly let others perform actions instead of himself. This means though that if giving up money or honors to friends is not an everyday and usual practice of the agent then the value of contested goods must be greater than someone would think.

Let us return now to the value of contested goods for the agent. On the one hand, we see that Vassilis Politis³³ and Stern-Gillet³⁴ do not believe to the competitive value of moral nobility because they think of moral virtue in terms of following certain rules, rather than to act in the most glorious way³⁵. Kraut (1989: 83, 90-99, cf.115-23) on the other hand, seems to me, to see more clearly the expression of moral virtue. He argues that, at its fullest, moral virtue requires the greatest equipment and power³⁶.

I think that Kraut makes a serious point through his analysis. Moral virtue is something that needs external resources such as money, offices, and honors in order to be expressed, practiced (and developed)³⁷. Especially in the political life this is something that cannot be discarded from Aristotle. The problem is though that Aristotle seems to place these kinds of goods at the back of the agent's mind. Namely, the agent can give those away to his friends and he gains in turn moral nobility which is the true end he should focus on.

Aristotle offers a solution to this problem. He implies at NE 1169a20-2 that the nobility a man seeks is not a contested good, but he also says at NE 1169a8-9 that such a man competes to perform great deeds and win great honors. But this is an unorthodox way of solving the problem on behalf of Aristotle. How is it possible for nobility to be a non- contested good and at the same time the agent competing to perform virtuous actions?

³³ Politis, Vassilis. (1993: 153-74)

³⁴ Stern-Gillet, *Ibid.*

³⁵ See also Pangle (2003: 235) for a similar view on Politis and Stern-Gillet.

³⁶ See especially *ibid.* p.98 (n.27). See also: NE 1094b7-10, 1099a32-b2, 1177b16-7, for the support of Kraut's intuition.

³⁷ Kraut does not refer to the benefits that the external resources give to the agent concerning the development of her virtues. This is what I will mainly add to Kraut's otherwise very good argument.

In order to understand this argument we have to clear some things out: (a) the word compete here does not have the contemporary meaning of the word where any practice, good or bad, is allowed so that someone achieves their goal. The word that Aristotle uses here, which is *ἀμιλλάομαι*, should best be understood as strive³⁸. This word means leaving others with their fair share of moral nobility and a fair share of resources for practicing the virtues as well. Therefore, (b) Aristotle seems to attribute value to contested goods such as money, honors, but as external resources that must be used in the right and virtuous way when someone wants to gain moral nobility. But even if these two points manifest Aristotle's thought in NE 1169a20-2 and 1169a8-9 someone could still accuse him of some form of ethical egoism. Even if the agent leaves some things for his friends, his mind seems to have one target, moral nobility.

So Pangle (2003: 175) indicates that for Aristotle moral nobility is not something that accrues to the moral agent incidentally as he goes about seeking to help his fellows; it is precisely the prize that he keeps his sights fixed upon. As we saw earlier in this chapter, in the case of someone's sacrifice of life, Annas, Stern-Gillet, and Pakaluk, argued what Pangle objects here. Namely, they suggested that moral nobility is not something that the agent gains out of choice, but, as a byproduct of his sacrifice. But I have to say here that Pangle is right. The agent seems to have a clear deliberative process that leads them to choose moral nobility.

Pangle (2003: 175-6) substantiates her position by giving an example about the hero in battle who deliberately chooses moral nobility {moment of glory} than a lifetime of mediocrity. As I said before, I agree with Pangle's comment. I disagree

³⁸ Thus I agree with Irwin's (1999: 296) approach on the issue of the translation and meaning of *ἀμιλλάομαι*.

though with her example since I argued in the preceding section that in the case of sacrifice of life we have to recognize some altruistic concern on behalf of the agent for his friend.

Therefore, Pangle (2003: 175-6) argues that acts of apparent noble sacrifice, made by those who understand such nobility as the highest good are not really sacrifices. What seemed at first a sacrifice, she says, is actually an exchange of lesser for higher goods³⁹. Concerning this argument, Price (1989: 110) gives an account of the contradictions involved in noble self-sacrifice according to Aristotle, but he points the finger to Aristotle for having “stumbled” into self-contradiction. However, Price does not offer an alternative account of the moral understanding that obviates this contradiction.

Politis⁴⁰ (1993: 170), on the other hand, argues more cogently that Aristotle is indeed negating the outlook of moral self-sacrifice and his argument is indeed very well structured. Pangle argues though, that Politis:

“...gives insufficient weight to the value of sacrifice in the common understanding of what makes virtuous actions noble, as is seen in the way the very noblest actions tend to elicit a sense of tragedy, and a sense they deserve the greatest honors of compensation. Although the discussion of the moral virtues in the early books of the Ethics stresses this side of nobility less than the tragic poets do, it is still present in crucial ways.” (2003: 175)

Thus, Pangle (2003: 175) says, that Politis fails to see the degree to which IX.8 (NE) offers a key reinterpretation of the character of nobility, even as it has so far been offered in the Ethics.

³⁹ As we will see later on in this chapter though the agent tries to equalize and not gain more goods than his friend.

⁴⁰ Politis, *Ibid.*

I just want to add here that Politis is not right in negating the outlook of moral self-sacrifice from Aristotle. As we have already seen both in the case of losing one's life for a friend, and as we will see in the case of relinquishing external goods to them, the agent sacrifices something for his friend. And even if there is compensation in both cases, in the first one it is insignificant compared to the loss of his life; and in the second one, the agent sacrifices a larger share of goods that could make his practice of the virtues easier and the occurrence of a eudaimonic feeling more frequent. But he does not behave in this way as we will see in the sections that have to do with justice and equality between the character friends.

Nonetheless, there are still questions concerning self-sacrifice that have to be answered. Pangle asks for instance:

“when noble acts of sacrifice are so clearly seen for what they are, they can still make sense as the epitome of virtue and the highest purpose of a virtuous life.” But, asks Pangle, “...is there not something absurd about trying to get the better of everyone else by giving up the most for them?” (2003: 175)

Richard Kraut (1989b: 126-7) suggests though how such competitions could be determined so that everyone, intensely desiring as much nobility as possible but also being committed to justice, would take only their fair share of the noble and help their fellows to get their fair share of prospects for noble action too.

Now, Pangle (2003: 237) says that the question is whether the kind of friendly, fair rivalry that Kraut sets forth would not utterly change its character once everyone involved in it accepted that: (1) every act of virtuous “sacrifice”, being best for the one doing them, deserve no reward or praise; and (2) when friends allow one to benefit them, they are really doing one a favor. Kraut does not address these two points.

In defense of Kraut I have to say that the second point of Pangle refers to a sort of motivation that does not belong to Aristotle's agent. If the agent is so reluctant and suspicious in accepting beneficence from his friend then their relationship should be characterized as at least instrumental. Now the first point seems to me to denote a potential weakness in Kraut's argument. But once we understand that character friendship is based on reciprocity and equality, Pangle's point does not affect Kraut's argument. This will become more vivid in the next section.

But let us return to Pangle's conclusions on self-sacrifice. She says (2003: 176-7) that what makes a selfless and generous act noble must be reappraised. She argues then that sacrifice is not the heart of noble action then the act must be noble because it is rationally chosen. And if sacrifice is not the core of why an action is noble, the virtuous agent will not contend for prospect to make sacrifices, although he will perform them when serious reasons demand it.

Now both Kraut and Pangle's arguments have their own merits. I think though that Kraut's approach⁴¹ is closer to the argument that I will present in the next section. The reason for this is that it covers the mixed motivation thesis that I favored at the beginning of this chapter. This view, I think, balances the needs of the agent with the needs of his character friend. The agent understands the needs for himself to gain moral nobility.

⁴¹ I have to say here that Kraut's approach influenced me greatly in connecting character friendship with special justice. Kraut's point is that in any transaction, either between friends or not, the agent should take his fair share and also give their fellows their fair share as well. I agree with this. What I will try to accomplish though in the "justice" section of this chapter is to extend Kraut's argument and suggest that character friendship in particular is actually a relationship of special justice; something that Kraut does not say. I will analyze there the role of greed, proportionality, and need in special justice and how these concepts are connected with the mixed motivation hypothesis in character friendship. I will also argue that, by relinquishing goods and chances for action to his friend, the agent helps him to morally develop; and this is something that Kraut does not say as well.

This need is met though by either relinquishing goods or use them in the right way. An action then is noble when rationally chosen as Pangle suggests but, not only in extreme cases or when very serious reasons demand it. It is noble every time the agent takes his fair share in cases of moral rivalry. So his action is every time a sacrifice, since he could have taken more than his fair share, but he chooses not to. This equality that results though is not a strict arithmetical equality but a proportional one as we will see in the next section. At last, as we will see in the next section I will try to cover Kraut for a potential gap in his argument that Pangle spotted with points (1) and (2). Both points can be dealt with when we understand reason as “justice as equality” where reciprocity based on the agents' needs for virtuous action is the main underline cause of their actions.

1.8. Justice as Equality

Aristotle distinguishes between two forms of justice: general and special. On the one hand, general justice means the agent's concern for the common good of others and the polis. Special justice, on the other hand, has to do mainly with fairness and equality. The point here is to avoid overreaching or greed (*πλεονεξία*) (NE 1129a31-b1, 1130a14-24, b6-16).

In this kind of justice the just person is called the one who is equal, while, the unjust person is unequal or greedy. The greedy seeks money, honors, profit from others. He acts for profit (*κέρδος*) and tries to increase his share in money, honor, safety (1130b2); and he takes pleasure in such gain (b4). Also, the greedy can sometimes seek for less willingly if this means he will have fewer bad things (NE 1129b6-10). We could generally say that overreaching expresses the agent's desire for more at the expense of other people.

In this chapter though, we are not interested so much with general justice as we are interested in the special one. This is so because the former has to do with the good of the whole polis which is not relevant in our analysis of character friendship; in addition, general justice is based on the obedience to the laws.

Thus, on the one hand, in special justice the agent engages into a character friendship with a single agent of high level of morality. He cannot engage in such a friendship with all the citizens in his city. On the other hand, we need special justice because the agent's character is what matters on how he behaves to his friend and not the obedience to the law.

Thus I will extend my analysis on the connection of character friendship only with special justice. In order to do that though we need a preparatory discussion on some issues of justice that will clear out the nature of the relationship of special justice with character friendship, and, more particularly, the relationship between the agent and his friend (egoistic, altruistic, etc).

1.9. Justice as a Mean

One of the most important issues we have to discuss in this section is the role of justice as a mean. In V.1 of the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle asks: "What sort of mean justice is?" (NE 1129a4-5) And he answers in V.3: "since the unjust person is unequal and what is unjust unequal, it is obvious that there is also something intermediate between what is unequal; this is what is equal." (NE 1131a10-11)

Now, as we said before, we are interested in the special sense of justice and injustice. This means that when we apply the above view of Aristotle in this case we can understand that: (a) injustice in the special sense is done when someone has less of something than he should have, and someone else has more (overreaching). Also,

(b) the just agent wants to avoid the extremes by moving between them. As Kraut (2002: 157) puts it: "Each person is assigned the amount of good and evil they should have, neither more nor less."

To be more specific, in cases of distribution, the unjust man gives more of some good to himself or someone else and less to another than they deserve. And when he gives more to himself, he is called greedy. On the other hand, the just man distributes goods among other people (or between himself and others) in a way that he eschews both extremes. The just man then understands one thing: that justice requires every time the appropriate intermediate amount.

Therefore, if we remind ourselves Aristotle's discussion on the doctrine of the mean (NE 1106a26-b28; 1106a36-b7) we can understand that there is no unchanging or instinctive way of determining what this right amount is in order to hit the mean. The same idea can be applied here in the case of justice⁴². But the concept of justice as a mean is not without problems. Kraut is one of the scholars that have spotted these problems and has tried to solve them.

1.10. Other Virtues, Justice, and the Mean

The doctrine of the mean has three different states: Excess, intermediate, deficiency. Each state is accompanied by one or more emotions. The bottom line is that in each virtue, there is an emotion (or set of emotions) that has to be mastered; any failure to master this emotion leads to vice which is expressed through excess or deficiency. Aristotle, however, does not seem to follow this pattern in the virtue of justice.

⁴² I follow Kraut (2002: 157) on this point.

Being unjust, in the special sense is accompanied by the emotion of overreaching (*πλεονεξία*). The just man, however, does not have this emotion at all. It is not the case that he has it, *but* to the right extent. As Kraut notes: "The just person has of course an emotional response to injustice: pain from the former and pleasure from the latter. But the emotions he feels are not proper amounts of the very emotions the unjust feels; "they are completely different emotions." (Kraut, 2002: 160) But is there a better way to understand this baffling issue?

A possible way to liken justice with the other virtues is very well put by Kraut. He presents the three different states in the following manner: (a) "to be pleased by taking more is overreaching" (2002, 160); (b) "to be pleased by taking right amount and pained by anything more or less is the intermediate state"(2002, 160); (c) "fail to be pained by having less is opposite emotional deficiency"(2002, 160). Actually this proposal makes sense. But I do not think that it is Aristotle's. Of course such a view is so obvious (Kraut, 2002: 160) that it should have been easily identifiable if someone perused Aristotle's text. Now Curzer⁴³ (1995) has claimed to have identified such a scheme. But I do not agree with him. As we will see in Kraut's analysis, the answer is not as easy as it looks, and it is certainly different than the one Curzer attributes to Aristotle.

1.11. Choosing Less

The most important question that we have to answer in the attempt to deviate from Curzer's scheme is the following: is it possible for the virtuous agent to choose

⁴³ Curzer (1995: 207-38)

less of some good than his friend (and not be pained by it)? If the answer to this question is yes, then part (c)⁴⁴ of his scheme does not work. But is it so?

Aristotle seems to argue that there are cases where the agent might choose less.

For instance, he says:

"The small-souled (*μικρόψυχος*) man deprives himself of the good things that he deserves; and his failure to claim good things makes it seem that he has something bad about him [and also that he does not know himself], for (people argue, if he deserved any good, he would try to obtain it. Not that such persons are considered foolish, but rather too retiring; yet this estimate of them is thought to make them still worse, for men's ambitions show what they are worth, and if they hold aloof from noble enterprises and pursuits, and go for the good things of life, presumably they think they are not worthy of them." (NE 1125a19-27)

This passage though has to do with the small-souled man and not with the unjust one. The reason for this is that while the former has to do with one's self, the latter has to do always with someone else (Kraut, 2002: 121); because this is the nature of justice or injustice⁴⁵. Specifically, in cases of injustice, there always has to be someone who does the injustice and someone who suffers it. For instance we cannot accuse someone who leaves less money for himself with injustice, since we would then have to consider him as someone who both brings about justice and suffers injustice at the same time; but this is a paradox (NE 1138a4-26).

In addition, Aristotle argues that "No one is voluntarily treated unjustly" (NE 1136a10-b14). That is so because if one could voluntarily treat oneself unjustly, then one could also voluntarily be treated unjustly, which is also a paradox (NE 1136b6; 113823-4). In general, no one can have a rational wish to be harmed (NE 1136b7-8).

⁴⁴ Part (c) of Curzer's scheme was: "fail to be pained by having less is opposite emotional deficiency". As we will see though there are cases where the agent may choose less and yet not feel pain by such a decision.

⁴⁵ In contrast to Plato where justice or injustice is an internal condition of the soul; see Rep. 443c-d.

There are occasions though where taking less than one deserves may be the right thing to do. For instance, at NE 1136b20-1, Aristotle talks about agents who are prepared to take less if necessary. He characterizes those agents who choose less as decent (*ἐπιεικής*). As Kraut (2002: 164) correctly notes, Aristotle must be thinking of circumstances where choosing less for oneself and leaving more for others harms no one. But the agent who takes less cannot be blamed for involuntary justice to oneself. For Aristotle, to do injustice (NE 1136b4-5) to anyone is to act against the rational wish of the person to whom the injustice is done. But the decent (*ἐπιεικής*) man does not struggle with his own rational wish, but he is essentially expressing it as Kraut (2002: 164) rightly observes.

Now, after the previous argument, it seems to become a lot clearer why the unjust man is presented by Aristotle as someone who on the one hand desires more, but, on the other hand he does not have a suggestion where taking more and taking less are the two excessive states that have to be avoided, and the equal is the medium between these two extremes.

Actually, if he argued in this way, then his idea that *there are cases where someone chooses less is the right thing*, would be meaningless. Therefore, as Kraut points out: "...instead of taking overreaching (*πλεονεξία*) as an excess of an emotion that one must feel in order to hit the mean and be just, Aristotle prefers to argue that justice is not a mean in the same way as other virtues are." (Kraut, 2002: 165)

However, Kraut's argument seems to face a serious objection. If he cannot face this objection then not only would we be hesitant to accept his thesis on special justice as a mean, but, we would also have to start thinking about accepting Curzer's one. This argument would be like what follows.

On the one hand, we have Aristotle saying that justice is a mean, but, not a mean as the other virtues are. On the other hand, however, he argues that the just in the special sense is equal. Now, if we accept the first premise then the second one seems like an “empty phrase” as Kraut (2002: 165) rightly notes; because Kraut is not unaware of this issue. That is why he tries to address it.

We should not forget that Aristotle argues that the decent man is willing to take less (of some good A), on one hand, but, then again, he is also expressing his desire to get a larger amount of some good B that is: “fine without qualification” (NE 1136b22). Thus, Kraut (2002: 165) argues, the agent may take less money, for instance, (than his friend in my case of character friendship) but he gains some different kind of good; that is the fine. And even though this kind of “transaction” does not have perfect arithmetical proportions, it shows, at least, the endeavor on behalf of the virtuous man to allocate the transaction as equally as possible. (2002: 165)

What does this last argument from Kraut show us for the case of the agent giving up external goods to his friend? First of all we have to note that the agent does not seem to be an egoist. The reason is that he simply does not disregard the needs of his friend for external goods and may let him, in some situations, take more of them. But he cannot be characterized as an altruist either. This is so because the agent may give up external goods to his friend but he also has a desire to gain what is fine through their “virtuous transaction”, if I may call it this way.

What we can say though is that their transaction is based on a sense of justice. In this transaction the virtuous agent cares about his needs for nobility and virtue as much as he does for his character friend. He wants to allocate the transaction as

equally as possible. And this is how reason works in this case. The agent wants proportional equality that is based on a relationship of special justice with his virtuous friend. This means that the agent may choose less than his friend if this suits his current needs, and his friend, in turn, needs more of some external goods than he does.

For instance, the two friends might play the lottery together and might win 10.000 Euros. Now, if one of the two friends is already rich and the other is not, the first one might give up the whole amount to his friend. In this way, proportional equality is accomplished since the first agent gains moral nobility by giving up his share of the money, and his friend may now perform actions through which he will practice, for instance, the virtue of magnanimity which he could not easily practice with his previous financial situation.

The general scheme then is the following. The two agents share the goods they come upon based on their needs for practicing and developing the virtues. Each agent though does not put his needs before his friend's. He respects his needs as much as he respects his own. These facts make their relationship a unique amalgamation of reason and justice that is, in my view, the very core of character friendship. The self-lover then is nothing more than the just man's reason in action. He might not be an altruist in the strict sense, but he never wants more than he needs.

1.12. Conclusion

In this chapter I tried to argue that despite first appearances Aristotle's idea about self love cannot be characterized as egoistic. First of all, I suggested that when Aristotle tells us that the agent loves himself most of all he means that he loves his

rational part. Now this kind of self-love should not be confused with this concept as is usually understood; namely, the tendency to want the greater part of goods at the expense of other people.

But even if we accept this technical approach of self-love on behalf of Aristotle this does not mean that it is not without problems. The point is that we must determine how reason works in the agent's mind especially in cases of self-sacrifice towards his friends in order to definitively say whether his actions could be characterized as egoistic or altruistic. I tried to examine what is the nature of the self-lover. I argued that he is someone whose decisions do not suffer from regret or remorse. He also gives priority to reason and loves it most of all.

After that I tried to answer whether Aristotle's idea that "intelligence chooses what is best for itself" implies any egoistic sign on behalf of him. In this case I agreed with Pangle that Aristotle should be read in the following way: The agent acts on the one hand consistently and with self-command, but, the concerns of his intelligence do not end with the care of the happiness of his mind; his intelligence also cares about the other as well. Although I agreed with Pangle, my final argument was different than her in the sense that intelligence does not only show *some* concern for the friend's happiness, but that it seeks equality between the friends.

Past that, I examined the possibility of egoism in cases where someone would sacrifice his life or goods to his friend. I divided the sacrifices the agent may perform in two parts. The first part had to do with the sacrifice of someone's life. The second part included the sacrifice of goods. I suggested that when someone sacrifices his life he acts altruistically. The reason for this is that: because of the greater goods of the political and practical life the agent will lose by sacrificing his

life, his gain of moral nobility from such a sacrifice does not really mean much. In this case the agent acts as the great souled man. He performs a few but illustrious deeds.

Now in the case of giving up goods for his friend I argued that the agent can neither be characterized as egoist nor as an altruist. He can be characterized though as just. This is so because he wants the goods to be equally, yet proportionately, divided between himself and his friend. I also contended that reason is based on the needs of the agents. These needs have to do with the practice and development of the virtues. This means though that the external goods are not indifferent to them. What matters is how they use them. Thus the two friends divide the goods according to their needs. One of them might, in some cases, of course, choose less. And by doing this he might gain moral nobility. But this action does not only suit his needs at the current moment, but it also equalizes his condition of practicing the virtues with his friend.

As we will see in the next chapter this happens because the agent considers his friend as another self. This means that he loves him and takes him to be another, yet different, virtuous agent, like himself, who has his own needs for practicing the virtues and further developing them through their practice. And his conception of his friend helps the other to advance in some virtue(s) in which he is slightly underdeveloped.

Chapter 2

A Friend is Another-Self: An Epistemological Interpretation

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will interpret a crucial issue for the understanding of the Aristotelian discussion on character friendship. Namely, I will try to explain the Aristotelian expression: “a friend is another self”. In order to do so we will also need to understand another Aristotelian expression, that is, wanting the good for one’s friend “*for his own sake*”. In fact, I will examine two⁴⁶ major approaches on the issues at hand.

On the one hand, I will examine Millgram’s⁴⁷ metaphysical approach of identity, and on the other hand we will examine Cooper’s⁴⁸ epistemological one. I will argue that we cannot⁴⁹ accept Millgram’s approach of the issues at hand, but on the contrary, we can accept and build on Cooper’s arguments and interpretation of the issues of the ‘other-self’ and the ‘wanting the good for one’s friend *for his own sake*’.

In particular, I will argue that Cooper’s ‘mirror’ process between virtuous friends can be the bridge that links the two issues at hand in an epistemological way that can give us a clear view of the Aristotelian thought in these passages, and, also, connect

⁴⁶ I will provide an in depth analysis of just these two scholars in the current chapter because it serves my purposes. Other scholars have approached the issue of the “other-self” in Aristotle in case it denotes egoism or altruism. But I already discussed this issue in the previous chapter. Interesting papers on the connection of the “other-self” concept with either altruism or egoism see: Annas (1977); Kahn (1981). For criticism on Kahn and Annas see: Benson, J. (1990: 50–68)

⁴⁷ Millgram (1987).

⁴⁸ Cooper (1980: 301-340). Originally published in: Cooper (1977). See also: Cooper (1999), Chapters 14, 15.

⁴⁹ We will see later on in this chapter that even though Millgram's metaphysical part of his theory cannot be accepted, we may accept some small part of his views that has to do with moral development.

the argument I made in the previous chapter about the connection of justice that forms the friendship of virtuous agents. By taking together Cooper's argument and my idea about special justice I will claim that the "other-self" concept implies a relationship between the friends that leads them both to morally develop⁵⁰.

2.2. 'Other Self' and 'For the Sake of'

In Aristotle's discussion of friendship in books VIII and IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* we meet two notions which should be analyzed in order to see how they are related. The first concept has to do with wanting the good for one's friend sake, and the second notion is concerned with the friend being another self.

These two ideas appear many times throughout Aristotle's discussion of friendship. Namely, the notion of wanting the good for one's friend for his own sake appears for example in: (a) NE 1155b31, whereas we are told that we ought to wish our friend well for his own sake; (b) NE 1156b7-10: "The perfect form of friendship is that between the good, and those who resemble each other in virtue. For these friends wish each alike the other's good in respect of their goodness, and they are good in themselves."; (c) NE 1159a10: "If then it was rightly said above that a true friend wishes his friend's good for that friend's own sake..."; (d) NE 1166a3: "...a friend is defined as one who wishes, and promotes by action, the real or apparent good of another for that other's sake..."; (e) NE 1168b3: "...but the best friend is he that, when he wishes a person's good, wishes it for that person's own sake ...". Aristotle follows a similar line of thought also in NE 1164a34; NE 1168a34; NE 1156a13.

⁵⁰ In the current chapter I will just give an initial dimension of how this process occurs. Now, in chapters 3, 5, 6, I will examine another possible route of moral development for completely virtuous agents that is based on interpretative mimesis.

Specifically, in all the passages derived from Aristotle's discussion on friendship that we cited above we saw that he insists that in the proper kind of friendship the friend should wish good for the other for the other's sake.

Let us move now to the idea concerned with the friend being another self and see where and in what form it appears throughout Aristotle's discussion on friendship:

1) NE 1169b6: "...whereas the function of a friend, who is a second self, is to supply things we cannot procure for ourselves."

2) NE 1170b6: "and if the virtuous man feels towards his friend in the same way as he feels toward himself (for his friend is second self)"

3) NE 1171b33: "... and a man stands in the same relation to a friend as to himself ..."

In the same spirit, Aristotle refers to the friend as being a second self in NE 1166a30-33; 1166b1; 1171a20.

So, as we previously saw in the aforementioned passages, Aristotle presents the friend as being another self. But how are the notions of: wanting the good for my friend's own sake (n1), and the friend being another self (n2) related?

2.3. The Relation between (n1) and (n2)

Concerning the relation between (n1) and (n2) Millgram writes:

"One might think that the fact that one desires the good for one's friend for the friend's sake is constitutive of the friend's being another self: to say that the friend is another self is just to say that one desires the good for one's friend for his own sake."⁵¹ (1987: 364)

Millgram (1987: 364), nevertheless, doubts that this explanation can be successfully brought into Aristotle's exegesis, and he presents two arguments to

⁵¹ Whiting presents a similar view in Whiting (1986). However, she does not attempt to interpret Aristotle through her argument.

support his position. His first argument is that if the friend is another self, then what makes one's friend, one's friend, is the same thing that makes oneself, oneself. This can be maintained together with the reading that takes other-self-dom to be constituted by special concern provided that one believes that one's own self is constituted by self concern. This position, says Millgram, is questionably credited to Aristotle, whose account of what makes oneself, oneself, will be a metaphysical story. This story is likely to have to do with species form and matter, and possibly with individual forms. In any case, it is unlikely, he says, for it to have much to do with concern. (Millgram, 1987: 365)

His second argument is the following. He suggests that if one's friend is another self and one desires the good for one's friend for his own sake are just different ways of saying the same thing, then the fact that the friend is another self can no more cause, explain or justify one's desiring the good for one's friend for his own sake than synonyms can cause, explain or justify one another. Aristotle, nonetheless, says Millgram (1987: 365), thinks that the friend's being another self at least explains desiring the good for him for his own sake: "The decent person, then, has each of these features in relation to himself (which include desiring goods for one's own sake), and is related to his friend as he is to himself, since the friend is another self." (NE 1166a30-32; cf. 1166a3, 15-17)

As far as the first reason that Millgram gives for his argument is concerned, I think that he is right in stressing that there is no connection between concern and other-self-dom. Furthermore, I agree with him that what makes oneself, oneself, is a

strict metaphysical account which has to do with species form and matter derived from Aristotle's work on *Metaphysics*, which is a very contentious issue⁵².

Concerning the second reason that Millgram presents to support his claim I would like to make a few comments on it. Specifically, he takes the notions n1 and n2 as to be synonyms. Namely, he states that the notions that 'one's friend is another self' and 'one desires the good for one's friend for his own sake' are different ways of saying the same thing. But can we accept this premise?

I am skeptical to accept Millgram's position for various reasons. First of all, why would Aristotle use two different expressions to say the same thing? Why didn't he just use one of the two to express his thought on how to see and behave towards a friend? I suggest that we should understand n1 and n2 in a way that they are interconnected and interrelated with each other in a way that one is depended and influenced by the other. Through this way of understanding n1 and n2 we are going to understand why Millgram's position of considering them as synonyms is misleading.

First of all, if we accept Millgram's assumption that n1 and n2 are synonyms then Aristotle should have to either use one of the notions n1 and n2 and not both of them since they are used to express the same thing and this would be unnecessary on behalf of him. So, we have to see how Aristotle uses both of these notions.

In NE 1166a1-5, Aristotle says: "The forms which friendly feeling for our neighbors takes, and the marks by which the different forms of friendship are defined, seem to be derived from the feelings of regard which we entertain for ourselves." In what follows (NE 1166a6-29), he argues, on the one hand about, (1)

⁵² Hartman (1977: 10-56); Whiting (1986).

the feelings that the good man has towards his friends, and on the other hand about, (2) the feelings that he has towards himself . And he concludes with the passage cited by Millgram (NE 1166a30-33).

In (1) Aristotle gives 5 ways to define a friend in terms of his feelings toward his friend. One of these feelings is to wish the good of one's friend for his own sake. Despite the importance of this feeling towards a friend, Aristotle presents with four more feelings of an agent towards the same person. Conversely, in (2), Aristotle gives five ways to understand the feelings that an agent has towards himself.

Here, again, the fact that the agent has to wish himself good for his own sake is a very important feeling but not the only one that the agent has towards himself. Therefore, the fact that the friend is another self could partially explain why one desires the good for one's friend for his own sake in the sense that the other self is someone that the agent comprehends as someone like him.

Thus, I think that through n2 Aristotle expresses the comprehension of a friend as another self in the sense that the agent understands the friend as someone who is *potentially* another self. What I mean by this is that the agent has the potentiality of feeling in the five aforementioned ways towards a friend which derive from the five ones he has towards himself. But n1 signifies just one of those feelings and therefore it cannot stand as synonymous to n2. Now, these feelings become actualized as far as the friend is concerned in the way that Aristotle describes at NE 1166a6-29.

We could accept though that n1 is a part of a set of *synonymous* feelings (NE 1166a6-29) which are expressed both for the agent and his friend who is to him another-self. By *synonymous*, I mean here that both agents must share a similar phenomenological experience that will include a set of feelings that correspond both

to themselves and to their friend. I will not deny though the importance of the connection between n1 and n2 in particular. Because even if Aristotle gives us a set of feelings ((NE 1166a6-29) that someone has to have both towards himself and his friend, we have already seen in section 2.2 that he repeatedly emphasizes the importance of n1 for character friends; and we should thus take it as the most valued feeling among the others which are depicted at NE 1166a6-29. However, their connection will become much clearer when we will examine in section 2.9 the meaning of *because* in: One desires the friend's good for his own sake *because* he is another self. Let us move on now to examine how Millgram tries to explain the concept of other-self-dom.

2.4. Millgram's Comprehension of Other-selfdom

In order to explain the idea of other-selfdom, Millgram argues from Aristotle's discussion on friendship of kindred and that of companions. Specifically, Aristotle argues at NE 1161b11 that the friendship of kindred and that of companions constitute a separate class, different from other kinds of friendship. At NE 1161b16, Aristotle explains that kinship-friendship is uniformly derivative from the love of parents for their children, and importantly, parental love shares with comradely friendship the feature we are trying to understand: "A parent loves his children as he loves himself; for what has come from him is a sort of other himself" (NE1161b27-30; NE1161b18).

Therefore, Millgram argues that, "by transitivity of identity, as it were, brothers are 'identical with each other,' since they are identical with their parents."(1987: 366-7) This means that they are "...in a sense the same thing, although in separate individuals" (NE1161b30-35). This leads Millgram to conclude that:

“Since kinship-friendship and companion–friendships belong together, and share the features that we are trying to explain, and since kinship friendship derives from parental friendship, we may be able to understand companion friendship by way of parental friendship.” (1987: 367)

And Millgram continues his argument by saying:

“One can abstract from the parent-child relation to a relation that we shall call procreation. If A is a procreator of b, then (i) A is a creator of B in the sense that A is causally responsible for B’s being, and (ii) B has the same being that A does.” (1987: 367)

What Millgram tries to establish here is a connection between companion and parental friendship. In particular, he understands companion-friendship via parental friendship, and by abstracting from parental-child relation he creates a term which he calls *procreation*. But Millgram’s argument begs the question: Is someone the procreator of his friend the same as the parent is the procreator of his child? The answer to this question seems to be no. Concerning the aforementioned question Millgram (1987: 367-8) says that over the course of a friendship, one becomes causally responsible for the friend’s being who he is (his virtuous being) in the way that the parent becomes causally responsible for the child’s being what he is (his human being).

At first glance, the analogy that Millgram uses in order to support his claim seems implausible. Namely, someone could accept Millgram’s claim that the being of a child for which his parent is causally responsible is him being a human, in the sense that a parent can be causally responsible for the child because she is the source for the being of the child, and the child owes his being a human being due to his parent. But is this analogy plausible in the case of friendships based on virtue as

Millgram claims? We are going to see the answer to this question towards the end of this chapter.

Before that though, we need to refer to another important problem concerning friendship. Namely, we have to refer to the argument in IX.9 N.E in order to see how Aristotle answers to the question: Is friendship necessary for happiness? We will see that in this chapter of book nine of the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle seems to propose a more epistemological understanding of the other-self concept.

2.5. Is Friendship Necessary for Happiness?

In NE IX.9 Aristotle argues that friendship is necessary for happiness. I will present Aristotle's argument through Cooper's (1980) eyes in order to show that friendship is an essential constituent of a flourishing human life. So Cooper contends:

“Aristotle argues, first, that to know the goodness of one's life, which he reasonably assumes to be a necessary condition of flourishing, one needs to have intimate friends whose lives are similarly good, since one is better able to reach a sound and secure estimate of the quality of a life when it is not one's own. Second, he argues that the fundamental moral and intellectual activities that go to make up a flourishing life cannot be continuously engaged in with pleasure and interest, as they must be if the life is to be a flourishing one, unless they are engaged in as parts of shared activities rather than pursued merely in private; and given the nature of the activities that are in question, this sharing is possible only with intimate friends who are themselves morally good persons.” (1980: 330)

Millgram takes Cooper to be saying that one's friend's serve as mirrors in which one can better witness one's own virtue, and one's friends are the team mates one needs to play the game of a virtuous life⁵³. In this case, he adopts a phrase from Cooper. Specifically, this phrase is: 'one's friends serve as 'human mirrors'. So, before moving on, we should first see what Cooper means by the aforementioned

⁵³ Millgram, *ibid.*

phrase. Furthermore, we are going to examine if it is reasonable to adopt it and apply it on the current discussion of friendship of Aristotle in the NE.

Cooper takes the term-phrase ‘human mirrors’ from the Magna Moralia (MM 1213a10-26). Cooper seems to consider the passage from the MM as a more simple form of the argument of NE 1169b27-1170a4 and of 1170a15-b7. However, I agree with Millgram’s worries that: 1) it is not clear whether the two passages (1169b27-1170a4 and 1170a15-b7) contain the same line of thought and thus the same argument, and 2) it is either NE passage includes the argument of the MM passage in 1213a10-26. Hence, our first task is to examine the arguments from both MM and the NE so as to see if Cooper’s position is wrong or right.

2.6. Magna Moralia 1213a10-26

As we mentioned above, our first task is to examine the arguments from both the NE and MM in order to see whether Cooper’s suggestion that we should consider the passage from the MM as a more simple form of the argument of NE 1169b27-1170a4 and of 1170a15-b7. So, let us first see the argument from MM 1213a10-26:

“Now supposing a man looks upon his friend and marks what he is and what is his character and quality; the friend-if we figure a friend of the most intimate sort-will seem to be a kind of second self, as in the common saying ‘this is my second Heracles.’ Since, then, it is both a most difficult thing, as some of the sages have said, to attain a knowledge of oneself, and also a most pleasant (for to know oneself is pleasant) – now we are not able to see what we are from ourselves (and that we cannot do so is plain from the way in which we blame others without being aware that we do the same things ourselves; and this is the effect of favor or passion, and there are many of us who are blinded by these things so that we judge not aright); as then we wish to see our own face, we do so by looking into the mirror, in the same way when we wish to know ourselves we can obtain that knowledge by looking at our friend. For the friend is, as we assert, a second self. If then it is pleasant to know oneself, and it is not possible to know this without having someone else for a friend, the self-sufficing man will require friendship in order to know himself.” (MM 1213a10-26)

Thus, in what will follow I will examine the three aforementioned passages and I will try to see if Cooper's suggestion is plausible. We will first examine Aristotle's point in MM 1213a10-26 and then we will move on to the arguments in NE 1169b27-1170a12 and 1170a15-b7.

2.7. The Three Arguments Examined

2.7.1. Argument 1

As far as the argument from the MM is concerned, Aristotle stresses the importance of friends in terms of the agent's self-knowledge. In particular, he argues that if one wishes to know oneself he should look at his friend as he would look at a mirror in order to see his own face. Furthermore, this mirror process of looking at a friend as someone that helps the agent to obtain self-knowledge is further explained by Aristotle in a way to consider the friend as another self.

It seems clear and explicit then through this passage from MM that Aristotle connects the human mirror process with self-knowledge. This is obvious through the use of specific verbs in this specific passage. Specifically, we see in a) 1215a15, 23: *τό αὐτόν γινῶναι*, b) 1215a16, 25: *εἰδέναι*, and in c) 1215a23, 26: *γνωρίζειν*, that Aristotle makes explicit the self-knowledge is the central aim of this argument. So, we have to see what is the central aim of the other two arguments from the NE and whether they could be associated with Argument 1 in the way that Cooper suggests.

2.7.2. Argument 2

In this passage, Aristotle constructs an argument where he bridges friendship with the definition of happiness as virtuous and thus pleasant activity. He first notes that the activity of the good man is excellent in itself (NE 1169 b31-2). However, he

also adds that the virtuous agent is better able to observe his friends' actions than his own (NE 1169 b33-5).

Then we can distinguish three arguments in the next lines which are connected with NE 1169 b31-5. Namely, we can say that the core of argument (2) is the following: a) the virtuous actions of our friends give us (by sympathy) the same pleasure as our own (NE1169 b35-b2); b) continuous virtuous activity is difficult when the agent lives in isolation; but good activities can be carried on longer through the pleasure the agent gets from his friend's good actions (NE 1170a4-10)⁵⁴; c) virtuous friends increase our own virtue through training in excellence (NE 1170a11-12).

I just want to note here that argument (c) implies some sort of learning through imitation from our friends' actions. Aristotle does not say this explicitly here but he suggests it at the very end of book IX of the Nicomachean Ethics. He says there that the agents: "... seem to become better by being active and correcting each other, for each molds⁵⁵ the other in what they approve of, so that '[you will learn] what is 'noble from noble people'." (NE 1172 a12-14) I will leave though this very important argument for the end of the chapter.

Anyway, what Aristotle wants to say in this passage is that friends are useful and pleasant because they are virtuous (though not useful or pleasant friends in the

⁵⁴ I will use this argument again in 6.6 of the last chapter to show one of the benefits that the agent gains from his friendship with another virtuous agent.

⁵⁵ The Greek word here is *ἀπομάττονται*. The translation "mold" is Irwin's (1999). This word could also be translated as "impression" or even "copy". The former is Rowe's; specifically, see: Broadie & Rowe (2002). For the latter, see: Pakaluk (1998). I think that all three translations seem good. Perhaps the least accurate according to my interpretation of character friendship is Pakaluk's. As I will show in the last chapter of this thesis the agent does not just copy his friend's actions but he imitates them through a unique interpretation.

ordinary sense) and they are necessary adjuncts of our happiness. It seems that Aristotle tries to establish here a different kind of argument than the one in MM.

Specifically, in this argument Aristotle wants to connect friendship with the definition of happiness. This connection is made by Aristotle in order for him to show the importance of friends for the agent's happiness. However, the problem arises when someone tries to compare this argument with the one from the MM. The problem lies in the fact that as we saw before, the argument in the MM has a different scope than the one we are examining now.

As we saw before, in the MM passage, Aristotle argues that the agent should see the friend as someone who helps him obtain self-knowledge and that he should look at his friend as if he was looking in the mirror. In addition, Aristotle connects pleasantness with knowing oneself and he sets as a prerequisite the fact that in order for someone to know oneself he should have friends. This line of thought, nevertheless, seems unlike the one that we see in argument 2. Namely, in argument 2 and especially in (c) we saw that: virtuous friends increase our own virtue as we unconsciously imitate their acts.

So, if we apply the human mirror process that we saw in the MM argument- which is not explicit in argument 2- we will be able to see that the two arguments are referring to different things. Namely, the human mirror process is used in the MM by Aristotle to denote the importance of friends for the agent to obtain self-knowledge. On the other hand, the Argument 2 from the NE refers to the importance of friends in order for the agent to increase his virtue through the unconscious imitation of the virtuous friend.

At first sight, the two arguments look dissimilar since the friend is seen from a different point of view in each case. Someone could argue though, that virtue is included in the self-knowledge which the friend is helping the agent to obtain. This could lead someone to say that even though the two arguments are different in what they are trying to establish, the way that the agent should see his friend is similar.

Namely, that even if not explicitly stated in argument 2, the human mirror process could be applied and thus accepted in the present passage even as implied by Aristotle. Therefore, I accept the ‘human mirror’ phrase from Argument 1 to Argument 2 even if not literally expressed in the text. Let us move then to the next argument of interest. This argument shall be Argument 3 and is the one in 1170a15-b7 from the NE.

2.7.3. Argument 3

In NE 1170a15-b7 Aristotle constructs a psychological argument where he says that sympathy enlarges our consciousness and consequently our happiness. In this case, Aristotle sets a different kind of outcome for the relationship between the agent and his friend. Namely, Aristotle says that if the virtuous man (*σπουδαῖος*) feels towards his friend in the same way as he feels towards himself—since the friend is another self—then as a man’s own existence is desirable for him, so is his friend’s existence also desirable (NE 1170b5-9).

Generally, this passage’s central point is self-consciousness and not self-knowledge as we saw in the MM argument before. However, the human mirror process could be applied here as well even if the argument’s target is different. What is interesting in this argument (3) and the one in the MM is that the friend should see or feel towards his friend as he would feel towards himself (since the friend is a

second self) and hence the human mirror process can be applied in all three arguments.

Thus, it would not seem implausible to read all the three aforementioned arguments as a unified one. Specifically, in the three arguments we saw that the virtuous friends can increase and help obtain the agent's own: *self-knowledge*; *virtue*; *self-consciousness*. This means that the virtuous friend helps the agent to obtain and increase either one of the three, two out of three, or even all of the three. Thus, even if the human mirror process is only explicitly stated in the MM passage where the vital point is self-knowledge, it could also be applied in the arguments (2, 3) of the NE.

Now that we have dealt with this mirror issue it is time to return to another important matter that we have left unexamined. In particular, another essential subject that we have left unanalysed from previous sections is what does the 'because' represent in the phrase: 'One desires the friend's good for his own sake *because* he is another self'.

Concerning this issue, Millgram suggests that the "*because*" cannot stand for a means-end relationship since friendships are essentially non-instrumental. The problem is that if the "*because*" turns out to have an instrumental reason then the "mirror" argument will have no moral significance since the agent wants to use his friend to gain all the epistemological benefits that derive from their character friendship. This would mean that Cooper's argument about the mirror process and the other self would be in jeopardy. We will see in the next section though that Millgram accuses Cooper for giving an instrumental interpretation of the "*because*". Let us see then Millgram's argument against Cooper in more detail.

2.8. Does Cooper propose an Instrumental Account of Friendship?

Millgram accuses Cooper of proposing an instrumental account of friendship. In particular, he says:

“When Cooper takes the function of these arguments to be that of ‘defending the value of friendship only by showing that for human beings it is a necessary means to attaining certain broadly valuable psychological benefits’ (Cooper, 332) he is providing an unsatisfactory, because (solely) instrumental, account of friendship.” (Millgram, 1987: 370)

Generally, Millgram (1987: 370) asserts that Cooper’s position in his paper ‘Aristotle on Friendship’ is schizophrenic in the sense that he refutes that he generates an essentially instrumental explanation of friendship, and in the first part of the paper seems relatively successful; but the second half produces what is just such an account.

Nonetheless, I think that this split-personality accusation is groundless. There is a chronological reason that acquits Cooper from this two poles kind of thinking. In fact, the two parts of the paper were initially independently published papers⁵⁶. So, I think that this part of the accusation on behalf of Millgram towards Cooper does have an explanation which may still be historical and not philosophical but can yet acquit Cooper from the above mentioned incoherence.

What is more, Millgram says that the story that Cooper gives is in essence instrumental. Specifically, Cooper’s account takes friends as essentially instruments, and as a fungible product. Let us see his argument in detail.

Millgram says that Mirrors-even human ones- are tools used for a specified purpose. However, Cooper denies such a conclusion. Specifically, he argues that the

⁵⁶ This is something that Millgram (1987: 370) accepts himself but he does not take it as a convincing enough factor for him to acquit Cooper.

human mirror story should not be interpreted as meaning that on Aristotle's view a flourishing person treats his friend as a mere instrument by which to enhance his own self-esteem. In contrast, he says, this image implies that his self-esteem only gets the support he seeks insofar as he first has precisely the same esteem for the other person and his life, taken by itself, as he will come to have for himself and his own life.

Thus, Cooper concludes that Aristotle's argument is that in "loving and valuing the other person for his own sake one becomes able to love and value oneself" (1980: 333), and this he presents in justification and clarification of the fact that a friend loves and values his friend for his own sake and places a high value on doing so. Despite the obvious denial on behalf of Cooper regarding the instrumental use of friends, Millgram presents the argument that I am going to evaluate in what follows in order to prove that actually Cooper believes the opposite.

According to Millgram, Cooper differentiates between shared activities like some game, in which co-participants need have only instrumental value, and shared virtuous activities, which need intimate acquaintance in order to establish the co-participants in virtue. This kind of intimate acquaintance is, Cooper thinks, sufficient for friendship. An analogous line, says Millgram, is taken as far as the 'human mirrors' idea is concerned.

Millgram rejects Cooper's argument for the following reasons. First of all, he (Millgram, 1989: 370) says that intimate acquaintance is in no way adequate for friendship. Moreover, determining the virtue of another need not involve intimate acquaintance. Millgram continues by saying that psychologists could find out ways of reading psychological states of virtue off a person's nervous system. They could

build “virtuometers”, as he says (1987: 370), which can reliably measure a person’s virtue index.

Under such conditions it is very simple for virtuous persons to find guaranteed-to-be-virtuous co-participants in virtuous activities. But it would be unreasonable, asserts Millgram, “to portray such people-people like the stranger with whom he has agreed, on the basis of his 98.7 Composite Virtue Index, to co-operate in building a temple- as friends.” (1987: 370)

In addition, says Millgram (1987: 370), such devices could also be made to take the place of ‘human mirrors’; instead of using one’s friend to study one’s own virtue, one could take “virtuometer” readings. Thus, Millgram concludes by suggesting that stories like this one prove that ‘human mirrors’ and co-participants in virtuous activities are, as occupiers of these roles, merely instrumental means to an end; they can be replaced by gadgets like “virtuometers” since they are already no more than tools, and any tool, qua tool, is replaceable by anything else that serves the same purpose. As a result, he asserts, Cooper’s account, takes friends as essentially instruments. In other words, Millgram takes Cooper to consider a friend as instruments despite the latter’s refutation (1980: 333). Let us see then if his accusation against Cooper is strong enough to be accepted.

I think that Millgram’s accusation against Cooper makes sense but there are ways to defend the latter. First of all, the indicative “vitrtuometer” example that Millgram presents could be a derivative from Cooper’s views even though it is a stretched one. But I think that we should acquit Cooper from Millgram’s accusation. Let us see the part from Cooper’s *Aristotle on Friendship* and understand why we should acquit him. Specifically, the part form Cooper’s paper is the following:

“The motif of the friend as a mirror, which is indeed at best implicit in the Nicomachean argument, is not to be interpreted as meaning that on Aristotle’s view a flourishing person treats his friend as a mere instrument by which to enhance his own self-esteem. On the contrary, this image implies that his self-esteem only gets the support he seeks insofar as he first has precisely the same esteem for the other person and his life, taken by itself, as he will come to have for himself and his own life. Aristotle’s argument, in short, is that in loving and valuing the other person for his own sake one becomes able to love and value one self, and this he offers in explanation and illumination of the fact that a friend loves and values his friend for his own sake and places a high value on doing so.” (1980: 333)

I think that in the part from Cooper’s paper *Aristotle on Friendship* that I quoted above, he clarifies his position that the mirror mental scheme should in no way be interpreted as if an agent treats his friends as instruments to increase his own self-esteem.

Particularly, Cooper emphasizes the fact that by valuing and loving his friend for his own sake, the agent becomes capable of loving and valuing himself. This claim on behalf of Cooper depends of course on how someone would interpret the expression ‘for the sake of’. If we interpret this expression in this case as denoting an instrumental motive then I think that Millgram might be right to accuse Cooper. However, I think that we should not do so.

It is obvious throughout Aristotle’s discussion of friendship that he considers friendships as being essentially not instrumental and the expression ‘for the sake of’ vividly denotes Aristotle’s thought on this issue. However, the fact that intimate acquaintance, as Cooper asserts, is required in order to determine the co-participants in virtue might not be enough for friendships, as Millgram claims in his accusation. Perhaps Cooper could have given more clues as to how someone can determine the co-participants in virtue. This shows that Cooper may have rushed in going analogically from intimate acquaintance to ‘human mirrors’. Nonetheless, I still

think that human mirrors cannot be replaced by any gadgets such as “virtuometers” as Millgram asserts. The reason for this is that the agent is able to feel pleasure from another agent’s action⁵⁷. This could determine (along perhaps with intimate acquaintance), our co-participants in virtue, and it could be connected with human mirrors. Namely, we could say that the agent feels pleasure from someone else’s action as he would have felt was he performing some virtuous action himself. So he values the other as he values himself. But he is not *using* the other as an instrument in order to value himself, since, he recognizes someone else *as* himself, namely, another virtuous agent. Which means that pleasure⁵⁸ is the medium that connects them through virtue. Therefore, Cooper’s argument about the function of human mirrors might be correct but the intimate acquaintance route that he follows to go there is incomplete. I hope I have filled this gap in his train of thought, and thus to have answered to Millgram’s interesting counterarguments.

Nevertheless, the most important question remains unanswered. Namely, as we saw before, Millgram correctly put forward a very crucial task. This task is to elucidate the ‘because’ in ‘One desires the friend’s good for his own sake *because* he is another self.

2.9. One Desires his Friend’s Good for his own Sake *because* he is Another Self

As we said before, the question on what the ‘*because*’ represents in the phrase “One desires the friend’s good for his own sake *because* he is another self” still

⁵⁷ I explain more on this process in chapter 3.

⁵⁸ Someone could argue here that the agent uses his friend in order to feel pleasure from his good actions which, as a result, make him have a eudaimonic feeling. But this is not the case since, in the virtuous agent, pleasure functions as a supervenient end (NE 1174b31-3) and not as the intended end of action.

remains to be investigated. We can immediately emphasize the fact that these thoughts cannot be instrumental reasons in order to have friends⁵⁹ due to the essential non-instrumentality of friendship as portrayed by Aristotle. But if they are not instrumental reasons, what are they anyway?

Millgram suggests that these considerations are causes. But let us see his argument in detail in order to comprehend what he has in mind by suggesting such a solution to the problem. Specifically, Millgram presents the following argument to support his solution:

“Let A and B be friends, and let B be (partially) responsible for (at least the maintenance of) A’s virtue, in that B serves as a human mirror, and is a team-mate in A’s virtuous activities. Cooper takes these facts to provide A with (instrumental) reasons for befriending B. But Cooper has things backwards. The causal facts, rather than providing A with instrumental reasons to befriend B, explain B’S love for A. B loves A *because* he is the procreator of A, and procreators love their creatures. These causal interactions make each friend the other’s ‘other self’, and bring about the love of the friend for his own sake. (In like manner, the symmetrical facts explain A’s love for B; just as B is a procreator of A, so A is a procreator of B.)” (1987: 371)

So, let us reflect on this first part of Millgram’s argument. First of all, I disagree with Millgram with the fact that Cooper takes these facts to provide A with instrumental reasons for befriending B. Concerning this issue, I tried to show in previous sections why I believe that Cooper should not be accused of suggesting that friends are used as instruments.

Someone could argue though that Cooper does not present with a clear explanation of what this ‘*because*’ means in ‘One desires the friend’s good for his own sake *because* he is another self’ as Millgram tries to do here. But we should

⁵⁹ This is something emphasized by Millgram as well (371).

definitely exculpate him from Millgram's accusations of him taking friends as instruments.

A second thing that troubled me concerning Millgram's argument is that: he equates (as we saw in previous sections of this chapter) the analogy of the parent-child relationship in the sense that the parent is the procreator of the child with the friend-friend relationship. This analogy though does not seem to be correct. Let us see why in what follows.

As we previously saw, Millgram abstracted from the parent-child relation to a relation that he called procreation. He used this example in order to express that: "If A is the procreator of B, then (i) A is the creator of B in the sense that A is causally responsible for B's being, and (ii) B has the same being that A does." (1987: 367)

Millgram then moves from the parent-child relationship to the relationship between friends and tries⁶⁰ to explain the link between other-self-dom and special concern. This analogy of Millgram, nevertheless, brings about a certain question.

This question has to do with whether a biological relationship such as the parent-child one is the same or even similar to the one of the friend-friend one. Apparently it is not. On the one hand we have a biological relationship where a (particular) parent is the procreator of a (particular) child and it is obvious that the child is a definite product of the parent, and on the other hand we have an emotional relationship between two friends where the one is the procreator of the other in terms of virtue.

⁶⁰ As we are going to see in the next section

Millgram would answer (1987: 367) though that Aristotle has an argument through which he could extract his analogy. This argument is from N.E 1167b33-1168a10:

“The same thing happens with the artist: every artist loves his handiwork more than that handiwork if it were to come to life would love him. This is perhaps especially true of poets, who have an exaggerated affection for their own poems and love them as parents love their children. The position of the benefactor then resembles that of the artist; the recipient of his bounty in his handiwork, and he therefore loves him more than his handiwork loves its maker. The reason of this is that all things desire and love existence; but we exist in activity, since we exist by living and doing; and in a sense one who has made something exists actively, and so he loves his handiwork because he loves existence. This is in fact a fundamental principle of nature: what a thing is potentially, that its work in actuality.” (N.E 1167b33-1168a10)

If we take this passage from the Nicomachean Ethics under consideration we might be able to accept Millgram’s analogy from parent-child to friend-friend. Even though it is not exactly said by Aristotle in the above passage it is possible to accept Millgram’s argument and as a result his interpretation of the ‘*because*’ in ‘One desires the friend’s good for his own sake *because* he is another self’ could be plausible. However, in what we will see next there are problems in the term procreation as Millgram uses it; problems that make Millgram’s arguments unlikely to be accepted.

2.10. Problems with Millgram’s Analogy

As we previously saw, Millgram suggested that: ‘In like manner, the symmetrical facts explain A’s love for B; just as B is a procreator of A, so A is a procreator of B’ (371). This premise implies that the parent-child relationship works bilaterally. Namely, that as the parent (P) is the procreator of his child (C) [1], so the child (C) is the procreator of the parent (P) [2]. In the case of the parent-child relationship though we could accept [1], but we could not accept [2]. This objection of mine has

to do with the link between the analogy stated above and the concept of a friend being another (but separate) self.

As we said above, Millgram's premise is easily adjustable in [1] but not possible in [2], and there is a very specific reason for this. The premise in Millgram's argument (1987: 371) has to do with two friends who are adults, while in the parent-child relationship we deal with an adult and a child. So, we will have to examine the distinction that Aristotle makes between an adult-adult relationship and an adult (P)-child (C) relationship. But let us examine each relationship separately. The first relationship to be examined will be the 'adult (parent)-child' relationship.

2.11. The Adult (parent)-Child Relationship⁶¹

In *Magna Moralia*, Aristotle explicitly states that in the parent-child relationship, the child is in a significant way not yet separate. Specifically, the passage from the *Magna Moralia* is the following:

“For there does not seem to be justice between a son and his father, or a servant and his master-any more than one can speak of justice between my foot and me, or my hand or any of my other limbs. For a son is, as it were, a part of his father, and remains so until he takes the rank of manhood and is separated from him, and becomes then an equal and a peer with his father” (MM 1194b11-17)

Thus, the child, lacking in mature rational capacities⁶² is dependent upon his parent's reason. Namely, a parent makes choices for a child and promotes his good in a way that would be inappropriate within adult friendship. On the other hand, we have to see what Aristotle thinks that happens in an adult-adult relationship. In particular, we are going to see how Sherman approaches the issue at hand.

⁶¹ We have to emphasize the fact that when Aristotle says in 1161 b27-29 that: ‘Parents then love their children as themselves (one's offspring being as it were another self-other because separate’) he strictly gives a biological meaning to the ‘other self’. Namely, Aristotle is referring to a second-self produced by separation from oneself (the mother).

⁶² NE 1111b8-9; 1144b8-12, EE 1240b31-33, Politics 1260a11-14.

2.12. The Adult-Adult Relationship

In this section we are going to see how Sherman approaches the adult-adult (friend) relationship. We will see that her approach will turn out to be very helpful.

Specifically, as far as the adult-adult relationship is concerned Sherman notes:

“So Aristotle says an adult friend is ‘another self,’ but equally, in his own words, ‘separate self’ (*αὐτός διαιρετός*) (EE 1245a30, a35; NE 1170b7, MM 1213a13, a24). This entails that such friends promote each other’s good in a privileged way (as only another self can), but in a way that is nonetheless mindful of the mature rational agency of each.” (1987: 607)

Consequently, Sherman’s argument is indicative of Aristotle’s thought regarding the difference between the relationships between adults and the one between parent (adult) and child. We will use the *separate-self* idea from Sherman’s argument later on in this chapter when we will connect the other-self concept with special justice and moral development. Therefore let us keep this argument from Sherman in mind and let us examine some further now some further objections to Millgram’s argument.

2.13. Further Objections to Millgram’s Argument

As we previously saw, Aristotle says that the child is the parent’s ‘other self’ (1161b28-29NE). Concerning this intuition from Aristotle, Millgram takes it and says that friendships of kin and companion derive from parental friendship. However, there are some things that we have to note concerning this argument.

First of all, we have to highlight the fact that when Aristotle talks about a child being the ‘other self’ of the parent he limits this scheme solely in biological terms. In particular, he says that parents love their children as themselves (one’s offspring being as it were another self-other because separate) (NE1161 b28-29). In this case,

the second self is produced by separation of oneself (the parent). So, in this case I take Aristotle to strictly refer to a biological sense of the ‘other self’.

Additionally, Aristotle continues by saying that: “For their parents have bestowed on them (*the children*) the greatest benefits in being the cause of their existence and rearing, and later of their education.” (NE 1162 a6-8)

In this argument, Aristotle refers to a fundamental parameter in the parent child relationship. Specifically, the parent has the role of the moral educator of the child throughout their relationship. There is though a serious doubt on whether the same scheme can be applied not to companion, kin, or even fraternal kind of friendship but, instead, to the higher form of friendship; the friendship based on virtue.

It is crucial to mention that when Aristotle refers to the friend as being an ‘other self’ he is only talking about character friendships. An indicative example of this intuition is when Aristotle says:

“(1) Friendship is essentially a partnership (*κοινωνία*). (2) And a man stands in the same relation to a friend as to himself; but the consciousness (*αίσθησις*) of his own existence is a good; also therefore is the consciousness of his friend’s existence; but this consciousness is actualized in intercourse.” (1171 b32-6 NE)

And later on, just before the end of book IX, Aristotle completes in a way his previous argument by stating that the friendships of the good is good, and grows with their intercourse. (1172a11-12 NE)

What is more, there are two different passages, once more from the Nicomachean Ethics, which are connected in their meaning which strengthen the fact that the ‘other self’ refers to character friendship. On the one hand, we have 1169b6 NE where Aristotle says: “...whereas the function of a friend, who is a second self, is to

supply things we cannot procure for ourselves”; and, on the other hand, we see Aristotle saying at 1172a12-14 NE that the good people seem to become better by putting their friendship into practice, and because they correct each other’s faults, for each takes the impress from the other of those traits in him that give him pleasure.

I think it is clear that in the passages above, Aristotle connects the idea of the ‘other self’ with the friendships based on the good. And we cannot neglect the fact that he argues that the friendship between parents and children affords a greater degree both of pleasure and of utility than that between persons unrelated to each other, inasmuch as they have more common in their lives (NE 1162a8-9). So, what is the moral of the above mentioned Aristotelian arguments?

First of all, if we accept the fact that when Aristotle talks about the ‘other self’ he refers to the friendships based on the good then we must partially⁶³ reject Millgram’s suggestion that friends function as procreators of each other’s virtue. The reason is that the moral characters of already virtuous agents have been shaped and cultivated in a way that allows them to be part of a friendship based on character. This infers that Millgram’s argument about procreation is exaggerating and misleading.

We should not forget though Millgram’s argument where he stated that:

“Let A and B be friends, and let B be (partially) responsible for (at least the maintenance of) A’s virtue, in that B serves as a human mirror, and is a team-mate in A’s virtuous activities. Cooper⁶⁴ takes these facts to provide A with (instrumental) reasons for befriending B. But Cooper has things backwards. The causal facts, rather than providing A with instrumental reasons to befriend B, explain B’S love for A. B loves A *because* he is the procreator of A, and procreators love their creatures. These causal interactions make each friend the other’s ‘other self’, and bring about the love of the friend for his own sake. (In like manner, the symmetrical facts

⁶³ I will explain later on in this chapter why I say *partially reject* and not *completely reject* Millgram’s position.

⁶⁴ Millgram refers to Cooper (1980: 301-340).

explain A's love for B; just as B is a procreator of A, so A is a procreator of B.)” (Millgram, 1987: 371)

In this argument Millgram makes a critical mistake. He tries to explain why an agent x loves his friend by saying that: x loves y (his friend) because he is his procreator; and procreators love their creatures. We have already seen though that Millgram understands companion-friendship via parental friendship, and by abstracting from parent-child relation he creates a term which he calls *procreation*. But since the ‘other self’ doctrine cannot be applied in any other form of friendship apart from the friendship based on the good and the character of the agent then the term procreation, when it is applied, it can only be so to the friendships between parent-child, of comrades, or kin.

So, if we eliminate from Millgram's argument the explanations he tries to give with the *because* and thus the procreation, then what is left is his initial argument: “Let A and B be friends, and let B be (partially) responsible for (at least the maintenance of) A's virtue, in that B serves as a human mirror, and is a team-mate in A's virtuous activities.” (1987: 371)

If we keep then the human mirror concept as a critical explanation of the other-self doctrine then I think we can draw some serious implications about the function of the other self that Aristotle wants to give us to understand.

2.14. Explanation of the Other-Self Concept

Before saying what I think it is to see a friend as another self I will first reflect on the importance of the argument that is left from Millgram's initial one. In particular, this argument shows the importance of a virtuous friend to the virtuous agent. In this case, the virtuous friend functions as a moral educator for the virtuous agent. From

this we can infer that Aristotle does not consider virtuous agents morally perfect⁶⁵. Even *they* need another virtuous agent with whom they are going to be friends that will be in a way partially responsible for at least the maintenance of his virtue and a team-mate in their virtuous activities.

Apart from that though, we have to remind ourselves that: ‘the function of a friend, who is a second self, is to supply things we cannot procure for ourselves’ (NE 1169b6). This means that even though the agent in such a friendship is already virtuous, there are things that he can learn by seeing his friend as being another self. And here we come to the point of the understanding of the mirror process in the ‘other-self’.

2.15. Friends as Mirrors and the Other-Self

It is of vital importance to interpret the role and function of the mirror process if we want to understand what the expression: ‘a friend is another self’ means. In particular I think that the mirror process has a dual effect on the agent. On the one hand, when the agent looks at his friend who in this case functions as a mirror is able to obtain knowledge about him as if he was looking in an actual mirror. This can lead us to infer that: by looking at a friend who functions as a mirror we do not only get to know things about ourselves that, without the existence of friends would not be possible to know, but we also value and admire what we see in the mirror; namely ourselves. This means that since the friend is another-self: 1) when he looks in the mirror he does not only get self-knowledge but also gets knowledge about his friend , 2) when he looks in the mirror he does not only value and admire himself but also his friend, which means a dual effect of self-appreciation.

⁶⁵ I will look deeper on this point in chapter 6.

If we understand the other-self in this way, it proves why we should not comprehend Cooper, and definitely not Aristotle, as understanding the agent of treating his friend as a mere instrument by which to enhance his own self-esteem. This issue is resolved if the other-self doctrine is read in parallel with the mirror process and its dual nature and function.

In addition, the fact that the agent loves his friend for his own sake has again a dual nature if applied to the mirror process. Namely, when the agent looks himself into his friend, who functions as a mirror, and sees his friend as another self, he loves his friend for his own sake⁶⁶, and at the same time he loves himself for his own sake⁶⁷.

2.16. Final Thoughts

As we have seen in this chapter, the other-self doctrine is critical for someone to interpret in a way that does not distort the Aristotelian thought in his theory of friendship. We examined two different approaches on how we should interpret the other-self doctrine; one of them was Millgram's and the other was Cooper's.

Millgram's approach and interpretation of the other-self does not seem to represent the Aristotelian thought in the best way. Namely, his interpretation of the other-self as a relationship that implies transitivity of identity, and his abstraction of the term procreation from other kinds of friendships and his use of it in the virtuous ones does not seem to work. However, a part of his argument was worthy to be kept⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ Namely, for his friend being good.

⁶⁷ Namely, for himself being good.

⁶⁸ Millgram (1987: 371).

On the other hand, Cooper's approach on the other-self seems to represent Aristotle's thought in a better way than Millgram's. His use of the mirror process is decisive for the understanding of the other-self. In addition, his argument on the understanding of the other-self clarifies and explains what the expression 'for the sake of' means in the mirror process. Namely, the agent does not have instrumental reasons to love his friend by just using him to enhance his own self-esteem.

As I understand Cooper, and have already explained in the previous section of this chapter, the mirror process has a dual effect on the agent. This means that by looking in the mirror he values not only himself but also his friend since the friend is another-self. The same schema applies to knowledge as well: when the agent looks in the mirror he gets to know things about himself but also about his friend, since the friend is another-self. These facts lead us to conclude that the other-self in combination with the mirror process, can together be understood as processes of value and knowledge of the other and the agent's self that take part in a character friendship.

So, Millgram's metaphysical approach of identity in order to explain the other-self seems to have problems and does not work. Cooper's approach in addition with my explanations seems to portray Aristotle's thought concerning the 'other-self' and its meaning in the Aristotelian passages. What remains now to be examined is whether my interpretation of self-love as special justice in the previous chapter can be combined with what we have suggested in the present one.

The first and most important thing that we should note is the importance of clearing out the meaning of *because* in the expression "I love you because you are my other-self". As we previously said in this chapter, the "*because*" in this

expression does not denote any instrumental reasons for the agent to consider his friend as another-self. This also means though that the agent loves his friend for his own sake. Namely, he loves him for being virtuous and not for the things he might gain from their friendship. This means that the “*because*” denotes a *recognition* of virtue in someone other than myself, which results in loving him as I love myself.

The second, and most important outcome from the current discussion of the other-self, is that the mixed motivation argument that I proposed in the previous chapter does not only turn out to be right inside the discussion of self-love, but, can be applied to the current chapter as well.

Namely, the agent wants to divide goods with his friend in a way that special justice dictates. This way of division does not have arithmetic but proportional equality as we have already noted. That is so because the division is mostly based on the *need* of the appropriate goods for some corresponding virtue that the agents need to further practice or improve.

The agent who divides goods between himself and his friend though does not only take under consideration his needs, but also his friend's. This happens because he regards his friend as another self. But not an exact replica of himself since that would be impossible. Instead, he considers him as a separate self⁶⁹ who has his own distinct rational choices and needs for practicing and improving the virtues. Thus even if, in certain occasions, he gains moral nobility by giving more to his friend than himself, this does not mean that he acts in this way in order to gain the larger share of goods. He cares equally for his good as much as he does for his friend's. Thus he wants to be just and equal to him.

⁶⁹ See section 2.12.

Now in this way, the agents may further develop their understanding of virtue through its practise. They could not have had this opportunity in such abundance if the virtuous friends did not have each other. For instance, something that is missing from one of them (e.g. money) may be provided by their friend. And now the agent that previously did not have enough money, may now practise, for example, the virtue of magnificence.

This point though is not only applicable in cases where someone lacks the chance or the resources in order to perform a virtuous action at some particular time. This would not only give the agent a chance to practice and maintain some virtue that certain factors hold him back from doing so. The process that we previously described may also help the agents progress their understanding of certain virtues whose development has not been equal with other ones throughout the agent's life.

Generally, we should not forget that for someone to have a virtuous character he has to have all the virtues (NE1145a1-2; NE 1098a17-18); and we cannot ignore this unity of virtue demanded by Aristotle. But the form of unified virtues might vary⁷⁰ in different agents. This means that on the one hand, each agent may have all the virtues, and exercise them appropriately, as external conditions demand and allow. But on the other hand, and as a result of nature (NE 1144b4-7), development⁷¹ and resources, certain virtues may surpass others in growth⁷².

⁷⁰ For a similar view see Sherman (1987: 609).

⁷¹ In *Politics* 1329a9ff Aristotle argues that different virtues of character traits gain preeminence at different times in an individual's life.

⁷² This point applies particularly to completely virtuous agents which I focus in chapter 1, the current chapter, and the last one (chapter 6) of my thesis. This means that even if the agent is considered completely virtuous there are still virtues in him that need to be further developed. This argument about the variance of the unity of virtue applies then in both processes of moral development of the completely virtuous agent that I argued for at the introduction of this thesis.

Therefore, both agents have the chance, not only to practice some virtue due to the lack of resources at some particular time of their life. They also have the opportunity to develop in some virtue that has remained slightly underdeveloped due to one of the reasons I stated above. Now, the agent may realize his friend's weakness in this virtue and thus divide some good *A* mostly in favor of his friend by choosing less of it. And this might occur the other way around as well. In this way their relationship is based on equality and justice since the agent gets moral nobility from relinquishing some good to his friend. And his friend may now practice and develop this virtue in which he was previously somewhat underdeveloped.

2.17. Conclusion

What remains now to be examined is another dimension of moral development that takes place inside character friendships. This has to do with Argument's (2) point (c) that we previously saw in the current chapter. As I said there, character friendship helps the agent advance his understanding of virtue. The argument in 2 (c) is substantiated at NE 1172 a12-14 where Aristotle says that the agents mold each other on what they find pleasing.

Now this expression implies an imitative process that takes place between the virtuous friends. This process has not⁷³ been emphasized enough or analyzed deeply by any scholar that has written anything regarding Aristotle's theory of friendship. But, (1) how does this process come about? (2) Which are these actions that derive from the agent's virtuous friend that please him? (3) In what way does imitation take place?

⁷³Nussbaum (1986: 363) and Sherman (1987) have also argued that in this passage Aristotle wants to show that character friends emulate each other's actions. But they not explain deeply how this psychological process actually works. I will explain more on this argument in chapter 6.

I will keep the answers to questions (1) and (3) for the last chapter of this thesis. Before that though, I will examine the foundations on which these answers will be based on. Therefore in the next chapter I will try to address the second question from the previous paragraph.

We must know what attracts someone in another so as to want to befriend them. As we will see, the pleasure that the agent feels from watching someone performing a virtuous action may lead him to desire to befriend the virtuous agent he just watched. I will argue though that this desire is not only intensified by the fact that the watched agent is *just* virtuous. The agent enjoys the other being *particularly* virtuous as well; which implies a distinguishable way on behalf of the agent of performing the virtuous action. Now when this desire leads to character friendship, then a necessary step has been taken that paves the way for the imitative process to start taking place. This is what I will call “interpretative mimesis” (IM) in the last chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 3

Pleasure, Friendship, and Particularity

3.1. Introduction

How does the highly advanced agent choose his friends among so many people he gets to know every day? What makes them so special and unique for him? In other words, why does he desire X and not Y to be his friend? I will argue that Aristotle can give convincing answers to these questions. In order to support this thesis, I will provide the following analysis.

I will suggest that a thorough response to the above stated questions can be provided amply if we turn our attention to the role that pleasure plays in evaluating our actions and those of others. In particular, I will propose that when the virtuous agent perceives someone's action she can tell whether this action represents a truly virtuous action or not. If and when it does the agent is attracted and feels pleasure by this virtuous action and a desire to befriend this person emerges. The reason of desiring to befriend the other person is her virtuous character.

In order to accomplish my goal though, I first have to face some problems that arise in Aristotle's discussion of pleasure. Namely, the most important problem is the connection of the perception of an activity and the pleasure that supervenes it. As Heinaman⁷⁴ (2011) puts it, the point is to discern (a) the species of perception connected with virtuous actions with the corresponding pleasures that supervene them, with the (b) species of perception and pleasure which are of lower moral value, or even vicious. If (a) and (b) are not discernible then the vicious and the virtuous can turn out to have the same species of perceptions and pleasures. We will

⁷⁴Heinaman (2011: 8-46).

see that Heinaman offers a way to avoid these problems.

At last, I will argue that the agent does not only recognize virtue as such in the other. She also values and recognizes the particularity of the other agent's virtuous action. I will propose this as an answer to Nehamas' (2010) anti-Aristotelian thesis where he argues that Aristotle's character friendship lacks the particularity recognition component, and remains a friendship where virtue is just an objective fact that we recognize in others.

In order to show this I will use the famous doctrine of the mean, and I will connect it with a particularist interpretation of Aristotle. In essence I will argue that what the agent feels pleasure from is the other's ability to adapt to each moral situation individually and find the appropriate solutions. Thus, this fact makes the agent not only virtuous, but, in fact, particularly virtuous.

I will deploy this chapter in the following order. I will first discuss the importance of the connection between pleasure and goodness; and specifically the connection between pleasure and virtuous activity. Next, I will argue that there is a problem in the connection of the species of perception of a virtuous activity of the agent and the species of its supervening pleasure. I will suggest though that Heinaman (2011) can offer a solution to this problem. When we address this issue we will see that: (1) there is a significant difference in how the morally advanced agent perceives and feels pleasure from her actions, with how the morally inferior does so, and, (2) the difference applies also on how the virtuous agent perceives other agents' actions and gets pleasure from them, and how the morally inferior agent does so as well.

At last, I will propose an alternative reading of Aristotle's character friendship,

and contra Nehamas, I will argue that the agent does not only value and recognize virtue as an objective fact in her potential friend, but, also, she values the particularity of the other's action. This can be manifested through the doctrine of the mean when read and interpreted in the particularist way I will propose.

3.2. Pleasure and Goodness

Aristotle devotes part of book VII (chapters 11-14) and more than half of book X (chapters 1-5) to discuss the concept of pleasure. It is evident that in both discussions, pleasure is not something bad for him⁷⁵. On the contrary, it seems like there is an important connection⁷⁶ between pleasure and goodness emphasized especially in book X.

For instance, Aristotle argues that pleasures differ in goodness according to the way their activities do⁷⁷ (NE 1175b24-29). In more detail, Aristotle argues that:

“...since activities differ in moral value, and some are to be adopted, others to be avoided, and others again are neutral, the same is true also of their pleasures: for each activity has a pleasure of its own. Thus the pleasure of a good activity is morally good, that of a bad one morally bad; for even desires for noble things are praised and desires for base things blamed.” (NE 1175b24-29)

⁷⁵ In Book X of the Nicomachean Ethics, however, Aristotle makes a critical statement about pleasure. He argues that pleasure is *a* good but not *the* good. He cites and endorses an argument given by Plato in the Philebus: ‘If we imagine a life filled with pleasure and then mentally add wisdom to it, the result is made more desirable. But the good is something that cannot be improved upon in this way. Therefore, pleasure is not the good’ (1172b23-35; see also cf. I.7, 1097b14-20). For more detail on the Philebus arguments see: *Philebus* 20e-22b; 60a-61a. See also: Kraut (2012)

⁷⁶The connection between pleasure and goodness becomes very clear not only in Aristotle’s discussions on pleasure in NE Books VII and X. There is a preparatory discussion in Books II-IV of the NE where he shows how correct virtuous activity must be connected to corresponding pleasures. For a more detailed discussion on this issue and other aspects of the connection between pleasure and goodness see: Annas (1981: 285-299).

⁷⁷Aristotle seems to agree with Plato’s suggestion in the Philebus (12c8–d4) that the virtuous person takes pleasure in being virtuous and acting virtuously, while the vicious person takes a different type of pleasure. Therefore, I agree with Irwin’s position on this issue in: Irwin (2007: 168-9)

In this passage Aristotle differentiates between pleasures which are connected to virtuous activity and pleasures which are connected to bad activity. He underlines the fact that the corresponding pleasures of the former activity are good while the ones of the latter activities are bad. There is a significant point that we have to make here though.

Namely, if we go back to Book VII, we see Aristotle giving weight to the fact that pleasures seem to encumber one another. The point is now that even if all kinds of pleasure are good, it does not follow that all of them are worth choosing or suitable. The agent must choose and discern the pleasures which are better. But on what standards should the agent base her judgment in order to come to the final pick? Kraut (2012) gives, I think, a very good response to this question.

He says that the answer is not to be found in NE Book VII but in Book X. Specifically he argues that we can find it in the first half of the passage that we previously cited (NE 1175b24-26). We saw there that the choice of pleasures is not to be made with reference to pleasure itself, but with reference to the activities they complement. Therefore, Kraut suggests:

“Aristotle's statement implies that in order to determine whether (for example) the pleasure of virtuous activity is more desirable than that of eating, we are not to attend to the pleasures themselves but to the activities with which we are pleased. A pleasure's goodness derives from the goodness of its associated activity.” (Kraut, 2012)

This statement from Kraut is, I think, very crucial in enlightening how pleasures acquire their value. Essentially, what Kraut says, and what Aristotle seems to propose, is that pleasure alone should not be chosen by the virtuous agent. She must choose some pleasure *P* when it accompanies an activity *A*; and specifically a virtuous activity.

What Aristotle wants to highlight here is part of the strategic point he makes in NE Book X. This idea has to do with the nature of pleasure. Specifically, he suggests that pleasure is by its nature something that accompanies something else. What we have to examine in more detail is the connection between pleasure and activity as portrayed especially in Book X of the NE. Therefore, we will next study closer the role that Aristotle ascribes to pleasure. He argues that when pleasure is connected to virtuous activity, it functions as a judgment of value. Let us move on then to delve further into this argument.

3.3. Pleasure as Judgment of Value

In this section I will further examine the connection between pleasure and goodness; and more specifically the connection between pleasure and virtuous activity. As we will see pleasure works as a judgment of value⁷⁸ inside the mind of the agent.

Before moving on though we have to clear something out. Namely, pleasure is not something distinct from rational choice and evaluation. In fact they must work together. Broadie puts it very nicely when she says that: “We cannot understand rational choice except in relation to pleasure.” (Broadie, 1991: 331) But let us see Broadie’s argument about the relation of rational choice with pleasure in more detail. It will turn out that her analysis⁷⁹ will be very useful later in this chapter.

In her inquiry of pleasure and rational choice, Broadie, understands both of these

⁷⁸ The term ‘Judgment of Value’ is Sarah Broadie’s. Specifically, see: Broadie (1991: 331-9)

⁷⁹ Broadie does not intend to connect her analysis on pleasure (1991: 313-353) with Aristotle’s theory of friendship. I will argue though, that especially the part (1991: 331-9) of her discussion on pleasure that I am dealing with in this section, can be enlightening when I will later apply my results of the discussion of pleasure and goodness to Aristotle’s theory of friendship.

concepts as affirmation models. Specifically she argues that:

“Making and enacting a rational choice to φ is affirming¹ the *goodness of φ -ing rather than any alternative, in this situation*⁸⁰, and the implicit affirmation² is of the rightness of this choice. In the case of pleasure, on the other hand, the ground level affirmation issues from a natural or quasi-natural disposition simply to φ , i.e. to engage in φ -ing; thus one is naturally disposed to affirm¹ the goodness of *φ -ing simpliciter*. So the implicit affirmation² of the goodness of affirmation¹ declares the goodness of engaging in φ -ing as such, not rather than something else or as called for by these circumstances. This second level affirmation is pleasure in engaging in φ -ing.” (Broadie, 1991: 333)

In the above quoted passage Broadie suggests a thought-provoking model of affirmation for pleasure. The analogy of rational choice with pleasure is, I think, not only original and deep, but, furthermore, very indicative of the significance that Aristotle gives to pleasure as a judgment of value.

As we previously saw then, Broadie distinguishes two first levels of affirmation of pleasure: (I) a ground level affirmation where the agent shows a natural disposition to φ , and (II) a second-level affirmation where the agent feels pleasure in engaging in φ -ing. These two levels of affirmation though seem not to be enough. Consequently, Broadie goes on to extend the argument further. She says:

“The same logic points to an implicit affirmation (3) of the goodness of affirmation (2) and the affirmer’s excellence as such. Pleasure, then, is not only an affirmation of the goodness of doing, but carries an implicit affirmation of its own goodness as pleasure, and the self’s well-ness in *enjoying* (not only *doing*) what is enjoyed.” (Broadie, 1991: 333)

This third level affirmation that Broadie refers to here provides us with additional information on the agent’s nature of character when she is pleased by performing virtuous activities. In fact, the pleasure that the agent feels from virtuous activities shows her level of moral excellence.

⁸⁰All words or letters emphasized in italics in this quoted passage are from Broadie.

Broadie's point here is very crucial because it shows that not just any agent could fit her three level affirmations model; only completely virtuous agents could be ideal for it⁸¹. The reason for this is that especially the third level affirmation shows that the agent is in essence a virtuous one. On the other hand, the third level affirmation shows something very interesting about enjoyment as well. Namely, the fact that the agent enjoys what is enjoyed is an indication of the goodness of pleasure that she feels.

So, to sum up her three level affirmations model, Broadie says that: "Enjoyment then, declares the value per se of *doing* what, by one's very doing of it, one claims to be good to do; and enjoyment necessarily announces its own goodness per se." (Broadie, 1991: 333)

In other words, Broadie's three-level-affirmation model shows us how pleasure functions as a judgment of value in the agent's mind. When pleasure accompanies a virtuous activity the reason why it is correct for the agent to perform is clear. We must mention here that Julia Annas (1981: 293) seems to agree with Broadie when she states simply:

"My notion of pleasure and what I find pleasant is internal to my conception of the good. If I have to do either X or Y, and I think X right and Y wrong, then the pleasure of doing X give me reason to do X, but the pleasures of doing Y do not give me reason to do Y."

For Annas then, as well as for Broadie⁸², pleasure is a discerning force that

⁸¹ Broadie's argument is manifested in Aristotle's words when he suggests that: good man enjoys the activities which are in accordance with virtue (cf.1173a15, 1173b30). When Aristotle says "good" here, he implies someone who is completely virtuous.

⁸² Broadie and Annas correctly give value to pleasure when it is connected to virtuous action. We should not forget that for Aristotle, the indulgence in errant pleasures can lead to distortions in the understanding of the proper end of action (NE 1104b31-35; 1113a35b2;

functions as a judgment of value when it comes for the agent to choose between alternative courses of action. The question now is whether this understanding of pleasure that both scholars propose can work for my argument. Namely, can pleasure function as a judgment of value when it comes for the agent to choose his ideal friend? I will later suggest that the answer to this question is yes. Before moving on, however, I have to get deeper into the nature of pleasure and its connection with the virtuous agent. In order to do that, I will turn the reader's attention to Book X.4-5 from the NE.

3.4. NE X.4-5

In the first three chapters of NE Book X Aristotle starts by stressing the importance of the topic of pleasure (NE X.1: 1172a19-b8). After that, he goes on to give us a picture of the existing, positive and negative views, on the issue at hand where he provides certain replies (NE X.2,3: 1172b9-1174a12). We are not going to enter into a discussion on these three chapters, notwithstanding, for instance, the intriguing arguments of Aristotle against Eudoxus' hedonism (NE 1172b9-13).

What we are really interested in is *Aristotle's* views on the concept of pleasure. In order to do this, we need to analyze chapters 4 and 5 from NE Book X. In these two key chapters of Book X Aristotle's arguments can be divided in three parts: (a) pleasure is something complete or perfect (NE 1174a14-b14); (b) pleasure completes or perfects good activity (NE 1174b14-1175a21); (c) pleasures are as diverse as activities in kind and in ethical quality (NE 1175a21-1176a29). Let us see then each argument in more detail. Let us start with argument (a).

As we previously saw, in argument (a), Aristotle wants to show that pleasure is

1140b12-20). The right pleasures (NE1104b4-10), of course, come after a diligent and methodical moral education.

something complete or perfect (NE 1174a14-b14). One of the first tasks of this argument is to distinguish pleasure⁸³ from movement. Aristotle argues that movement is not complete in every portion of time.

In contrast, most movements are incomplete and differ in form (NE 1174b2-4). On the other hand, the form of pleasure seems for Aristotle to be complete in any and every portion of time. Therefore, pleasures, contrary to movement, are something whole and complete (NE 1174b6). The main point of this *completeness* argument is to show that pleasure is not a coming to be of something beyond itself. The *completeness* argument is, however, a preparatory one for what follows next in argument (b).

The crux of argument (b) is that pleasure completes or perfects good activity (NE 1174b14-a21). There is, however, a particular passage from argument (b) that we have to examine more closely (NE 1174b23-6). This passage is the following:

“...pleasure does not however perfect the activity in the same way as the object perceived and the sensory faculty, if good; perfect it; just as health and the physician are not in the same way the cause of being healthy.” (NE 1174b23-6)

Now in this (1174b23-6)⁸⁴ passage we see Aristotle continuing his ‘senses

⁸³ In order to make his point more lucid, Aristotle compares pleasure to the activity of seeing; in particular he suggests that: “...the act of sight appears to be perfect at any moment of its duration; it does not require anything to supervene later in order to perfect its specific quality. But pleasure also appears to be a thing of this nature” (NE 1174a14-19). At this point Aristotle seems to be consistent with his *Metaphysics* IX.6, where he argues about the completeness of seeing, and the contrast with movement. Aristotle’s analysis in *Metaphysics* IX.6 is useful in understanding better his point in NE 1174a14-19. This parallel passage from the *Metaphysics* IX.6 is pointed out by Sarah Broadie to whom I owe the reference. Specifically, see: Broadie, S. and Rowe (2002: 434).

⁸⁴ There is though more analysis on the metaphysics of this passage which is not of interest for this paper. For more on this issue, see: Broadie and Rowe (2002: 436); Irwin (1999: 305-6).

analogies⁸⁵ in order to display a very key fact about the nature of pleasure. The main point of this passage is that pleasure does not make the activity complete or perfect in the way the excellent sense-faculty⁸⁶ does. And while each of the senses assists in perfecting the activity since it is good of its kind, this is not the case for pleasure. The reason for this is that: pleasure is good because the associated activity is (NE 1175b24-1176a29). This passage (NE 1174b23-6) seems to be connected with argument (c) that we are going to examine now.

The main point of argument (c) is that: since activities differ in kind, so do the associated pleasures. In order to show this Aristotle argues that: (1) what completes one kind of thing is as different from what completes another as the things from each other (NE1175a21-8); (2) what belongs to one kind of thing is as different from what belongs to another as they are from each other; (3) the pleasure that belongs to an activity is inappropriate of an activity of another kind (NE 1175b1-24).

What interests us greatly from argument (c), however, is what Aristotle says about the diversity of pleasures and activities in the case of human beings. Specifically, he argues:

“But as a matter of fact in the human species at all events there is a great diversity of pleasures. The same things delight some men and annoy others, and things painful and disgusting to some are pleasant and attractive to others. This also holds good of things sweet to the taste: the same things do not taste sweet to a man in a fever as to one in good health; nor does the same temperature feel warm to an invalid and to a person of robust constitution. The same holds good of other things as well. But we hold that in all such cases the thing really is what it appears to be to the good man. And if this rule is sound, as it is generally held to be, and if the standard of everything is goodness, or the good man, qua good, then the things that seem to him to be pleasures are pleasures, and the things he enjoys are pleasant.” (NE 1176a10-

⁸⁵ We previously saw Aristotle using the sense of sight as an analogy in order to make his point about the completeness of pleasure in contrast to movement. In this passage though, he uses the senses one more time, only to make a different point, and differentiate them from pleasure in the particular respect that we will see.

⁸⁶ ...or excellent object.

20)

Before this passage, we see Aristotle arguing that the connections between life, activity and pleasure entail that each kind of living being has its own kind of pleasure (NE1176a2-8). The point is now for him to answer the following question: why are the same things pleasurable to some human beings while in others they seem to be distressing? (NE 1176a10-12)

Broadie's comment here is important for it seems that there might be a problem for Aristotle. She holds:

“If there is no one kind of pleasure characteristic of human beings, we may have to question the link just forged between pleasure and activity, or else question Aristotle's fundamental doctrine that there is an activity distinctive of man (1097b24-1098a8).” (2002: 438)

Broadie implies that Aristotle seems to contradict himself. On the one hand, he says that there is a distinctive activity of man (NE 1097b24-1098a8); while at NE 1176a10-20 he suggests that there is not only one. I do not believe though that Aristotle contradicts himself. In fact, I think that there is one distinctive activity of man which is virtuous activity according to the rational principle as is noted by Aristotle in NE 1097b24-1098a8; and this activity is accompanied by the proper kind of pleasure.

Now, Aristotle tries to denote the different versions of activities and pleasures that exist which are either, (1) the negative variations of the distinctive one, such as for example, the pleasure the self-indulgent feels from her activity, or, (2) the positive, yet different, variations of the distinctive activity; namely, different versions of the virtuous activity according to the rational principle.

For one thing then, in NE1176a10-20 Aristotle talks about the pleasures that base

agents feel from various activities. Aristotle cannot deny the existence of these activities. However, he does not take the pleasure that derives from them to be characteristic of man; he just notes their existence, especially contra the actions of the truly good man. On the other hand, he argues that the pleasure that derives from virtuous activity is the truly characteristic of man. This is evident both in NE 1176a10-20 and in NE 1113a25-33⁸⁷. Namely, he suggests there:

“...the good man wishes for what is truly wished for, the bad man for anything as it may happen (just as in the case of our bodies, a man of sound constitution finds really healthy food best for his health, but some other diet may be healthy for one who is delicate; and so with things bitter and sweet, hot, heavy, etc.. For the good man judges everything correctly; what things truly are, that they seem to him to be, in every department for the noble and the pleasant have a special form corresponding to each of the faculties of our nature, and perhaps what chiefly distinguishes the good man is that he sees the truth in each kind, being himself as it were the standard and measure of the noble and pleasant.” (NE 1113a25-33)

The idea of the above passage is that merely the truly virtuous man is able to fathom what is truly noble and pleasant. Moreover, since the virtuous man is the agent who acts according to the characteristic human activity, the soul’s activity in accordance with the rational principle, it is the rational man’s pleasures that determine the pleasure of the distinctive human activity. But as we said in (2), the activity of the soul according to the rational principle is a description at the genus level of many types of activity. Accordingly, the pleasures completing them could be described generically or specifically. Generically, they are one kind of pleasure: the pleasure the good agent experiences in virtuous activity; specifically, these are different types of pleasure according to the different rational-soul-activity types.

In other words, if we want to know whether something is indeed pleasant and

⁸⁷See also NE 1152b24ff. In addition, see: Broadie & Rowe (2002: 72-3). This reference is specifically from Broadie’s philosophical introduction (2002: 9-81).

noble we have to use the virtuous man as a standard. The variations of rational-soul activities though should not lead us to conclude that there are more than one pleasures characteristic of man.

This was actually the last argument that we are going to use for our preparatory discussion before moving on to examine the connection among pleasure, virtuous activity, and character friendship. What we have seen so far though is the connection between the agent's own virtuous activity and the role of pleasure as a judgement of value for this activity. What we need now is the transition from the agent's own pleasurable experience of virtuous activity to that of another agent.

Namely, we need an argument that can show whether the virtuous agent can feel pleasure from another agent's virtuous activity, and if this particular pleasure can work as a sign of value in order to motivate her to seek to befriend the other or not. There is though a problem we first have to confront.

In particular, the problem lies in the connection of the perception of an activity and the pleasure that supervenes it. The problem applies of course both in the case where the agent observes her own action and that of someone else. The crux of the issue at hand is whether Aristotle is justified in saying that, as Heinaman puts it, "a perception of a virtuous action differs in species from a perception of a vicious action." (2011: 9)

If this is not true then the pleasure that supervenes these perceptions will not be different from the vicious ones. We will see that Heinaman meets this problem. When this problem is solved we will be able to apply our conclusions to the initial and central problem of this paper. Namely, why do we desire X and not Y to be our friend.

3.5. Perception and Pleasure: Heinaman's solution

As we have already seen, Aristotle argues that pleasure functions as a supervening end to activities. He also explains pleasure as what is it to enjoy perceiving or thinking (NE 1174b14–26, b33–1175a1). Pleasure and thought, however, are entities of the mind which are activated either by the perception or thought of an object. Pleasure though is a “derivative” (Heinaman, 2011: 8) entity that supervenes on either perception or thought. As Heinaman rightly adds though: “...book 10 (1175b32–3) also affirms that pleasure and the activity, on which it supervenes, though distinct, are so similar that it is debatable whether they are the same or different.” (2011: 8-9)

Thus, Heinaman argues, that whatever the identity of perception or thought⁸⁸ it should illuminate the nature of identity of pleasure (2011: 9). The main question that Heinaman tries to answer in his paper is the following: does Aristotle justify the fact that a perception of a virtuous action differs in species from the perception of a vicious one? In this chapter though, I will not offer the whole of Heinaman's long and complex argument. It suffices for the purposes of our endeavor to state the main problem that he detects and the solution he proposes. Let us see then Heinaman's argument.

As we have already seen in argument (c), activities different in species are completed by pleasures different in species (NE 1175a21–b24). In addition, Aristotle says that since the activities on which pleasures supervene differ in value then the corresponding pleasures will, in the same manner, differ in value as well (NE 1175b24–28; 1173b28–9). These arguments can be found in NE 10.5. In NE 10.4,

⁸⁸ I am not going to enter Heinaman's analysis of thought in connection to pleasure since it is of no relevance to the present paper.

however, we see Aristotle making things complicated towards a clear and straightforward interpretation. As Heinaman puts it:

"On the *Physics*' account of identity for change, appealed to in *NE* 10's discussion of pleasure (τὸ πόθεν ποιῆειδοποιόν, δι' ἀκριβείας μὲν οὖν περὶ κινήσεως ἐν ἄλλοις εἴρηται, 10.4.1174a21–b5), the species of an action such as walking is determined by its path and its value is irrelevant. *NE* 10.4 does refine the *Physics*' account by saying that, in the case of locomotion, the mode of locomotion (walking, leaping, flying) is relevant to determining the species of the change (1174a29–31; cf. *PA* 639a30–b3). But that qualification *presupposes* that actions such as walking and leaping are indeed changes to which the *Physics*' criterion of specific identity for κίνησις, thus qualified, applies. There is no question of the moral value of an action such as walking playing any role in determining the species of the action." (2011: 32)

So, Heinaman argues, that if we accept this position derived from the *Physics*-and as it appears in *NE* 10.4 itself-we may be led to dead end conclusions. The reason for this is that if we assume two agents, one virtuous and one vicious, walking from spot A to spot B during a battle, we cannot distinguish which one is, for instance, a courageous walk, and which is the cowardly one. This happens because according to the *Physics* justification in *NE* 10.4, the two walks are not different in species. (Heinaman, 2011: 32)

The point now is the following. The species of perception is determined by the species of its object. If that is true then the species of walking from A to B of a virtuous man will be the same as the one of the vicious agent. But this fact has a consequence on pleasure as well. In fact, since the species of pleasure depends on the species of the object perceived, then the virtuous pleasure that agent X feels from perceiving the walk from A to B will be the same with the vicious pleasure that agent Y feels from perceiving the same walk. Therefore, in contrast to *NE* 10.5, X's virtuous pleasure will be the same as Y's vicious pleasure (Heinaman, 2011: 33). Also, it does not matter whether the agent takes pleasure in her own or other peoples'

actions (NE 1170a29-30), as Heinaman (2011: 33) points out.

Now this would be the most undesirable outcome for our chapter. The reason is that if the agent cannot perceive the difference of the virtuous from the vicious action then her pleasure will be of indistinguishable nature as well. But if that is so then the agent could equally desire to befriend a virtuous and a vicious agent. Therefore, the problem that Heinaman detects in Aristotle demands an immediate solution. Otherwise the initial purposes of this chapter are nothing but groundless suppositions. Let us see then Heinaman's solution and how it circumvents the difficulties that arise for the core of our paper's hypothesis.

Heinaman argues that the doctrine of the mean can help us solve the problem at hand. Therefore he says:

"...apart from questions of voluntariness, the questions of how the action is done, whether the action is done with respect to the right objects or people, its purpose, and so forth will determine whether a change from x to y can be described as a courageous or cowardly action." (2011: 34)

And, he concludes:

"...when those factors are of one kind the change is a courageous action, and when they are of another kind the change is a cowardly action, an action specifically different from the courageous action. Hence, when the virtuous man observes the courageous action his perception and the supervening pleasure are different in species from the perception and the supervening pleasure of the cowardly man when he observes his own cowardly behavior." (2011: 34)

I think that Heinaman is in the correct path of solving the problem by using the doctrine of the mean. Even if Aristotle does not mention the prospect of understanding the contradiction between NE 10.4 and 10.5, Heinaman finds a good and truly Aristotelian way to approach a viable solution.

As we said before, however, this solution works not only for this occasion, but, also, for our problem; namely, why an agent desires X and not Y to be her friend. First of all, we have to remind ourselves that it does not matter whether the agent takes pleasure in her or other peoples' actions (NE 1170a29-30).

Now, the latter part of NE 1170a29-30, in combination with Heinaman's argument, must be applied to the solution of our problem. This means that when the virtuous agent observes someone performing an action then: (1) she will be able to perceive the species of it by using the principles⁸⁹ of the doctrine of the mean; namely the fact that it is a virtuous action (e.g. courageous), and, (2) she will have the proper supervening pleasure from this action. Therefore, the outcome is for this virtuous agent to be able to recognize and appreciate someone else's virtuous action and feel the appropriate pleasure from it. This fact then can lead the agent to desire to befriend agent X. The reason for this is that she is attracted by X's action in a way that her true virtue is emphasized above all. This means that virtue is what she values and appreciates most of all in X.

It seems then that we have answered the main question of the current chapter. Namely, the virtuous agent can perceive and thus appreciate and value virtue in others; this fact leads the agent to feel pleasure from their actions and thus desire to befriend them. But even though we answered our initial question there still remain some issues that have to be addressed.

These issues derive especially from Nehamas' (2010) anti-particularity accusation on Aristotle. In the next section we will see the nature of this claim. After that I will propose a defense of Aristotle by arguing that by reading Aristotle as a particularist,

⁸⁹ Namely, whether the action is done with respect to the right objects, people, purpose etc.

Nehamas' argument should be rejected.

3.6. Nehamas' Anti-Particularity Argument against Aristotle

In NE 1156b8-9, Aristotle argues that when we love our friends for themselves, we actually love them for their virtues. Nehamas (2010: 242) argues that this view of Aristotle is wrong, and he tries to reverse his point in order to turn it, as he says, “to the right direction”. Let us examine then Nehamas' views closely. He begins his argument by suggesting: “Aristotle believes that the virtues exist objectively and that recognizing them in another is the first step towards friendship: my desire to become your friend depends on and is directed to features that you already possess.” Nehamas (2010: 242)

Now, in order to deviate from Aristotle's objective view of the virtues, Nehamas argues that someone can love features in her friend that she takes to be virtues; and not only the canonical virtues that Aristotle gives weight to. In this manner, Nehamas tries to reverse Aristotle's position by suggesting that we are friends not because: “*I recognize virtues that you already have* but because my reasons for liking you are features of yours that *I take to be virtues*, whether or not they are such in the abstract” (2010: 243)

Therefore, Nehamas suggests that numerous features can provide the basis for friendship. Moreover, when he says that these virtues might not be virtues ‘in the abstract’; he means to say that:

“If I say that I like you for your generosity, I need not like every generous person I run into; and if I say that I like you for the intensity with which you pursue the issues that interest you, I may still actively dislike such intensity in someone else. What attracts me to you is, as we say, *your* generosity or your *particular* generosity or the way intensity manifests in you. It is for the same reason that what draws me to you may be just what someone else finds indifferent or even unattractive” (Nehamas, 2010: 243)

Nehamas' arguments seem, at first sight, interesting and intriguing. There are certain problems though that arise from his analysis that make his view of Aristotle not only unconvincing but, also, misleading. Let us move then to the next section where we going to defend Aristotle against Nehamas' position.

3.7. Defending Aristotle

The first and most important part of Nehamas' argument that is, I think, problematic and needs to be addressed is what he says about Aristotle's objective view of the virtues. (Nehamas, 2010: 242)

The main problem with Nehamas' argument is not that Aristotle does not believe that the virtues are objective. The issue is that, in Aristotle's ethics, the virtues are manifested differently in each agent. This is evident from Aristotle's doctrine of the mean, and especially the mean relative to us. The point is then that when I recognize virtues in someone (and I desire to befriend her), I do not just recognize and value these virtues in her in the abstract. Instead, I am attracted by this person's practice of the virtues as they manifest in her and through her actions.

Hence, I intend to propose a particularist interpretation of Aristotle based on a reading of the doctrine of the mean that will oppose Nehamas' view of the virtues and their recognition in others.

Let us first start then with particularism⁹⁰ and its meaning. Particularism is: "a meta-theoretical commitment to the possibility of explaining moral phenomena (including the rightness and wrongness of actions) without appealing to exceptionless moral principles." (Leibowitz, 2013)

⁹⁰Besides Leibowitz (2013), who defends a particularist interpretation of Aristotle's ethics, we can also find a first attempt to defend particularism in Aristotle in McDowell (1979). For a generalist interpretation of Aristotle's ethics see Irwin (2000).

In Aristotle's ethics, we can see that particularism⁹¹ is manifested mainly through the doctrine of the mean (NE 1106b21-2); and especially through what he calls the "mean relative to us". First of all, I have to note here that Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of mean: the mean with reference to the object and the mean relative to us (NE 1106a26). Now, Hursthouse⁹² delineates the distinction between these two forms of the mean in the following way. She says:

“The mean with reference to the object is the simplest form of meson or mesotes in mathematics, the arithmetical mean. It is what is (a) equidistant from each of two extremes, which is (b) one and (c) the same for all. "Mean relative to us" is the sort of thing that (a) neither goes to excess nor is deficient, and this is (b) not one thing, nor (c) is it the same for all.”(2006: 101-2)

However, Woods makes the distinction even more clear when he says that we have to look in the contrast between the a's above. He writes then:

“The contrast seems to be that between the midpoint (meson, 'mean') on some scale, which is a matter of calculation, and, the second mean, which involves an evaluative element, since it refers to what is intermediate between excess and defect, i.e what avoids too much and too little, and therefore cannot be determined without reference to human needs and purposes-hence the phrase 'relative to us.’” (1982: 111-112)

Thus it seems that the evaluative element is, according to Woods, what mainly distinguishes the two kinds of mean. And as Hursthouse (2006: 104) rightly adds, the 'relative to us' part of the second mean must be a quality that is kept for the experts who are able to hit upon it, and is therefore excluded from those who miss it. Hursthouse (2006: 104) continues by explaining that, first of all, good people, namely experts, aim at the mean 'relative to us', but 'amateurs', so to speak do not. Furthermore, Hursthouse says:

⁹¹For a particularist interpretation of the 'relative to us' argument and its connection to virtuous friendship see also Stern-Gillet (1995: 47).

⁹² Hursthouse (2006).

“In the context of ethics our end, just is the human good, the supreme good 'relative to us'; this involves excellent activity, acting and feeling well, and it is that assumed as an end, that determines which circumstances are relevant for the agent in a given situation”. (Hursthouse, 2006: 104)

Hursthouse's interpretation is, I think, suitable to follow concerning the correct understanding of the 'mean relative to us' concept; as it seems to be illuminating for our defense of Aristotle against Nehamas. In essence, what Hursthouse says is that when we are in the context of ethics the mean 'relative to us' implies the mean that is appropriate to the given circumstances; and this applies especially to moral situations. Even though, in practice, the relative to the circumstances expression can have a narrower reference (Hursthouse, 2006: 104).

As Brown (1997: 86) has rightly noted: "obviously whether your conduct counts as generous depends on how wealthy you are". So it seems that, as Hursthouse admits (2006: 105), the circumstances may be comprised of facts or information about the agent.

The bottom line of Hursthouse's argument then is that, when put in an ethical context, the 'mean relative to us' expression implies a different mean for agent X and a different one for agent Y. This happens, according to Hursthouse, if the difference between agents X and Y makes for unlike circumstances pertinent to the end of each of them acting or feeling well (2006: 105).

In a similar way to Hursthouse, Richard Kraut (2012) gives his view of how we should understand the doctrine of the mean. He argues that, even though all ethical virtues⁹³ are in a map where they are positioned between states of excess and

⁹³ McDowell (1997: 144) has made a similar point in his historic paper called "Virtue and Reason"; specifically, he says: "...virtue, in general, is an ability to recognize requirements

deficiency, the mean should be determined by the special circumstances and context of the agent (NE 1106a36-b7). So, Kraut contends, there is no universal rule or mechanical/automatic way of determining the intermediate in a particular situation; instead, “a full and detailed acquaintance with the circumstances” is required. (2012)

At this point though, I want to state my disagreement to Curzer (1996) and Urmson's (1973) argument concerning the correct understanding of the doctrine of the mean. Both of these scholars have defended a, 'qualitative' interpretation of the doctrine of the mean, as they call it. In brief, they suggest that our target is to act and feel on neither too many or too few occasions, about or toward neither too many or too few things, with respect to neither too many nor too few people, for neither too many nor too few reasons.

I don't think though that we should follow this argument. Their view seems to give a presupposed mentality to the agent towards what she should do in each situation. In fact, if we have such a fixed kind of mentality then there is strong probability that we might fail to hit the mean in many situations (i.e. In some circumstances, the excess might be the correct treatment of a given situation; such as that the agent has to act on many occasions or act for few reasons). In addition, this interpretation implies a principled⁹⁴ way of confronting ethical situations that undermines the adaptability of the practically wise man to new situations. In other words, the agent must hit the mean in order to perform the action correctly that is not based on some fixed pattern of judgment of how to do it; instead she adapts and judges each situation individually in order to accomplish her goal.

which situations impose on one's behavior."

⁹⁴ Even though Urmson did not intend his interpretation in this way but, in a way that follows Kraut (2012), it seems to me that the 'quantitative' interpretation is vulnerable to the counter argument I propose above.

It seems then that we must follow the particularist interpretation of the doctrine of the mean that is defended by the scholars that we previously saw. Now, when we connect this line of interpretation of the mean with Heinaman's argument about pleasure and perception we can have a more complete view of the answers that we need both, (1) to the initial question of the current chapter, namely: why do we desire X and not Y to be our friend?, and, (2) to Nehamas' anti- particularity argument against Aristotle.

Heinaman's solution to the problem of the connection of pleasure and perception is essential for the purposes of this chapter because without it we could not answer (1), even if we had a particularist interpretation of the doctrine of the mean. In other words, if it was not for Heinaman's answers we could have reached an impasse that would be almost inevitable to surpass.

In the case of (2) now, Heinaman's argument was a prerequisite in defending Aristotle. The only thing I did was to follow the correct, as I believe, interpretation of the doctrine of the mean in order to offer an alternative proposal on how to read Aristotle contra Nehamas' position.

The particularist interpretation of the doctrine of the mean though is just one part of my defense of Aristotle. Let me now offer the second one.

Specifically, another problem that Nehamas cannot eschew from his analysis is the following: why does the intensity of someone's generosity make her so desirable and special to me? What is the mechanism in Nehamas' agent mind that guides her in choosing someone with intensity f in generosity and not c to be her friend? Nehamas does not have an answer to that.

Perhaps he could have argued that the agent with intensity f in generosity gives

me more pleasure than the one with *c*. The reason for this could be that the way and intensity that she performs some generous act is in essence more virtuous than some other generous act I might observe. This argument could stand well in explaining why we desire *X* and not *Y* to be our friend. There are, however, certain drawbacks in this argument.

The first disadvantage has to do with what Nehamas had said before. Namely, we saw him suggesting there: “I recognize virtues that you already have but because my reasons for liking you are features of yours that I take to be virtues, whether or not they are such in the abstract” (2010: 243)

But then again this argument from Nehamas is just begging the question: how do I know whether someone else’s action is generous if I do not know what this virtue is all about? If I support my judgment on a subjective view of generosity then there are a lot of possibilities that I am wrong. This will lead us to the conclusion that the particular intensity of someone’s generous activity can equally be wrong. That is, if I do not know what is really like to be generous, this has serious ramifications on my choices of friends.

In essence, if I do not know what generosity is like then what I recognize in the other as generosity can be wrong. This means that if I desire someone to be my friend for being particularly generous I do not desire her for what she is; I desire her for what *I think* she is. Therefore, my desire for choosing her might be founded on a false presupposition of virtue.

The repercussions of this choice, however, can be really unpleasant for such a friendship. The point is that if a friendship is not based on true virtue but on a false conception of it, the outcome could be for this relationship to dissolve at some point.

Let me expand on this idea.

If I desire someone to be my friend for a particular manifestation of generosity this does not mean that she is generous per se. This fact might turn out to be true in future actions of my friend, where she might stop being generous with the intensity and particularity for which I chose her to be my friend in the first place. But what happens then? Wouldn't this be a reason for not liking and loving him for what he is anymore? Wouldn't this fact dissolve our friendship?

It seems then that Nehamas' view of desiring and loving our friends does not provide us with a mechanism that could lead to a permanent deep relationship. His criticism on Aristotle's view of choosing and loving our friends seems then rather unsuccessful and unfair. In other words, his counter-Aristotelian position does not seem to work.

If my argument is correct then Aristotle seems to provide a complete view of why we desire agent X and not Y to be our friend. As we saw previously in this chapter the virtuous agent is attracted and feels pleasure from the actions of another agent that do not *just* represent the objectivity of the virtues. This means that when I say that I desire you to be my friend because you are virtuous, I do not say so because I find you, for instance, *just* generous or *just* magnanimous. Instead, I desire you to be my friend because I find you *particularly* generous or *particularly* magnanimous.

This was justified by the particularist interpretation that I offered to the doctrine of the mean. In fact, the agent is attracted and feels pleasure from another agent's ability to adapt to various situations and react accordingly, or, put it differently, the agent is attracted by the other's manifestation of practical wisdom in various situations. This fact makes some agent X not just virtuous, but, particularly virtuous.

The sense of particularity that I have proposed then is different than the one of Nehamas. My particularity argument does not depend on random qualities that might exist in the other's behavior that I find attractive but someone else does not. Instead, my argument depicts an agent who is virtuous herself and can recognize virtue in others. What she recognizes though in the other's action is the particularity of her virtuous action that makes her special and attractive. This means that every time the agent uses her practical wisdom to confront a given situation she uses every means available in order to hit the mean.

The mechanism that Aristotle uses is completed by Heinaman's solution. The particularity of the other agent's action and her ability to perform it in the right place, the right time, in the right way, for the right reasons make her stand out to me among other people I may observe; and if I am truly virtuous, I will not suffer any cloudy perception; I can see and recognize someone like myself, namely virtuous. This helps me identify someone as truly virtuous; and this fact gives me a reason to desire her to be my friend.

I must also add here though that when the agent performs a good action she also uses her own skills and abilities; and this should be considered as a second level of particularity of the agent. Now these skills could involve: agility, swiftness, strength, martial arts etc. This means that the agent's particularity also rests on her using her own potential in order to maximize the efficiency of some action towards hitting the mean. These skills and abilities make her action also unique and special.

But these attributes of the agent should not be considered as random qualities that we are attracted from, because then we would be getting closer to Nehamas' approach. Instead, these qualities are admired by the agent in his friend as important

means that the practically wise man also uses to accomplish the virtuous action. We will see in chapter 6 that these skills and abilities can be imitated and interpreted by her friend when circumstances demand it.

3.8. Conclusion

To sum up this chapter, I particularly want to give credit to Nehamas for trying to answer the initial question of this chapter. I must admit that his answer may work in everyday situations where we want to give a common sense answer on why we desire agent X and not Y to be our friend. Nehamas' answer could, in particular, fit in Aristotle's category of pleasure friendships where some quality of yours attracts me and I desire you to be my friend. In pleasure friendships, however, true virtue (character) is not the quality that attracts me from the other's actions; perhaps, some subjective view of the virtues or some non-canonical virtues of yours is attractive to me. But in Aristotelian terms, these facts will not make our friendship virtuous. Moreover, the reasons I might provide for desiring you and not someone else to be my friend will never be clear since I do not recognize some permanent and highly distinguishable quality in you such as true virtue.

Aristotle's solution, however, has a serious drawback. The people I might be attracted to, namely the virtuous ones can only be a few among the thousands of people that may live in my community or city. This happens due to the rarity of this high level of character. Nehamas' solution, instead, can at least provide a partial answer for the reasons of the initial desire to befriend someone in cases of non moral excellence. Does this mean though that these people can at most be part of pleasure friendships where no true virtue is involved?

Perhaps Aristotle's theory of friendship involves this sad conclusion about

human relationships. I think though that if we look closer in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, and especially his theory of friendship, this is not true. Agents who are not morally excellent can form character friendships as well; even in a less⁹⁵ degree than the truly virtuous ones. And in fact, they can not only take part in virtuous friendships, but, they can significantly improve and develop their character through them. But we will look closer at this possibility in the next chapter.

⁹⁵ For more on this argument see my paper: Vakirtzis (2013).

Chapter 4

Extending the Scope of Character Friendship⁹⁶

4.1. Introduction

Several scholars⁹⁷ argue that Aristotle's character friendship occurs only between completely virtuous moral agents. Oppositely, others⁹⁸ seem to be more skeptical about such an interpretation. Especially John Cooper (1980) has given us an original and creative understanding of the matter at hand. Particularly, he argues that not only completely virtuous agents can engage in virtuous friendship; less morally developed agents can do so as well.

The key advantage of Cooper's account is that it allows agents of unequal moral development to take part in character friendship. That is, if an agent A has advanced high in the levels of moral excellence, this does not mean that he necessarily has to find someone with the same level of moral excellence to befriend⁹⁹. I will argue that this agent can also be friends with a less morally developed agent. I will call this relationship: character friendship between unequally developed moral agents.

In fact, I will not only follow Cooper's argument, but I will also try to extend it. Specifically, I will argue that the most significant upshot of his argument is that Aristotle has found a way for the less morally developed agents to improve in moral excellence, throughout the help of their friends of higher moral standing.

⁹⁶ I have already published this chapter with a different title and with slight changes in Vakirtzis (2013).

⁹⁷ See for example: Irwin (1988: 389-399); Irwin (2007: 215-226). Coking & Kennett (1998: 506); Jacquette (2001).

⁹⁸ Nehamas (2010); Cooper (1980: 301-340) [Also, reprinted in: Cooper (1999), Chapters 14, 15]; Kraut (2012).

⁹⁹ This would be preferable and ideal for Aristotle. Nonetheless, in Book VIII of the NE, he argues that friendships of the highest form are rare anyway; luck must be in the agent's side in order to find an equally developed moral agent to make friends with.

I will suggest then, that this interpretation of character friendship, can not only give an answer to scholars that support the *completely virtuous agent* presupposition; and especially those who reject character friendships between unequally developed agents (Cocking & Kennett, 1998). Cooper's interpretation can be the stepping stone in understanding character friendship as a mechanism in Aristotle's hands for his less morally developed agents to further advance in virtue. If we accept the *completely virtuous agent* argument about character friendship then the circumstance just mentioned is impossible.

In order for Cooper's argument to work, however, we have to give a solution to what I will call the Reciprocity Problem¹⁰⁰. Unfortunately, he does not discuss this matter. I will suggest though, that Aristotle covers this potential gap of Cooper's theory in his discussion based on superiority. In this manner we can have a less problematic version of the extended view of character friendship.

I will thus deploy this chapter in the subsequent order. I will first explore the 'completely virtuous agents' view of character friendship. I will argue there that despite the merits of such an interpretation, Aristotle seems to offer a more extended view of character friendship. My next task will be to demonstrate why Cooper's position covers this extended view. Before I move on, I will give a solution to the Reciprocity Problem. After that, I will try to show that Cooper's view can be extended, so as to explain the prospect of less morally developed agents to advance in the sphere of virtue, by participating in character friendship between unequally developed moral agents. Lastly, I will try to show how the extended view of

¹⁰⁰ The Reciprocity Problem is in essence the following: *in the case of a character friendship between unequally developed agents, the superior one in virtue provides more to the less developed one than the latter provides to the former.*

character friendship can also work as an anti-luck shield against the vulnerability of the human character.

4.2. Character Friendship between Completely Virtuous Moral Agents

As we previously saw, there are a considerable number of scholars who argue that character friendship is only possible between equally developed moral agents. Their suggestion is essentially grounded on Aristotle's arguments in NE 1156b7-8, 1156b17, and 1159a35. In these passages, Aristotle argues that people who are excellent in virtue should participate in character friendship.

Nonetheless, among the scholars who are in accord with the completely virtuous agent (CVA) view of character friendship, two¹⁰¹ of them openly disagree with a more *extended view of character friendship* (EVCF); the other (CVA) defenders¹⁰² are just ignoring the possibility of (EVCF). The reason I am saying this is that they do not even refer to the passages from the Nicomachean Ethics where Aristotle argues about the prospect of (EVCF). This fact alone makes, I think, their interpretation narrow.

On the other hand, Cocking & Kennett's (1998) interpretation takes under consideration the odds of (EVCF); eventually, however, they reject it. Therefore, my argument will be targeted against all four scholars who are in favor of only (CVA), but, especially, against Cocking & Kennett who intensely disagree against the possibility of (EVCF). Let us see then their view more closely.

Cocking & Kennett take Aristotle to argue that we are related to our friend as we are related to ourselves; namely, when we choose a friend, we choose another self.

¹⁰¹ Cocking & Kennett (1998)

¹⁰² Irwin (1988, 2007); Jacqueline (2001)

As they put it: “Friendship is based on self-love; as such our choice of the friend is based on an appreciation of the similarity of the other to oneself” (Cocking & Kennett, 1998: 506).

In fact, they have based their previous argument on the following passage from the Nicomachean Ethics: “Now equality and likeness are friendship and especially the likeness of those who are like in virtue” (NE 1159a35). They also try though to strengthen their position by taking Aristotle to reject the possibility of (EVCF). They try to bring about their task by discarding character friendships between unequals in virtue.

In order to accomplish their endeavor they allude to the following passage:

“How could they (*unequals*) be friends when they neither approved of the same things nor delighted in and were pained by the same things. For not even with regard to each other will their tastes agree, and without this (as we saw) they cannot be friends” (1165b27-30, my italics; see also: NE1165b14-35).

Now, concerning the passage in NE 1159a35, I do not disagree with Cocking and Kennett’s argument; and not with Irwin or Jacquette’s one for that matter. Aristotle seems to be fairly clear here. This does not mean, however, that we have to reject-or even ignore-the possibility of (EVCF). The two scholars seem to do so by providing evidence from NE 1165b14-35. In the next sections, therefore, I will provide counterarguments to their view, and suggest that the (EVCF)-thus character friendship between unequals in virtue-is possible.

4.3. Arguing against Cocking and Kennett

Our most important task in this section is to put forward a different understanding of the passage in NE1165b27-30, than the anti-(EVCF) one that Cocking and Kennett propose. Regarding this passage, let us first look at Brewer (2005) who

gives an alternative explanatory line that is illuminating. Specifically, he argues that what Aristotle means here is that we should not create or withstand friendships with agents that have become “incurably vicious”¹⁰³. I think that Brewer’s reading of the passage portrays Aristotle’s thought very accurately.

Namely, what Cocking and Kennett miss from their argument is the point not of NE 1165b27-30, but the one of 1165b14-35 overall. That is, if we detach the former passage from the whole argument (NE 1165b14-35) then their thesis can be decently supported. Nonetheless, Aristotle’s idea here is different. If we go a few lines back we can see why this is so.

We can see Aristotle asking the following question: “Then should the friendship be dissolved at once as soon as the friend becomes bad?” (NE 1165b17-18) Aristotle’s answer to this question shows his true intentions for this argument. He says: “Surely not with every sort of person, but *only* with an incurably vicious person.” (NE 1165b18-9, my italics)

Now, it seems that what Aristotle is trying to say here is rather different than what Cocking and Kennett set forth. What he strongly denies, is the fact that unequals cannot be friends in the case where one of the agents becomes incurably vicious; or put it differently, if two friends are unequally developed moral agents and one is incurably vicious, then they cannot be friends.

There is though a passage from the argument at NE 1165b14-35 that could give some credit to the two scholars’ thesis. Aristotle says there: “But if one stayed the same and the other became decent and far excelled his friend in virtue, should the better person still treat the other as a friend? Surely he cannot.” (NE 1165b23-25)

¹⁰³ Brewer (2005: 725), footnote 13.

In this argument, Aristotle describes an extreme case of unequal friends, as he previously did in the case where one of them is incurably vicious. In this occasion though, one of the two agents is not incurably vicious; but he does not seem to be really virtuous either. A question arises though naturally. In particular, if the non-developed agent were really virtuous, wouldn't then his superior in virtue friend still appreciate and value his character? Irwin's (1999: 290) answer to this question is helpful. He argues that we should suppose here two developing characters (NE 1157a10; 1162a9-15), where one of the two develops into a virtuous character whereas the other one does not¹⁰⁴.

The idea then of NE 116523-25 is that when the difference in virtue between two agents becomes very large then the outcome is the dissolution of their friendship; albeit one of the two agents is not "incurably vicious" as in NE 1165b27-30. If we accept Irwin's argument we can understand that there has to be a huge chasm between the moral levels of two agents in order for an unequal friendship to fail. This fact becomes evident from the Greek text where Aristotle says that while one of the two agents remains the same, the other one *πολὸν διαλλάττοι τῆ ἀρετῆ* (NE 1165b23), which implies a huge difference between agents regarding their level of virtue. The emphatic *πολὸν* clearly shows Aristotle's purposes for this argument.

The moral then of NE 1165b23-25, and 1165b17-19, is that Aristotle does not accept unequal friendships and especially those based on virtue in two cases: 1) the difference in moral growth between the agents is huge, and, 2) when one of the two

¹⁰⁴ We must note here that Aristotle is not be talking about someone who is just a little bad, but, about someone whose difference with the virtuous agent is so huge that this makes the success of their friendship impossible.

agents is “incurably vicious”. What happens though when the difference in virtue between two agents is not so large?

Cocking and Kennett do not have an answer to this question. We will see in the subsequent section that there is considerable textual evidence that supports the (EVCF) argument, and thus answers the previous question. John Cooper’s (1980) argument will be our guide throughout our endeavor. His thought on the issue at hand portrays Aristotle’s issue in the best way. I will argue though that despite the merits of Cooper’s argument, he does not confront the Reciprocity Problem that arises between two unequally developed moral agents. In addition, I will briefly refer to the possibility of the (EVCF) of functioning as a tool of moral development. I will expand on these two ideas after the following section.

4.4. Cooper’s Argument and the Possibility of (EVCF)

For Aristotle, the most significant form of friendship is the one that is based on the shared recognition of character between the agents. When he refers to this kind of friendship he uses expressions such as: “the friendship between good people, those resembling each other in excellence” (*ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλία καὶ κατ’ ἀρετὴν ὁμοίων*, NE 1156b7-8) or “the friendship of the good” (*ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλία*, NE 1157a20, b25). What is more, he calls this friendship “perfect” (*τελεία*, NE1156b7-34); the reason for this is that it ideally displays all those features that one expects a friendship to have, as Cooper (1980: 304) rightly remarks.

On the other hand, there are two inferior kinds of friendship based on utility and pleasure. The following question that Cooper asks reveals though an interpretive problem for Aristotle’s argument. Cooper asks then: “Does Aristotle mean to imply that one who is not completely virtuous can only be befriended for the sake of some

pleasure or advantage he brings, that no one can associate with him for the sake of his good qualities of character?" (Cooper, 1980: 304)

Cooper's answer to the question above is "no". Specifically, he argues that, despite first appearances, Aristotle's argument is somewhat different. Cooper suggests that we should not read him as preserving character friendship merely for "moral heroes" (1980: 304-5). In other words, not only completely virtuous agents can engage in the highest form of friendship; people with a normal mix of good and bad qualities can be part of virtuous friendships as well. In what follows we will see that Cooper's argument is supported from textual evidence in Aristotle's corpus.

The *first* and most significant evidence which shows that Aristotle accepts the (EVCF) can be found in his discussion concerning friendships between unequals. Before entering though in the details of this theory, he gives us the general idea behind his view. We have to remind ourselves that at the beginning of his discussion on friendship, Aristotle emphasizes the fact that equality is necessary between friends of utility, pleasure, or virtue (NE 1158a30-3). He extends this argument, however, in the following passage:

"There are then, as we said at the outset, three kinds of friendship, and in each kind there are both friends who are on an equal footing and friends on a footing of disparity; for two equally good men may be friends, or one better man and one worse; and similarly with pleasant friends and with those who are friends for the sake of utility, who may be equal or may differ in the amount of the benefits which they confer. Those who are equals must make matters equal by loving each other, etc., equally; those who are unequal by making a return proportionate to the superiority of whatever kind on the one side." (NE 1162a34-b4)

This passage depicts direct textual evidence from the Nicomachean Ethics about Aristotle's approval of (EVCF). What he clearly says here is that, not only equals, but, unequals can take part in character friendship as well. His idea about equals and

unequals seems also to have application in the other two forms of friendship. This interesting fact though is not pertinent for the purposes of this chapter. What we should keep from this passage is the answer that is given to Cocking and Kennett. Namely, the fact that unequals can be friends based on character, shows that less morally developed agents can do so in general.

The *second*¹⁰⁵ illustration of character friendship between unequals is the one between husband and wife¹⁰⁶ (NE 1158b13-19). In this case, Aristotle is faithful in his view of women as delineated in his *Politics*; he says there that they have the deliberative element, but it lacks authority (*Pol.*1260a11). Furthermore, he follows his view about the superiority of men over women where their relation is by nature one of superior to inferior, and of ruler to ruled (*Pol.*1254b13-14).

When we take this fact under consideration, we may agree with Cooper when he says: "...a friendship between the absolutely good man and the absolutely good woman, each recognized as such, would be an unequal friendship." (Cooper, 1980: 307)

And as Cooper goes on to clarify: "in such a friendship the disparity in goodness does not imply any deficiency on the side of the lesser person with respect to her own appropriate excellences; she will be perfect of her kind, but the kind in question is inherently lower". (1980: 307) This shows that even though the woman is deficient in virtue compared to the man, they can still create a character friendship which is essentially based on virtue.

¹⁰⁵For the example of unequal friendship between husband and wife see also: Cooper, 1980: 307-308

¹⁰⁶ In NE Book VIII, ch.7, Aristotle expands the spectrum of character friendships between unequals. Namely, he argues that, apart from husband and wife, also: parents and children, older men and a younger, rulers and ruled, can also engage in character friendships between unequals.

The *third* piece of evidence concerning the possibility of (EVCF) can be found at NE 1165b23 ff., where, as we previously argued: a virtue friendship might start out as equal, but it can be led to dissolution if one of the two friends advances a lot in moral excellence while the other remains the same. We saw there, and followed Irwin in his argument, that Aristotle does not accept a character friendship between unequals in the case where their difference in virtue becomes huge.

Cooper (1980: 307-8), however, helps us see this passage from a different angle. He argues that in this context, Aristotle wants to approve a virtue-friendship where both agents are rather deficient as regards their proper excellences. This intuition on behalf of Cooper is essential for the purpose of this chapter. Namely, we can now understand that for Aristotle, it suffices for someone to have even a rather deficient level of moral development in order to be able to recognize and value virtue in her friend. In other words, this means that the (CVA) argument gives us only a partial picture of Aristotle's thought. The bottom line is then that even less morally developed agents can take part in a friendship based on character, even if this character is incomplete.

Cooper concludes then his argument by suggesting that the friendship between perfect virtuous agents is only a special case of character friendship. The possibility of agents with partial or even incomplete excellence of character to participate in virtuous friendships is reasonable for Aristotle as well. This fact is supported by textual evidence¹⁰⁷ from the NE as we have seen so far.

¹⁰⁷ We could also add here another piece of evidence for Aristotle's acceptance of the E.V.C.F. In NE 1155a13 Aristotle argues that young people need friends in order to avoid error. Now, in this passage when Aristotle says "error", he means mainly a moral one. Therefore some sort of guidance by a morally advanced agent is implied. So this passage must also lead us to follow the E.V.C.F.

This view, however, has certain positive consequences in the field of moral development of the agent. That is, as I will try to show in following sections, character friendship between unequals can be an essential tool in Aristotle's hands for his agents to morally develop through the help of each other.

But before we do this, we have to deal with a problem that arises from Cooper's argument; namely, I will call this the *Reciprocity Problem* (RP). Unfortunately, he does not discuss this matter. I will suggest though, in what follows, that Aristotle covers this gap in Cooper's theory in his discussion based on superiority. In this manner we can have a more complete and unproblematic view of Aristotle's position on the (EVCF).

4.5. The Reciprocity Problem and Aristotle's Solution

In the previous sections I tried to offer textual evidence that Aristotle accepts the (EVCF), and therefore defend Cooper's argument. There is yet a problem that we have to deal with if we do not want the (CVA) defender to provide counterarguments to our position; this issue, as I mentioned before is the: Reciprocity Problem.

The (RP) could be expressed in the following way: *in the case of a character friendship between unequally developed agents, the superior one in virtue provides more to the less developed one than the latter provides to the former.* A question then arises naturally: is this fair to the agent who is superior in virtue? If Aristotle cannot answer to this question then Cooper's argument is not sufficiently substantiated. Aristotle though has an intriguing response which can be found in his discussion regarding friendships based on superiority (NE VIII.7-8).

In NE VIII.7, Aristotle provides the following argument through which he tries to give a first approach to RP. Namely, he suggests:

“And in every friendship based on superiority the friendly affection too must become proportionate; for example, the better should be loved more than he loves; and the more beneficial; and each of the others similarly. For when the friendly affection corresponds to worth, then equality is achieved in some way, as seems indeed to be characteristic of friendship” (NE 1158b24-28)

In this passage we see Aristotle treating friendly affection¹⁰⁸ (*φίλησις*) as playing a momentous role in the reciprocity between unequal friends. In fact, he argues here that the superior friend should be loved more than he loves. The reason for this is that the superior friend provides more goods to the inferior than vice versa. When the inferior loves the superior more, then some sort of equality is achieved which is rather crucial for friendship. This kind of equality is achieved, according to Aristotle, when friendly affection corresponds to worth. What we should point out here is the fact that friendships between unequals resemble greatly with just distributions based on merit (*ἀξία*)¹⁰⁹. Pakaluk's analysis is illuminating on this point.

Pakaluk (1998: 94) argues that people who are involved in such a distribution attain something of merit and worthy of, i.e. honor; then, honor is allotted to them, in analogous amounts, equivalent to the different degrees of merit each one achieved¹¹⁰. A corresponding analogy takes place in the friendship between unequals. Namely, in this case, the superior provides more goods to the inferior than he gets back. By doing this, the superior is more “meritorious” in this achievement;

¹⁰⁸ In fact, Aristotle suggests that friendly affection is one of the “the good things of friendship” (cf. NE VIII.14, 1163a30)

¹⁰⁹ I follow Pakaluk (1998: 94) on this point.

¹¹⁰ For more on this argument, see NE V.3.

and he is “rewarded” then and “honored” by receiving the greater love of the inferior as Pakaluk (1998: 94) notes.

What we have seen then in the previous arguments is that Aristotle provides an answer to (RP). The reason for this is that the inferior’s friendly affection can equalize the fact that the superior provides him more goods than he does. There are, however, two further questions that someone could ask, concerning friendships between unequals: (1) is virtue recognized and appreciated in friendships between unequals by both sides? (2) Can a friendship between unequals be a lasting one, as the equal one based on virtue is? Now, if we want to consider friendships between unequals as character friendships, we have to give answers to the previous questions. In order to do this we are going to move to the next section where we are going to examine some significant passages from NE VIII.8.

4.6. Virtue in Friendships between Unequals

Both of the preceding questions [(1), (2)] must be answered so as to demonstrate that virtue is an important part of unequal friendships. Concerning the first question we have to look at two important passages from NE VIII.8. In the first passage Aristotle argues that friendship consists more in loving than in being loved (NE 1159a27). In the second one he highlights the fact that loving is like a virtue of friends (NE 1159a35).

Now, Pakaluk finds a stimulating and imaginative way to link these two passages. He argues that Aristotle’s reason for maintaining the argument in 1159a27 seems to be indicated by the one in 1159a35. In particular, Pakaluk claims: “...he (*Aristotle*) wants to emphasize that what the superior takes to reciprocate for the greater goods he provides is not something that *happens* or *accrues* to him, but

rather is something *in the inferior*, which he regards as itself good and lovable.”
(Pakaluk, 1998: 104)

Pakaluk (1998: 104-5) tries to give an example in order to further substantiate his argument. He suggests that what Aristotle has in mind, could be a case where a father is pleased by the appreciation that his son shows to him. This happens though, as Pakaluk suggests, more because the father considers that a proper demonstration of appreciation is a good and noble thing in his son, than because he looks upon his son’s appreciation and thankfulness as something that he deserves and thus gets.

Pakaluk’s argument provides good evidence in order to show how virtue is involved and appreciated by both agents in unequal friendships. To be more specific, in the previous example, we saw that the father recognizes something good and noble in his son’s attitude which is good in his character; and good for the development of his character¹¹¹. In other words, what we should keep from his argument is the fact that unequal friendships should belong in the class of character ones. This is so because recognition of virtue derives from both sides; namely, both from the father and the son¹¹². There is though a point I have to make concerning

¹¹¹ It could be argued here that, if this is true, then what Aristotle meant was not that more love will equalize superiority but that moral inferiority between friends will give rise to the expression of virtuous activity on the part of the inferior; and this seems different from the “loving more” argument. In what follows though we will see that Aristotle seems to say both, loving more, and thereby equalizing. In which case, I must admit, it is not clear whether the equalizing is by more love or by becoming better due to loving the good more. I take it though that loving more is the basic reason of equalization between the agents. The second part of the disjunction is a deeper explanation of the first since the agent becomes better by loving the good more. This means that when I love the agent more I equalize his benefaction towards me. Now, the fact that I become better because I love more is an extra advantage in this kind of friendship.

¹¹² Someone could counterargue that there cannot be a friendship of character between father and son since the difference between them is huge. The answer to such an argument is that in the case of father and son there is a biological connection which implies a deep affection and bond between them, where various virtues such as gratitude on behalf of the son can be developed. In the case where the discrepancy of virtue between agents with no

the answer to the first question. This point has to do with the resemblance of Pakaluk's example with the one about husband and wife (NE 1158b13-19) that we provided previously in this chapter. Namely, I argued there that their relationship can be characterized as a character one despite their difference in virtue. But is it really a virtuous one?

I am asking this question because without Pakaluk's argument the husband-wife relationship could have easily been characterized as one of advantage on behalf of the wife, and of pleasure on behalf of the husband. This means that the wife wants to take advantage of her husband's superior virtue, and the husband is looking for the pleasure he will get from his wife's appreciation and thankfulness. But as Pakaluk shows in his example concerning the relationship between father and son, this is not how we should understand friendships between unequals where virtue is involved. Now if we can connect Pakaluk's argument with the husband-wife analogy then we can solve the problem of mutual recognition of virtue in character friendships between unequals.

Let us then continue with the answer of question (2), that will provide more evidence in defense of the virtuous nature of unequal friendships. In order to answer question (2) we have to examine one of the most significant passages in NE VIII, chapters 7 and 8. This passage is in NE 1159a34-b3. Let us see this passage in full:

“As then friendship consists more especially in bestowing affection, and as we praise men for loving their friends, affection seems to be the mark of a good friend. Hence it is friends that love each other as each deserve who continue to be friends and whose friendship is lasting. Also it is by rendering affection in proportion to worth that friends who are not equals may approach most nearly to true friendship, since this will make them equal.” (NE 1159a34-b3)

biological connection is huge, then character friendship is still not possible as I have already argued.

Aristotle highlights here the greater prominence of loving than being loved in friendships. When each agent loves the other as she deserves then their friendship will be lasting. In this case, Aristotle is talking about virtuous friendships as he later clarifies (NE 1159b3-7). The fact that this kind of friendship is lasting is one of its most essential characteristics (NE 1156b12-13). His main point though is that friendships between unequals can have the “lasting quality” as well. This is achieved when each agent loves the other for her worth; thus, their relationship is brought into an equal status. We have already seen that Aristotle solves the RP in this way.

What Aristotle had not specified there, however, was whether a relationship between unequals can be a lasting one. This happens because, as in the friendships between equals in virtue, each agent loves the other for what he is; namely, for the fact that he is virtuous. The difference in virtue in friendships between unequals is reduced, on the other hand, through the solution of the RP (NE 1159a34-b3). What we should keep in mind though is the fact that, initially, what triggered such a friendship to start in the first place was the recognition of virtue. This fact and the solution of RP make then friendships between unequals, virtuous in character. The ‘lasting quality’, in other words, is a significant element of the unequal friendships as well.

As I hope to have shown then, friendships between unequals *can* be virtuous ones. In addition, by solving the RP, and by answering question (1) and (2), I have also tried to defend Cooper’s argument against any counterarguments that could jeopardize its philosophical integrity. What remains now is what I promised at the opening of this chapter. I suggested there that if we accept Cooper’s argument we can understand how the (EVCF) can be a tool in Aristotle’s hands for the moral

development of his agents. I will keep my promise by defending this idea in the next section.

4.7. Moral Development and the (EVCF)

In the preceding sections of this chapter, I endeavored to demonstrate that unequal friendships should not be rejected, but, on the contrary, they should be considered as a part of character friendships. The only serious encumbrance to the acceptance of this assertion was the (RP). Nonetheless, I offered a solution to this problem that I hope does not leave space to the (CVA) defender for opposing argumentative maneuvers. What is left now, for the present chapter, is to extend the comprehension of the (EVCF) by arguing that, in essence, it is a tool in Aristotle's hands for the moral development¹¹³ of his agents.

First of all, we have to remind ourselves that the (EVCF) covers not only cases between (b) friends who are unequal in virtue, but, also, (a) friends who are equal in virtue; yet, not completely virtuous (i.e. practically wise). I will then try to analyze cases (a) and (b) through a corresponding example in order to make Aristotle's views more vivid. After this, I will try to show how the (EVCF) can also work as an anti-luck weapon against moral decline. Let me start then with case (a).

4.8. Case (a)

In case (a), I will follow Cooper on how to understand two agents who are virtuous but not "moral heroes." We previously saw him arguing that people with some good and some bad qualities can take part in a character friendship. Let us

¹¹³ I have to note here that concerning the prospect of various virtues to develop in the agents during friendships and through them, Pakaluk (82) argues: "Since many friendships develop as the persons involved are developing their character (NE 1162a9-12) and presumably many virtues (magnificence, NE IV.2) are not acquired any earlier than many friendships". Unfortunately, Pakaluk does not expand on this view. I have tried though to give a more complete picture of such a possibility in the present chapter.

assume then that we have two of those agents with this mixture of character traits. Let us call the first agent Paul and the second one John. Now let us also suppose that Paul is characterized by the virtue of courage, while John, is characterized by the virtue of magnanimity. In addition, Paul has not advanced much in the virtue of magnanimity, and John has not done so in the virtue of courage. We will take this fact as the bad¹¹⁴ side of their mixture of character. We can fathom now this part of their character as one which is undeveloped. But can Paul's friendship with John help him improve this underdeveloped part of his character? My answer is that it can. Let me explain how it works.

When John performs a magnanimous action he works as a model for this virtue to his friend. Paul has a good example to learn from. Now when the time comes for him to perform a magnanimous action then he has, not only a good pattern of magnanimous action in his mind that will guide him in performing the action correctly, but also, his friend can further criticize his action and help him improve even more. The same process can function of course vice versa where John can learn from Paul's courageous actions.

The whole point of this process is that that even though both agents are deficient in a particular virtue, they can improve through the help and guidance from each other; and thus advance in other fields of moral excellence. Let us examine now case (b); namely, the situation of unequally developed moral agents.

4.9. Case (b)

¹¹⁴ When I say "bad" here I do not mean vicious. I mean, for instance, that in a case where Paul would have to show magnanimity, he actually did not do so as the circumstance demanded.

Concerning case (b) we are going to examine the case of a character friendship where the difference between the agents is not significant enough so that it is objectionable by Aristotle. Let us assume then that we have James, on the one hand, who is practically wise¹¹⁵. On the other hand, we have Michael, who has the mixture of good and “bad” qualities that we have talked about previously. Now their difference is not that huge¹¹⁶ that would prevent them from being character friends. But what would be the outcome of such a friendship especially for Michael who is less morally developed? Could he become *practically wise* at some point?

I think we should take this possibility under serious consideration. The reason for this is that as he watches James performing virtuous actions he can fill in the gaps he has in his character. Namely, he can learn from his excellence in deliberation, decision making, and practicing of the virtues. He can adopt then these excellences of his friend’s character and apply them when it comes for him to choose the right course of action. In addition, James is going to be there for him when he reaches possible moral dilemmas, to help him and guide him throughout his deliberative process. Then the upshot of a long lasting friendship like that between them could be for Michael to become at some point *phronimos* himself after all this learning experience with his friend. Before we move on though we must answer the following question: in case (b) what’s in for James in such a friendship? Why would

¹¹⁵Someone could ask here though: does at least one of the two character-friends need to be a perfectly developed moral agent for that type of friendship to be possible in the first place? Now, Aristotle does not say something like this explicitly, but, if we accept Cooper’s argument we should not suppose that necessarily one of the two agents must be practically wise. I argue about this possibility in case (a) above. The point is that if Aristotle allows one of the two agents who engage in character friendships to have a mixture of good and bad qualities-as Cooper reads Aristotle-then the other agent can have such a mixture as well and not be a “moral hero” of practical reason.

¹¹⁶ For instance, we cannot think of a practically wise man to be friends based on character with a child or someone who has emotionally remained a child (NE 1165b23-29).

he want it? In order to answer this question we must turn our attention to a passage from NE I.8. In particular, Aristotle writes:

“Nonetheless, happiness evidently also needs external goods to be added, as we said, since we cannot, or cannot easily, do fine¹¹⁷ actions if we lack the resources. For first of all, in many actions we use friends, wealth, and political power just as we use instruments.” (NE 1099a30-b1)

In this passage Aristotle stresses the importance of external resources¹¹⁸ for the virtuous agent's happiness. In fact, external resources are crucial for the performance of noble actions. Now, this passage gives the answer to the previous question. That is, the morally advanced agent will use his friend as an “instrument” to act virtuously such as, for instance, to help and guide her in the performance of virtuous actions, and thus help her improve morally. We have to say though that the morally advanced agent will not use the inferior agent just to gain a eudaimonic state.

The advanced agent loves the inferior one as the benefactor loves his product. Aristotle explains this fact in the following way: “Now the product is, in a way, the producer in his actualization; hence the producer is fond of the product, because he loves his own being. This is natural, since what he is potentially is what the product indicates in actualization” (NE 1168a7-9). So even though it seems that the superior agent uses the inferior one to gain some advantage, namely to achieve a eudaimonic state, she actually loves the agent for her virtue. We can see this when we apply the benefactor-beneficiary schema in the superior-inferior friendship in case (b).

¹¹⁷ See also NE1155a15 where Aristotle also stresses the fact that men in their prime need friends for noble actions.

¹¹⁸ Concerning the need of external resources for the virtuous to act, see also: NE 1122b27; 1178b1-3 1101a14-16; Politics 1329a1-2. I have already stressed the need of external resources for virtuous activity in chapter 1.

Let us move then to a final and very significant consequence of the acceptance of (EVCF); I will call this: the “anti-luck shield of moral development” argument.

4.10. The Anti-Luck Shield of Moral Development Argument

In order to further understand the value of the (EVCF) we are going to examine here how it can function as an anti-luck (AL) shield of moral development. In order though for AL to work we must reject the (CVA) view. The reason for this is that Aristotle insists that perfect friendships are rare because agents with such a level of moral excellence are few (NE 1156b25). In other words, there is strong probability that the completely virtuous agent will not find a morally equal one to befriend throughout the span of his life; and this could even have serious effects even for his eudaimonia (NE 1097b11). Luck should be on his side in order for him to take part in character friendship. The (EVCF) argument can give the agent a lot more probabilities for him to create character friendships even with less morally developed agents; and since we have dealt with the RP then such friendships are not problematic. But this is just one way to see the application of (EVCF) as an (AL). That is, we should also consider the case of someone with a mixture of good and bad qualities.

In fact let us presume that we have a developing character and not a complete one as we previously saw. What would happen then if this agent could not take part in character friendships at all throughout her life? I think that this agent would be vulnerable in the sense of befriending people that could lead her already developed character to deteriorate. But how can we lower the odds of something like that happening?

From what I have already argued in this chapter, even a less morally developed agent can recognize virtue in others. This means that throughout the span of her life, while her character is developing, she will be able to recognize and admire other virtuous agents who are better than her. This fact shields her against people who could hold her back in developing her character. Of course, I have to say here that such an agent cannot be *fully* protected against the probability of engaging into friendships that could deteriorate his character. The reason for this is that since she has not developed the appropriate intellectual virtues adequately then he cannot recognize the good in others so clearly. The fact though that she can still recognize virtue, even in a lower degree does not leave her moral development in the hands of luck alone. In other words, the ultimate moral condition of a person does not depend on luck only, because she can improve her situation by forming character-friendships even if she is not a perfect moral agent, and via these friendships she can improve morally.

As a last comment, I have to note here that my argument follows Martha Nussbaum's¹¹⁹ thesis in her excellent analysis on the vulnerability of character and the importance of support from without (e.g. politics, friendship). She argues:

“First of all, moral growth does not come to an abrupt stop when a young person reaches a certain chronological age, or even a certain high developmental stage. In his discussions both of politics and of *philia*, Aristotle depicts growth as an ongoing process that requires continued support from without.” (Nussbaum, 1986: 347)

In this argument, Nussbaum highlights the importance¹²⁰ of friendship (and politics) in keeping the agent in a constant developing process in the sphere of value.

¹¹⁹ Nussbaum (1986), Chapter 12.

¹²⁰ Especially for character friendship, Aristotle argues that it keeps participants from error and deepens their attachment to the good (NE 1155a12-16; 1170a11-12; 1172a10-14).

This claim of Nussbaum serves the purposes¹²¹ of a significant part of her argument in chapter 12 of her book, where she defends the importance of friendship not only for keeping the agent in the road of virtue and value, but, also, for her developing her character through it (Nussbaum, 1986: 343-372).

Generally, I do not disagree with Nussbaum's approach. What I think I have provided though with my analysis is the value of unequal friendships for the development of the agent's character and its function as an anti-luck shield of moral development. In other words, I agree with Nussbaum that moral character is something fragile and vulnerable and it depends on how lucky someone is in order to create friendships that will keep her away from making mistakes and from her character to worsen. I think though that through the analysis that I have offered regarding (EVCF) I have enhanced her view and have given it a new and important dimension. Namely, unequal friendships can protect the vulnerability of a developing character apart from the already developed one that Nussbaum argues about.

4.11. Conclusion

The main strategic goal of the present chapter was to argue against the (CVA) defenders. Thus, I presented the (EVCF) thesis-based on John Cooper's argument-in order to offer an alternative and more extended view of character friendship. The whole idea behind the (EVCF) was to show that even less morally developed agents can take part in character friendships apart from the completely developed ones. However, despite the fact that there is textual evidence in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

¹²¹ Nussbaum stretches not only the vulnerability of human character without friendship. She also argues about the role of luck and vulnerability involved when someone takes part character friendships. This part of her intriguing argument does not concern us though for the purposes of this paper.

that support the (EVCF) argument, it is not without problems. The most significant problem that we had to face was the (RP). I tried to show though that Aristotle has good answers against this problem that can safeguard the validity of (EVCF). Our last sections were devoted in the utilization of the (EVCF) as an implement in Aristotle's hands for his less morally developed agents to advance in the sphere of virtue by taking part in character friendships. In order to make my position more vibrant, I tried to present two cases where, in the first one, both agents have the same moral level but they are not completely virtuous, and in the second one, one of the two agents has a more developed character than the other (unequal friendships). Finally, I argued that that the (EVCF) has an extra advantage which should not be unheeded. In fact, the (EVCF) can work as a shield against the jeopardizing effects that a bad company could have on the agent's character.

If my argument in this chapter is then correct it can give Aristotle's position a more pluralistic view concerning the level of moral excellence that someone must have in order to take part in character friendship. This view gives character friendship a unique value among the tools (i.e. the laws¹²²) for the agent's moral development. It seems then that for Aristotle, learning and developing your character is also a matter of a relationship that not only deepens the value we give to others, but also, improves our moral character. This relationship is friendship based on virtue which can start and develop earlier than the state where people become "moral heroes"; or, put it differently, masters of practical wisdom.

In chapter 5 I will further examine the process of moral development in EVCF. I will describe specifically how the agent acquires a form from her friend's action that

¹²² NE 1180 a1-4

has to do with some virtue which is underdeveloped in her character. This process helps develop her understanding of some particular virtue in a deeper level and gives her new patterns available for application in future situations. I will also argue through the “balance argument” that the agent always needs others for her moral development and especially her character friends.

Chapter 5

The Metaphysical and Psychological Foundations of Moral Development in Character Friendship

5.1. Introduction

In the current chapter I will try to show that the moral development in EVCF can be further substantiated and explained by certain Aristotelian theories of psychological and metaphysical background. First I will suggest that through his theories of agency and change, Aristotle wants a passive power to depend on an active one for its alteration from a privative to a positive state. Next, I will apply Aristotle's metaphysical arguments in the two cases of EVCF that we saw in chapter 4. First, I will examine the case of a more developed agent (A), and a less developed agent (B). I will explain how (B) depends on (A) for her moral development. In this case of character friendship, however, there arises a problem of reciprocity¹²³ between the agents. But since I have already offered a solution to this problem in chapter 4, I will just briefly remind the reader my approach to this issue.

On the other hand, I will further examine the case of EVCF between agents of equal moral level; yet, in this circumstance the agents are not completely virtuous. I will submit that in both cases of EVCF the agents function both as passive and active powers. Specifically, they can morally develop by providing a new level of understanding of virtue to each other which emerges through a perceptual process of receiving his friend's form of virtuous action. I will call this the *balance argument*,

¹²³ This problem of reciprocity arises because agent (A) seems to give more to (B) than the other way around.

and I will argue that this shows the interdependence of character friends for their moral development.

At last I will suggest that the perceptual process that the agent of the EVCF goes through can also be applied in the case of completely virtuous agents that I will discuss in chapter 6. The difference between these two moral levels lies mostly in applying the pattern received in the ideal way. The completely virtuous agent has an advantage compared to the agent of the EVCF due to his possession of practical wisdom.

5.2. Aristotle's Focal Analysis and the Priority of Active over Passive Potentialities

Aristotle discusses the notion of change in various passages throughout his corpus. The most important for our subject in hand are in *Met* Θ1-5, Δ12, and *Physics* III. 1-3. Aristotle underlines, however, the fact that his theory of change goes hand in hand with his view on potentiality and actuality. Hence, for the purposes of the current chapter, we have to justify how these two theories come together in Aristotle's mind and why they are valuable for his theory of friendship when viewed from the angle of moral development.

Aristotle's first task in *Met*. Θ1 is to identify all those cases that qualify as capacities for change. In order to do this he has to omit any cases to which the term capacity/potentiality refers to only in an accidental way (Makin, 2006: 21). Such cases are described as "those that are called potentialities homonymously" (*Met*.

1046a6). In this passage, Aristotle follows his views of homonymy¹²⁴ as expressed in the *Categories* (Cat.1.1a1-6).

He moves on then to Met. 1046 a9-19 so as to provide the proper analysis that is essential for his treatment of the cases which are suitable as capacities for change. Once homonymous cases have been dealt with, Aristotle proceeds to consider three basic forms of capacities: (a) active capacities (Met.1046a11¹²⁵); passive capacities (Met. 1046a11-12); (c) the capacity something has to withstand being changed or being destroyed (Met. 1046a13-15).

Concerning active capacities (a), Aristotle refers to the power that something possesses in order to make a change in something else—for instance, the power that fire has to burn wood. Aristotle says though that apart from the power that a thing has to bring a change in another thing, it can also bring about a change in itself *qua* other¹²⁶. As Makin (2006) points out, this qualification is added by Aristotle to differentiate between changes because of such active capacities, and alterations due to something's own nature¹²⁷.

Now a passive capacity (b) is a capacity a thing possesses so that it can be changed by something else. In this case, the qualification “in itself as other” is used for the same account as in the active capacities (Makin, 2006: 23). Finally, parallel to each of these cases of capacity (a, b, c) there is another capacity whose exercise is a good instance of the exercise of the related unqualified capacity (Met. 1046 a15-6).

¹²⁴ For instance, when X and Y are homonymous means that X and Y are both called L, but with different definitions of L.

¹²⁵ See also Met.Δ.12.

¹²⁶ Met. Δ.12, 1019b35-1020a6; cf. 1019a15-20.

¹²⁷ For more on this argument see Makin (2006) chapter 5

What is essential for us, however, is the role that active capacities play among the other ones. Aristotle informs us that the active capacity is the primary type. Specifically, he suggests that if we want to characterize any of the other capacities, then this characterization must refer in some way to that primary type (Met. 1045a15-6, 17-9; 1046a9; 1019b35-1020a6).

What we have seen so far then is Aristotle's way of presenting various dissimilar cases that can be covered by the same term. But apart from homonymy and synonymy¹²⁸ cases "there is logical space for a third category between homonymy and synonymy-cases in which the definitions are neither the same, nor merely different, but related in some structured way." (Makin, 2006: 24) A characteristic example of such cases can be found in Met. Γ2. In particular, Aristotle says:

"There are many senses in which a thing may be said to 'be,' but they are related to one central point, one definite kind of thing, and are not homonymous. Everything which is healthy is related to health, one thing in the sense that it preserves health, another in the sense that it produces it, another in the sense that it is a symptom of health, another because it is capable of it." (Met. 1003a34-1003b1)

Analyses of such a structure have been defined as focal¹²⁹. We can find several cases where Aristotle provides us with focal accounts (Met. 1003 b1-3, 1030a35-1030b3, 1022a1-3, 1030b4-7; and even in the Eudemian Ethics (EE) 1236a16-18, 1236b23-6). What we are interested in though for the intentions of the current chapter is what Aristotle says in Met. 1020a2-3 and 1019 a32-b1. He proposes there that active capacities are the primary case in the sense that when we attribute passive capacities to objects, this is so due to active capacities that have power on them. For

¹²⁸ X and Y are synonymous when both of them are called L and with the same definition of L.

¹²⁹ The term *focal* was first introduced by Owen. In particular, see Owen (1960: 163-90); Owen (1986: 180-99).

instance, Aristotle would say that wood is capable of being burned, and we thus attribute to it the passive capacity to be burned, because fire has the proper active capacity to burn it.

The way to understand the passages from *Met. Δ. 12* is, I think, to identify the dependence of passive capacities on active ones as was previously denoted by the fire and wood example. It appears then that the relation between passive and active capacities could be characterized as asymmetric¹³⁰. In the case of passive (p) and active (a) capacities the term asymmetric means that: (p) depends on (a) in a way that (a) does not-in a similar way-depend on (p).

This fact can lead us to say that wood, for example, has a passive capacity to be burned because fire has an active capacity to burn it; but it would not be reasonable to say that fire has an active capacity to burn because wood has a passive capacity to be burned. This conclusion can logically follow from our previous exposition of focal analysis where we saw that passive capacities can be referred to active capacities; the other way around is not possible according to Aristotle.

We have to note here though that despite the explanatory priority of the active capacity over the passive one, there is an underlying interdependence of one capacity from the other that has to do with their realization¹³¹. For instance, an engineer cannot realize his active potentiality to fix a broken car without having his tools at his disposal; neither can the tools “realize” their passive potentiality without their use from the engineer in order to fix the broken car. This argument is helpful in our endeavor to show that the active power of the agent is crucial in bringing about a change in the patient with a passive one.

¹³⁰ Makin (2006: 28); Beere (2009: 54).

¹³¹ Gill (1989: 174)

What I have shown thus far then is Aristotle's highlighting on the explanatory priority of active over passive potentialities. The importance of this fact can be seen in what Beere says about it:

“Aristotle nowhere further explains why active powers are prior to passive powers. But I think it is pretty clear why he thinks this. Active powers are prior to passive powers because of the asymmetric roles the agent and the patient play in a change. It is the agent that makes the change happen. The patient merely undergoes something done by the agent. While the properties of the patient do constrain how the change proceeds, it is the agent that actively determines how the change proceeds.” (Beere, 2009: 65)

We will see in the following sections of this chapter that Beere's intuition will not only turn out correct, but, will also be useful in understanding deeper Aristotle's theory of friendship and its connection with moral development. Before moving on to the sections that have to do with friendship and moral development, however, I first have to enhance my argument regarding the need of others for our moral development.

5.3. Change in Another Thing or in Itself as Other

In the model of potentiality that we have presented so far, the agent and patient are normally different; for instance we can have: fire and water, builder and house, doctor and patient. On the other hand, there are cases where the active and passive potentialities coincide in the same subject. In this occurrence, as we said before, the agent acts on himself as other.

A first example that comes to mind is the one of a doctor who can act both on others and, depending on the situation, on himself as other. In particular, the doctor can, first of all, apply his knowledge of the medical science to an ill patient in order to cure him. He also has the ability though to apply his medical knowledge to himself; but if he does so, then he acts on himself *qua* other. Put it briefly: if the

power to cause x and the power to become x refers to the same particular then this particular act as f and suffers as y .

Someone could ask though: what happens in the case of an agent who wants to morally develop? The value of this question becomes evident when we consider an agent who happens to be in any level of virtue and he can use himself as an active power in order to help an agent being less morally developed to improve. But what happens with himself? Can he improve on his own? Can he function as the doctor in the example given above? The answer is no.

The reason for this is that an agent in a state of virtuous understanding v cannot teach himself the next and superior state of virtuous understanding $v+I$; and thus he does not know how to impose this state to himself¹³². Put it differently, agent x might have the active potentiality to impose his level of virtue to someone who levels in a less developed stage than him. In addition, he has the passive potentiality to improve in virtue. This passive potentiality cannot be actualized though by his efforts for the epistemic reasons that I have already mentioned. As for instance fire, that cannot reach higher temperatures without the help of external powers- e.g. when feeding oxygen into the fire, its temperature gets higher and thus fire becomes more powerful and more efficacious.

When we accept the argument above, we can realize that Aristotle understands virtuous agents in a similar manner as he understands powers in nature. That is to

¹³² The argument I construct here derives from a common sense understanding of Aristotle's whole process of moral development in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. We see there that the agent learns both the ethical (habituation) and the intellectual (teaching) virtues through other agents. In the case of habituation, of course, the agent has to repeat the good actions of other people in order for these actions to become habitual to him and thus to pass the first stage of learning to be good. My point is though that these actions that the agent imitates must always come from other agents. Without them, the process of habituation would not be possible.

say, he sees active powers as initiators of change in passive ones. Passive powers though depend on active ones only for their actualization (bricks become a house), but, also, for their improvement (fire gets higher temperature when fed with oxygen). There is though a problem. What we need for our current endeavor is not only a one sided perspective of interaction of powers. Instead, we need a two-way-interaction model. For example, we do not need a model of powers that follows the example of fire heating a pan. The reason for this is that from this interaction of powers, fire will always be the cause of change for the pan's temperature. The pan though does not affect fire in some way. So it cannot be the active power in this case; it can only function as the passive one. We need then a model of powers that can function both as passive and active ones. I will call this the "balance argument" and I will proceed to analyze in the next section.

5.4. The Balance Argument

To recapitulate the previous section we can say that the virtuous agent of any level can have: (1) the active power to change others, and (2) the passive power to be changed by others; but, she cannot have the active power to change herself, and, (4) the passive power to be changed by herself. What we need for the balance argument now is two agents that satisfy (1) and (2). In other words we need an agent x who has the active power (AP_x) to change y , who has, in turn, a passive power (PP_y) to be changed by x . On the other hand, we also need agent y to have an active power (AP_y) to change x , who has in turn the passive power (PP_x) to be changed by x . Before we moved on though we need some background theory that will help us understand the interaction between the agent and the patient and how the change from the former to the latter takes place.

In Physics III.2 (202a3-12) we see how an agent causes a change. In this passage, Aristotle has a couple of ideas in mind. His first idea lies in the fact that every mover, if he can be changed, undergoes a change when he brings about a change in something else. Aristotle proposes that the agent suffers a change by his interaction with the object changed. Specifically, when the agent touches the patient, the agent suffers when he produces a change. Aristotle's second idea is that the agent imposes a form on the patient. The form imposed by the agent is the cause of the change.

Aristotle's first idea cannot be applied in the case of virtuous agents. First of all, this idea requires a level of physical contact that is not necessary when a change in someone's character takes place. Thus the simultaneous suffering of the agent that initiates and produces the change is not possible.

Now the second idea tells us that the agent imposes a form on the patient who is essentially the cause of change. This point is really important and requires further analysis that is provided in Aristotle's *On Generation and Corruption*. Aristotle deals though with both ideas presented in this work. We will see then the further exposition of these two ideas.

In Gen. Cor. I.6-7 Aristotle deals with the notion of contact and his theory of movers. In I.6 he claims that contact in the strict sense occurs between distinct located magnitudes that have their extremities together (322b32-323a12). This contact that Aristotle describes is physical and requires reciprocity. These passages from *Gen. Cor.* follow what Aristotle has already said in Physics III.2 (202a3-12). However, further on in *Gen. Cor.* he relaxes the demands for contact. In fact he suggests that mover and moved have to stand in relation to one another in such a manner so that doing and suffering can be ascribed to them (323a22-5).

This is actually what we have been looking for. We have already said that we need two agents—who have some connection of character—where each one can change one another and can be changed by each other through their ability to act and be acted upon. This kind of relation that they have satisfies Aristotle's point at Gen. Cor. (323a22-5). This is further substantiated when we move on and see how this relation actually works.

Aristotle suggests that the properties by reason of which an agent acts and a patient suffers are opposite. Specifically, in Gen. Cor. 1.7, he argues that, on the one hand, the agent and patient are the same in kind (e.g. body affected by body, color by color [323b29-324a5]) but different in form. In fact, because of some property (a form of his soul, e.g. virtue) that he possesses, he can impose this form on a patient that is suitable of having it, but indeed lacks this property (Gen. Cor. 1.7 324a5-14; Phys. 257b6-10; Met. Θ1 1046 a19-29). Now, if the action of the agent is successful then the agent assimilates the patient to himself (324a10-11). Hence, when the change is completed the agent and patient are not only one in kind, but also like in form. The reason for this is that the agent has successfully imposed its form on something that it has acted upon— for example, fire makes something cold to become hot.

But what happens in the case of two humans who are related through their moral character? Let us imagine then that we have two agents. Let us call the first agent *x* and the second agent *y*. The first agent has a particular level of virtue *L* while the second one lacks *L*. Now the process through which agent *x* imposes the form of *L* to agent *y* is quite different than the one which takes place between simple material objects.

The difference lies in the fact that the relation between humans is essentially more of a teacher-learner one, while that of materials is not. The teacher-learner relation involves two agents where, (1) touching, as in material objects, is not necessary, and, (2) the learning process involves pattern acquisition of virtue and more sophisticated levels of perception. Concerning (1) we have already seen how Aristotle loosens the conditions for touching between agents. This makes sense in the case of character change between agents if we further consider what Aristotle says in his *De Anima* about the role of perception and thought in acquiring a form; thus (2) will attract our attention in what follows.

For Aristotle, perception and thought are varieties of change. Hence, each one can be explained by his hylomorphic theory of change that is provided concerning the reception of form¹³³. The point here is though that not every change is a case of perception or thought. The reason for this is that living beings have different psychic abilities; only human (animals) can be subjects of change when it has to do with perception (Shields, 2007: 294). But let us first examine Aristotle's view on perception.

Perception seems to be some kind of alteration (DA 416b32), but not just any kind. Instead, as is depicted in a famous passage in *De Anima*:

“By ‘a sense’ is meant what has the power of receiving into itself the sensible forms of things without the matter. This must be conceived of as taking place in the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold; we say that what produces the impression is a signet of bronze or gold, but its particular metallic constitution makes no difference; in a similar way the sense is affected by what is colored or flavored or sounding, but it is indifferent what in each case the substance is; what alone matters is what quality it has, i.e. in what ratio its constituents are combined.” (DA 424a17-24)

¹³³ For an introductory analysis on hylomorphism and its connection with, not only change, but also, with perception and thought see, Shields (2007: 53-64; 196-203; 294-5).

In addition, Aristotle says that perception rests on an organ's being made like the object it perceives (DA 418a3-6). In other words, the bottom line of the already presented passages is that the perceiving object becomes isomorphic with the sensible object. There are two prevailing interpretations of Aristotle's idea of isomorphism. The first one takes Aristotle to comprehend form transmission literally¹³⁴. This interpretation says to us, for instance, that when the perceiver receives the form of a white object, the sense organ (eye) that actually receives it becomes white itself. On the other hand, we have the interpretation where isomorphism is taken intentionally (Brentano, 1973) rather than literally. According to this view, as Shields puts it, isomorphism is understood in terms of: "...sameness of structure, and not in terms of literal property exemplification." (2007: 297)

Both interpretations have their own problems. We are not interested though in solving these issues in the current chapter. Our task is rather different. We want to understand Aristotle's view on perception from the stand point of the causal impact of the agent who produces the form to the agent who receives it. Let me give a general picture of what I want to say.

Let us assume we have agent A, who perceives color red with his eyes. Here we are mainly interested in the causal impact that this process has in the agent's soul. For instance, A's perceptual experience of color red could be followed by a feeling of aversion towards blood. Or, using a different sensation (smell), when someone smells a cigarette and this makes him want to smoke.

My point here is that we should divide perceptual experiences in two categories. The first one has to do with *simple* perceptual experiences which are normally the

¹³⁴ Sorabji (1971); Everson (1997).

ones we have from an object for the first time; or there has not been a particular causal impact of this sensible object of experience in the agent's mind. The second category has to do with sensible experiences that have a causal impact in the agent's soul (e.g. an emotion, desire etc.). Let me express the crux of the second category more clearly and try to apply in the case of receiving the form of a virtuous action.

The form of the sensible object that the agent receives is an experience of some (form) of value. This value has a particular causal impact in the agent's soul that can be translated through her reaction to the reception of this form. For instance, consider the reception of a snake's form which causes the agent fear, and thus he tries to get protected.

Now the reception of the form of a virtuous agent is a more complicated perceptual process. The patient does not just receive a form of a color as we previously saw. Instead, he receives a whole sequence of action from another agent. In this manner the patient receives a form of value. This value is represented by the good that is depicted by the other agent's action. But how does the patient perceive *the good* from the agent's action? How does he react? The answer to these questions can be found in Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium*. I will cite this passage in full due to its importance for our argument:

“But how is it that thought (viz. sense, imagination, and thought proper) is sometimes followed by action, sometimes not; sometimes by movement, sometimes not? What happens seems parallel to the case of thinking and inferring about the immovable objects of science. There the end is the truth seen (for, when one conceives the two premises, one at once conceives and comprehends the conclusion), but here the two premises result in a conclusion which is an action — for example, one conceives that every man ought to walk, one is a man oneself: straightway one walks; or that, in this case, no man should walk, one is a man: straightway one remains at rest. And one so acts in the two cases provided that there is nothing in the one case to compel or in the other to prevent. Again, I ought to create a good, a house is good: straightway I make a house. I need a covering, a coat is a covering: I need a coat. What I need, I ought to make, I need a coat: I make a

coat. And the conclusion I must make a coat is an action. And the action goes back to the beginning or first step. If there is to be a coat, one must first have B, and if B then A, so one gets A to begin with. Now that the action is the conclusion is clear. But the premises of action are of two kinds, of the good and of the possible. And as in some cases of speculative inquiry we suppress one premise so here the mind does not stop to consider at all an obvious minor premise; for example if walking is good for man, one does not dwell upon the minor 'I am a man'. And so what we do without reflection, we do quickly. For when a man actualizes himself in relation to his object either by perceiving, or imagining or conceiving it, what he desires he does at once. For the actualizing of desire is a substitute for inquiry or reflection. I want to drink, says appetite; this is drink, says sense or imagination or mind: straightway I drink. In this way living creatures are impelled to move and to act, and desire is the last or immediate cause of movement, and desire arises after perception or after imagination and conception. And things that desire to act now create and now act under the influence of appetite or impulse or of desire or wish." (*De Motu Animalium* 701 a)

In the above passage Aristotle tries to give us a parallel between what follows a sense, a thought, or imagination, with what follows the end of a practical syllogism. These processes have something in common: they are both followed by action. Specifically, when an agent comes to the end of the practical syllogism, she does not stop as she would have done so was she engaging in a theoretical one.

Instead, Aristotle underlines here that immediately after the end of practical syllogism, action occurs. But the same thing happens in other occasions as well; as Aristotle puts it: "For when a man actualizes himself in relation to his object either by perceiving, or imagining, or conceiving it, what he desires he does at once. For the actualizing of desire is a substitute for inquiry or reflection." (*De Motu Animalium* 701a).

Thus we see here that the end of practical syllogism or thought (perception, imagination) can produce desires in the agent that need to be fulfilled immediately by action. In other words, we can say that the thought of the good can have a causal impact in the agent's mind; this impact is translated as a desire to act immediately.

What we must do now is connect what we previously said about certain objects of perception and their causal impact on the agent's desires and emotions with *De Motu Animalium* (701a). The bottom line of both analyses that I have offered is that certain conscious experiences make the agent want to act. What we are interested though for our purposes is the motivational power that a perceptual experience of another agent's virtuous action exercises in the patient's mind. Based on what we have said on *De Motu* (701a) we may suggest that the perception of a good action can urge the patient to act in a virtuous way himself. But there are two questions that have to be answered here: (1) does the patient have to act immediately after the reception of the form of someone's good action? (2) How does the perception of a form of good action work and affect us in friendship between unequals, or, equals yet not completely virtuous agents?

Regarding the first question the answer is no. The reason for this is that when the patient receives the form of a good action from another agent, this kind of perception does not necessarily urge the patient to act in a virtuous way at that very moment. If the situation does not require from him to do so, then why should he act virtuously.

This urge to act that is accompanied with the perception of the good is the basis of the learning process of the patient. That is, when it comes for her to act virtuously in a way similar to the one she has learned from another virtuous agent then she will not hesitate to do so. The bottom line then is that the learning process might involve the reception of the form from another agent's good action that is accompanied by an urge of the patient to act virtuously. Now, as I understand it, this form must be stored in the agent's memory and when the time and place is suitable she will apply this kind of pattern immediately by acting virtuously.

Now the answer to the second question must wait since we first have to provide an analysis that has to do with virtuous friendships of agents that have different levels of moral development; this will follow after the next section. Before we moved on though, we will sum up the crux of the *balance argument*.

My assertion is that the process that the patient goes through when he receives a form from another agent's good action can work the other way around as well. Namely the patient who is able to receive the form is able in turn to the one who transmits the form and not the one who receives it. In other words, the patient does not only have the role of the passive recipient of the form of a good action. That is, she cannot only be the learner, but, she can be the teacher as well. This happens due to her ability to perform good actions that the patient, who was previously an agent, is not familiar with. Through this argument we may see that in human interaction where virtue is involved, the agents can function both as passive and active powers; which comes to the opposite side of interactions such as between fire and pan where the interaction of powers is one sided.

Specifically, the fire-pan example does not work for the balance argument. The reason for this is that for the balance argument to work we need both powers to be able to get better and help the others get better as well. So if we want to visualize the balance argument we must imagine two people holding hands together and each one leaning on their back. The result is a balance point. This shows the interdependence of their powers. In this case they both have the passive potentiality to be hold, and the active potentiality to hold the other. The balance point that occurs is, in the case of virtuous agents, the good that can be achieved with the help and guidance of others.

It remains now for this chapter to show how this process takes place in the two forms of character friendship that I have already talked about at the introduction and chapter 4. In the following sections then I will discuss how the balance argument works in cases of character friendship between agents who are: (a) unequal in moral development, and (b) equal in moral development, yet not completely virtuous. I will first start with (a) and then I will proceed to examine (b).

5.5 Character Friendship between Unequally Developed Moral Agents

As I have already discussed in chapter 4, character friendship between unequally developed moral agents has an ingrained problem that requires solution; I have called this issue as the *Reciprocity Problem (RP)*. In this section I will provide a brief overview of the problem and its solution that I expounded on in the previous chapter. We will see that without the solution to this problem the balance argument for this type of character friendship cannot work; and this outcome would have jeopardizing effects on the point I am trying to make in this chapter regarding the necessity of friends to each other.

The RP is focused on the case of unequally developed moral agents because of their difference in the level of moral virtue. This problem could be expressed in the following way: in the case of character friendship between unequally developed moral agents, the superior one in virtue provides more to the less developed one than the latter provides the former. In essence, agent A, who is superior in virtue than B, is not only providing more, but, actually, he is the only one who is providing something anyway; namely, the transmission of the form of his good actions. On the other hand, agent B is the only one who receives the form of A's good actions. The problem then is transferred to the balance argument.

We saw there that the agents have to have both active and passive powers. They need both since they have to transmit and receive forms of good actions as well. The point now is that a solution to RP is important, otherwise we will have agent A who will always function as an active power, and agent B who will always function as a passive power. Let us see then the solution to RP.

From the solution to RP that I offered in chapter 4, the most important passage that enlightened our quest to solve RP is in NE VIII.7. Aristotle says there:

“And in every friendship based on superiority the friendly affection too must become proportionate; for example, the better should be loved more than he loves; and the more beneficial; and each of the others similarly. For when the friendly affection corresponds to worth, then equality is achieved in some way, as seems indeed to be characteristic of friendship”. (NE 1158b24-8)

In this passage, Aristotle argues that the less morally developed agent should love more her superior friend than the latter does the former; this results in equality between the two agents, and, therefore, the gap between them is filled. Differently, we would have the superior agent A constantly providing the inferior agent B with his image of virtuous actions, while B would not reciprocate.

Through friendly affection then, Aristotle brings the two agents closer and thus helps us apply the balance argument without explanatory complications. Nonetheless, we need to analyze the balance argument deeper when it comes for character friendship between unequals. Specifically, in order for balance to occur, we have to divide the relationship between unequally developed moral agents in two parts. The first part has to do with the relationship of the two agents as far as *friendly affection* is concerned, which we could describe as the “value attribution” part. The second part has to do with the transmission of *virtue* of one agent to the other. Let us begin with the friendly affection part.

In the first part, the morally inferior agent B has the role of the active power of loving; the morally advanced agent A has the role of passive power of being loved. I have to clarify here though that this does not mean that the advanced agent does not love the inferior at all, or, that he does not have the capacity to love. I want to say that, in the inferior agent, the capacity to love is more salient than the capacity to be loved, while the opposite is true for the advanced agent. But this covers only one side of the balance argument. Instead, we need agents to use both their active and passive capacities equally. This problem is solved when we move to the second part that has to do with virtue.

In the second part the roles of active and passive capacity are reversed. The more developed agent acquires the role of active capacity and the inferior one assumes the role of the passive one. In other words, the more developed agent performs a good action and the inferior one receives the form through the perceptual process that we have already described.

Therefore in a relationship between two unequally developed agents, the interdependence-and as a result the balance-between them is a shape with two parts. The first part is the *value recognition* one, and the second is the virtuous one. We may realize now that when the two parts get combined we can have a single model of interdependence between the two agents. On the one hand, the inferior agent counts his moral development on the perception of the more developed one's virtuous actions. On the other hand, the more developed agent depends on the inferior one for the recognition of his value as a virtuous agent; and specifically as someone who provides his inferior-in virtue-friend, more goods than the latter provides to him.

However, we will not need any extra explanatory tactics in order to explain the next form of virtuous friendship. We will see that virtuous friendship between agents who are equal in virtue is unproblematic regarding reciprocity. Nonetheless, there are certain issues that we need to elucidate concerning the function of this kind of character friendship.

5.6. Character Friendship between Equally Developed Moral Agents

As we previously mentioned character friendship between equally developed moral agents does not have the reciprocity problem. This is evident due to the lack of discrepancy in the agent's level of virtue. There are though certain clarifications that we have to make for this kind of character friendship.

A question that arises naturally is the following: how can an agent develop with the help of another agent who has the same level of virtue with him? In order to answer this question, we have to justify the interdependence of one agent from the other.¹³⁵

First we have to illuminate the function of the word equal in this kind of character friendship. As I explained in chapter 4 (4.8. case (a)) there is a particular way in which we should consider character friends who are equal in virtue yet not completely virtuous. Namely, in this case some agent A who is more advanced than agent B in some virtue, say x , and, on the other hand, some agent B who is more advanced in some virtue y than agent A. Now between these two agents there is

¹³⁵ The argument I made in chapter 2 (section 2.16) about the variance of the unity of virtues among completely virtuous moral agents can be applied here as well. In this case, however, we must understand the unity of virtues hypothesis as being still in process. But this does not change anything in the point of the argument. Namely, the agent might still have formed weaknesses in certain virtues and advantages in others due to development, nature, or resources. The main difference between the completely virtuous agent and the one of the EVCF is that the weaknesses of the former are not as significant as the latter's.

interdependence on the level of some particular virtue they possess. This means that balance occurs between them and thus equality stands out in their relationship. Let me explain.

First, agent A performs an action based on virtue x and thus transmits the form of his action to agent B who is less advanced in this virtue than A. Now agent B who perceives the form of A's action has advanced a step further in the understanding of this particular virtue. On the other hand, in the case where B is more advanced than A in y , B performs the action based on y and A perceives the form of it. Through this process, agent A advances his understanding of y and its application.

Now the form received by the EVCF agent will use the pattern received from their friend's action and will try to apply in some situation they think appropriate; namely, when some situation S demands the application of virtue x .

5.9. Final Thoughts

I just want to add here that I will not further analyze the forms of friendship that can be found in EVCF anymore. It is actually tempting to connect these forms of friendship with mimesis because this process would gain a unified role in the agent's moral development, starting from her childhood and extending up to her moral maturity. However, a first glance at Aristotle's theory of friendship does not reveal any such possibility.

Anyway, the fact that the agent who takes part in the EVCF moves one step further her understanding of the application of the virtues through character friendship is what we should keep as the most important outcome of this chapter. As I said though in section 5.8, the agent of the EVCF will apply these received forms of action in real situations where she thinks they might be useful. Now this process

seems to look like the interpretative mimesis (IM) process that we will discuss in chapter 6. But whether the way she applies the forms received is clearly an imitative process is not something that Aristotle gives us textual evidence to count on.

We could say though that moral development during in the EVCF period looks like a pre-IM process that the agent goes through in order to prepare for the actual IM phase of moral maturity where he is yet able to apply the patterns received in appropriate situations and in the best way possible based on his skills and abilities¹³⁶. Now, the main difference that lies between the processes of moral development during EVCF and post-EVCF is that of phronesis and, in other words, the correct application of the pattern received.

Namely, the agent of the EVCF does not yet possess practical wisdom. This fact makes him incapable of using the pattern received from his friend as the agent of the post-EVCF period would have. In order to understand this better we have to understand the nature of practical wisdom. Aristotle tells us that excellence makes the goal right, while practical wisdom makes what leads to it right (NE 1144a8-9).

This indicates that the agent who has practical wisdom will use the right means in the right way in order to accomplish the goal he intends. The agent of the EVCF does not possess this intellectual virtue just yet. He will try though to use the patterns received, and he will attempt to perform in the best way possible even though he cannot carry out the action as the practically wise agent would have. That is so because he will probably make mistakes and misuse the patterns received correctly, and thus adapting to the demands of the situation. Therefore, interpretative mimesis fits the practically wise man better than the agent of the EVCF.

¹³⁶ See 6.8 of the next chapter.

Now, before closing this chapter I would like to address a question that might pop-up on the reader's mind. This question is the following: why does the agent desire to apply the form received from his friend's good action and not any other's bad action he might observe? This question is important because our answer must signal the superior value of character friends for our moral development against any other bad influences that we might have.

First of all, the reason that makes us desire¹³⁷ to apply some form received by our friend must be cognitive. Namely, the agent, since he is good, understands that the pattern that he perceives from his friend's action is good as well and this fact makes him want to act as I have already discussed in *De Motu* 701a. Second, since he understands that his friend's action is good he also feels pleasure when thinking about it. This pleasure must trigger the agent to have a desire for the good and thus to want to apply the pattern that represents it. Third, the agent wants to apply the pattern received because it comes from a person he loves. Now, since he loves this person he trusts his actions to be applied, and he considers them worthy for his moral development. I think that these three¹³⁸ reasons may justify why the agent

¹³⁷ The desire to apply the pattern received from a friend is different than, yet closely connected to the desire to befriend someone virtuous. I discussed the latter extensively in chapter 3. Now the former type of desire is, as I understand it, an evolutionary kind of desire that grows while the friends get to know each other better throughout the course of their relationship. That is so because the agent does not want to imitate every action of his friend, but only those that he thinks suit his character and abilities; and this process takes time.

¹³⁸ The three reasons I presented that concern the desire to apply the form received from my friend's action apply both for the case of the agent of the EVCF, and the completely virtuous agent of the IM that we will examine in chapter 6. The difference between the two cases rests mostly on the fact that the factors of cognition and pleasure in particular, must be stronger in the IM agent than in the EVCF one due to the former's advanced level of understanding the good. On the other hand, the EVCF agent is also able to understand the good and feel pleasure from it, but, undoubtedly, in a less degree than the IM agent.

desires to apply the patterns received from his friend and not any other's bad actions he might observe.

Last, I will devote the final chapter of my thesis to the only two cases where Aristotle believes that our moral development rests on an imitative process: (1) the case of imitation during childhood, and, (2) the case of interpretative mimesis in highly advanced virtuous agents. We will also see that the pattern acquisition process that we described in the current chapter applies not only in the EVCF, but, also, in the case of character friendship between highly advanced virtuous agents. The mechanism of application of these patterns though is what makes this process unique; this mechanism being interpretative mimesis.

5.10. Conclusion

In the current chapter I tried to highlight the metaphysical and psychological foundations of moral development in Aristotle's theory of friendship in the EVCF. My main strategy was first to examine the interaction of powers in Aristotle's metaphysics. I showed through Aristotle that active powers have priority over passive ones. This priority makes passive powers to depend on active ones not only for their realization but, in essence, for their development.

After that I tried to apply these view of Aristotle on powers to his theory of character friendship. I argued that agents in a character friendship have both the role of the active and the passive power. In fact when agent A performs a virtuous action functions as an active power, and his friend B functions as a passive power who perceives the form of A's good action. This psychological process helps B to advance his understanding of the particular virtue that A's action represents. Now the same process occurs the other way around as well when B has the role of the

active power, and A that of the passive one. I called this interchangeability of powers between agents as the *balance argument* where I showed the interdependence of agents for their moral development.

After that, I moved on to examine the application of the balance argument in two different cases of character friendship; namely, in character friendship between unequally developed moral agents, and that of equally developed ones. In the first case I presented the solution to the reciprocity problem-as in chapter 4- which was the main obstacle in applying the balance argument. In the second case, I analyzed two different instantiations of character friendship between equals: (1) two agents with different interpretation of a particular virtue, and (2) two agents where the first one has high performance in virtue V_i , and the second one who has high performance in virtue V_{ii} . I showed that in both cases, balance occurs between the agents. Hence in cases (1) and (2) of the EVCF the agents depend on each other for their moral development.

What remains now for us is to give a new dimension in the value of friendship. This dimension lies in the fact that character friendship is connected with the process of imitation. This is a job for the next chapter. I will mostly examine though there how mimesis is involved in friendships between children and between completely virtuous agents. We will see that these two cases are not only problematic, but, they also appear as the only cases where Aristotle explicitly refers to the process of imitation to play some role in the moral development of the agent during this period of their life.

Chapter 6

Mimesis, Character Friendship, and Moral Development

6.1. Introduction

Aristotle examines the concept of mimesis mainly in the *Poetics*. In particular, he emphasizes its role in poetry, tragedy, and comedy. I am not going though to engage in a discussion concerning the connection of mimesis with any form of art¹³⁹. My main goal, instead, is to bring closer the concept of mimesis and Aristotle's theory of character friendship. To be more specific, I will treat mimesis as a process that is a major component of Aristotle's most highly valued form of friendship. I will try to show that mimesis functions as a mechanism of moral development in virtuous friends. My stepping stone for this argument will be Fossheim's¹⁴⁰ idea that is based on the connection of imitation and learning. Based on his views, I will move further and argue that mimesis is an *indispensable part of character friendship*. In fact the agent can improve morally by imitating her virtuous friend's actions.

I will split my analysis into two parts. The first part will be about the young people who get habituated by doing good actions. The second part will be about the most mature period of agents where their character development is more advanced. I will argue that in both cases, mimesis of their friend's actions plays a significant role in the value of the agent's own undertakings of good nature, and in essence in their moral development through such undertakings.

¹³⁹ For the connection of mimesis with art or other topics such as the function of mimesis for the agent's katharsis see: Golden (1969); Hagberg (1984); Butcher (1951)

¹⁴⁰ Fossheim (2006).

However, the main difference between the two parts is that in the first one, the agent's action could be characterized as "pure mimesis"¹⁴¹; which means that there is no personal element of her to value in an undertaken action; while in the second one, the agent is not just imitating her friend's action. She just uses her friend's action as a pattern guide which might turn out to be useful when the circumstances demand from her to act virtuously. The main point here is though that she interprets and applies the pattern in her own way, and based, of course, in her own choices. I will call this the "interpretative mimesis argument."

So I will organize the current paper in the following order. First, I will give a brief summary of Burnyeat's (1980: .69-92) much appreciated views on how someone becomes good. Fossheim opposes Burnyeat's views by adding a special value and function of mimesis as far as the learning process of the agent is concerned. Next, I will reject Burnyeat's ideas, and based on Fossheim's analysis, I will proceed to connect mimesis with friendship in children. At last, I will proceed to expand the value and function of mimesis as an interpretation of the friend's virtuous actions. This particular and more sophisticated function of mimesis occurs during the mature period of the agent's life.

6.2.Fossheim's Argument and the Function of Mimesis in Learning to be Good

In his paper, "*Habituation as Mimesis*", Fossheim (2006) gives a new dimension in the concept of mimesis by trying to connect it with Aristotle's ethics, and in

¹⁴¹ We will see though in this paper that pure mimesis is not just about aping someone else's action. A qualification might be added in this argument. This qualification is natural virtue. This means that the child might be able to recognize in some first-level some virtuous value in the other's action which can make the other: (1) both attractive and desirable as a future friend and, (2) her action worthy of imitating. See more of this though in the corresponding section concerning pure mimesis.

particular with the process of habituation. In order to do that though, Fossheim first provides answers to questions that arise from Burnyeat's analysis relating to the process that the agent goes through in order to become good. So let me first briefly present Burnyeat's arguments, and then we will see Fossheim's opposing views and suggestions.

Burnyeat's view of habituation has two parts (1980: 74-8). The first part has to do with the young agent being told what is noble through advice and guidance by others ("knowing that"). The second part has to do with the agent experience the good by experience ("knowledge by acquaintance"). Burnyeat's argument is that, in essence, through practicing and habituation of what is noble in accordance with advice, we come to enjoy it (1980: 78).

Fossheim argues that Burnyeat's argument begs the question. Specifically, Fossheim has two interconnected questions for Burnyeat's thesis: (1) "What makes us experience attempts at virtuous action as enjoyable? and, (2) How exactly does doing something lead to loving it?" (2006: 106)

Fossheim's intention here is to question the motivational force that drives the agent to move from the state where she receives advice for the value of good actions and the noble, to the state where she tries to perform the good action by herself. In addition, Fossheim (2006:106) wants to know why the agent should accept someone's advice about the value of the noble in the first place This is a very important question that Fossheim raises here; because if Burnyeat cannot explain why the young agent should consider someone's advice significant enough, then he cannot justify the transition of the agent towards acting.

Burnyeat, however, has specific answers to Fossheim's questions. In particular, the former argues that the primary motivational drive for the agent's acceptance of someone's advice about the noble is the pleasure the she gets from it. So he suggests:

“the underlying idea is that the child’s sense of pleasure, which to begin with and for a long while is his only motive, should be hooked up with just and noble things so that his unreasoned evaluative responses may develop in connection with the right objects” (Burnyeat, 1980: 80).

This idea of Burnyeat is mainly rests on Aristotle's analysis of pleasure as one of the most fundamental motivational and learning forces in the agent's life. In particular, Aristotle argues that pleasure is connected with enjoying the right things, and pain with hating the right things. What is more, the value of pleasure is notably manifested in the development of the virtues of character (Cf. *NE* 1172a23–26).

Fossheim does not believe though that Burnyeat explains how this "hooking up" (Burnyeat, 1980: 80) works. He thinks that the gap between pleasure and the noble cannot be connected through this kind of advice based learning (Fossheim, 2006: 107). Fossheim presents as his most significant evidence to support his claim, Aristotle's assertion in *NE* 1179b23-31:

“Arguments and teaching surely do not influence everyone, but the soul of the student needs to have been prepared by habits for enjoying and hating nobly, like ground that is to nourish seed. For someone whose life follows his emotions would not even listen to an argument turning him away, or comprehend it; and in that state how could he be persuaded to change? And in general emotions seem to yield to force, not to argument. Hence we must already in some way have a character suitable for virtue, fond of what is noble and objecting to what is shameful.” (*NE* 1179b23-31)

This passage from Aristotle leads Fossheim to conclude that, actually, advice does not have much to offer in the agent's habituation- or at least to "some crucial

part of it" (2006: 108). But, someone could ask, what is the motivational force that leads the agent to want to get habituated in virtuous actions anyway?

Fossheim thinks that the answer can be found in practicing itself. Namely, he argues that we can solve the problem if we turn our attention to Aristotle's much celebrated passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he says: "we become good by doing good actions" (*NE* 1105b10). In order though for the agent to perform a good action, she must: "(i) choose her actions for their own sake¹⁴²; and (ii) do so out of a firm and unchanging disposition¹⁴³" (Fossheim, 2006: 108-9). We will see in the following section that Fossheim tries to construct an argument based on the explanation and application of the two aforementioned prerequisites to the young learner of the noble.

6.3. Fossheim's Solution from Aristotle's *Poetics*: The Function of Mimesis in Moral Development

Our first task in this section is to explain how Aristotle understands the concept of mimesis in his *Poetics*. Let us start then with the most significant and indicative passage of his view of mimesis that pertains to the cognitive development of children. In chapter 4, *Poetics* 1448b4–10, Aristotle argues:

“It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation.”¹⁴⁴(*Poetics* 1448b4–10)

¹⁴² Fossheim notes here (2006: 109) that he does not mean to equate the choice-concerning the good- of the practically wise with an agent who starts learning about the noble. However, he parallels the choice of the latter to the former in some sense.

¹⁴³ *NE* 1105a31–b5.

¹⁴⁴ Translation from Barnes (1984).

In this passage Aristotle stresses two very critical ideas. The first one is that mimesis plays a fundamental role in the child's cognitive development. The second idea is that, imitation is not only natural *per se* for humans; it is also natural to delight in works of imitation. So in total, Aristotle takes mimesis as a natural process that initiates the process of cognitive development in the child, and, also, works of imitation are accompanied by some form of delight or pleasure.

The most immediate logical inference from what we have already said about imitation so far is that it must be connected with Aristotle's concept of learning¹⁴⁵. Fossheim also relates the role of mimetic desire in cognitive development with the famous passage from the first lines of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* where he tells us that everyone by nature desire to know (*Met.* 980A21).

The contribution of mimesis, though, does not only contribute in the field of understanding as far as poetry is concerned (*Poetics* 1451b5-11). In fact, Fossheim notes: "What is true of the poet's mimetic *poiēsis* will be true also of *mimesis* as an even more pervasive and basic mode of the human capacity for intellectual development." (Fossheim, 2006: 110)

Fossheim's argument is substantiated by textual evidence from the *Poetics* (1448b10-24). In this passage, Aristotle argues, that, first of all, when representing something through mimesis in art, the representation depicts some actual characteristic of the object. For instance, when a sculptor creates a tree, his work represents some general and original characteristics of the tree.

The second, and very important part of the argument in 1448b10-24, is that, for Aristotle, there is inherent pleasure and enjoyment that derives from images that

¹⁴⁵ As Fossheim rightly notes (2006: 109).

stem from imitation. The reason for this is that through this image X, some agent A comes to recognize "that this person is so-and-so."

Now, another significant part of Aristotle's argument lies in Poetics 1448b4-5 where he says that there are "two natural causes of poetry." Fossheim gives a plausible explanation of what Aristotle might mean here. He says: "The enjoyment of one's own representations and the enjoyment of others' representations are described by Aristotle as basically different enjoyments, having their sources in two natural tendencies of which neither is entirely reducible to the other." (Fossheim, 2006: 111)

This interpretation of Fossheim turns out to be useful in his endeavor to connect mimesis and habituation. He believes that the natural enjoyment -as that of learning- for which Aristotle is talking about in Poetics 1448b10-24, does not have to do so much with learning from representations of others as about learning from acting according to others' representations. (Fossheim, 2006: 111)

But in order to create the analogy between poetry-mimesis, and habituation-mimesis, Fossheim constructs an argument which is, essentially, the core of his thesis. In fact, he suggests that we should understand habituation as a reverse process from poetic mimesis. In particular, he argues that the poet performs an action based on who he is; namely, based on his already formed character. In habituation though, the agent *becomes* who he is by performing an action. (p.111)

Thus, Fossheim explains to us the connection of mimesis-habituation and its relation to the formation of character in the following way. This way has two interconnected parts. The first part is for the agent to be exposed in a model that she will imitate; and the second is when the agent actually imitates or re-enacts the

action(s) of the model imitated. These two parts, when connected, become what he calls "*practical mimesis*". (2006: 112) So Fossheim wraps up his argument by writing: "Children and young people develop their character by actively engaging in *mimesis* of others who function as models for them." (2006: 111) But the question is now: should we accept Fossheim's argument or should we follow Burnyeat instead?

The reason that we should not follow Burnyeat's argument and accept Fossheim's is given by the latter convincingly. He says that, in his argument, Burnyeat refers to associative pleasures and not intrinsic ones. Fossheim supports his argument by quoting one of Aristotle's pivotal ideas regarding his theory of pleasure. Specifically, in this passage Aristotle argues that pleasure completes the activities (NE 1174a14). Now when this passage is connected to the function of mimetic pleasure then we can see Fossheim's thesis more clearly. The justification for this is that, as we have already seen, *mimesis* is related to an intrinsic form of pleasure that is proper to the performance of an action.

This argument from Fossheim leads him to answer one of his initial questions about the agent doing an action for its own sake. In particular, when the agent performs an action mimetically this means that she tries to do it as good as possible and it is better than the case where the agent tries to perform it for some reward or just based on advice (Fossheim, 2006: 113). The fact though that the agent has the intrinsic pleasure that accompanies her action shows that she starts resembling the fully developed moral agent; and this, I would like to add here, is the first step towards her moral development.

There is though an ambiguity about *mimesis*, and Fossheim is right to bring it up (p.114). Namely, the nature of its objects is not clear. Actually, the process of

mimesis, and the pleasure that accompanies it, can either involve the noble or even the vile (*Poetics* 1448 b10f). So the problem is that the agent may feel pleasure both by imitating good actions and by imitating bad ones. And this cannot be good for his correct moral development.

Now, since Fossheim is interested in the process through which someone *becomes* good, and *not* in the state where someone *is* good, he wants to look into the "desire to perform *mimesis* of a certain sort of action as gradually giving way to a stable, character-determined desire to perform the action" (2006: 114). In order to do this, he examines the relation of Aristotle's requirement, namely, that the agent's performance must result from an unwavering and stable state (2006: 114).

First of all, Fossheim argues that the young agent can be exposed to both virtuous and vile objects of imitation. Now if we take under consideration the plasticity of the youth's character, and the interpretation-so far defended-of practical mimesis as a habituating process, Fossheim concludes that not only good examples should be provided to the young learner, but, she should be protected from the bad ones as well (p.115). It is evident that Aristotle has seen the jeopardizing effects of bad habituation in the youth's character, and he has suggested ways to avoid them (*Politics* 1336b33-5; 1336a30-3). This is indirect evidence, according to Fossheim, that mimesis plays a fundamental role in the moral development of children (2006: 115).

At last, Fossheim (2006: 116) argues: "*Mimesis* has its dangerously misleading power over us, simply because it has power over us; *mimesis* can forcefully motivate us to go the wrong way, simply because it can forcefully motivate us." That is why there should be extreme attention to the young learner's imitative objects. It is after

all, a very difficult task, as he correctly notes, to “re-program” someone who has been exposed to vile imitative objects or actions (2006: 116).

In this section I tried to present Fossheim's argument in detail. This task was necessary since I will use his views extensively in the upcoming sections. My next task now is to connect Fossheim's approach to mimesis with Aristotle's view on virtuous friendship. The first part of this task pertains to the role of mimesis in friendships of youngsters with other agents. The second one has to do with the role of mimesis in friendships between morally and mentally mature agents.

I will start then in the first part with what I will call the "pure mimesis argument." Nonetheless, I will add a qualification to this argument which, I think, does not take children as just pure imitators of others' actions and behaviors. In fact, this qualification may signal for the children the transition from mere imitation to a proto-level of the recognition of goodness and virtue in themselves and others.

6.4. Pure Mimesis and a Qualification

In this section I will construct an argument regarding the connection of imitation with friendship based on Fossheim's idea of *practical mimesis*. I will call this first period that young agents go through as *pure mimesis*, since they seem, in Fossheim's mind, to just ape others' behaviors during this period of their life. With the term *pure*, I mean that in this case the process of mimesis does not involve anything other apart from the imitation of some action itself. Namely, the young agent does not seem to incorporate any personal element when it comes to perform a similar action that she has observed. I will add though a qualification in the young agent's behavior that, I think, will change our view of the value of the imitating process that takes

place in this case. We will see that friendship plays a fundamental role in this qualification.

The qualification I want to make here is based on Aristotle's concept of natural virtue. The reason I want to make this qualification is that the young learner might on the one hand ape others' behaviors, but, on the other hand we should not consider all young agents as having the same predispositions and aptitudes towards virtue and goodness – she is not a *tabula rasa*. This fact does not, as a result put all children at the same starting point. Let me first then remind the reader what Aristotle believes natural virtue represents, and, after that, I will return to elaborate on the previous intuition. Aristotle writes about natural virtue the following:

"We must, then, also examine virtue over again. For virtue, is similar [in this way] to prudence; as prudence is related to cleverness, not the same but similar, so natural virtue is related to full virtue. For each of us seems to possess his type of character to some extent by nature; for in fact we are just, brave, prone to temperance, or have another feature, immediately from birth. But still we look for some further condition to be full goodness, and we expect to possess these features in another way. For these natural states belong to children and to beasts as well [as to adults], but without understanding they are evidently harmful." (NE 1144b2-7)¹⁴⁶

Before we start the analysis of the importance of this passage for my qualification argument, let me first make a clarification about natural virtue. When Aristotle refers to natural virtue he does not mean genuine virtues but natural aptitudes¹⁴⁷.

This fact is justified explicitly in NE 1103a19-26 where Aristotle writes:

"And therefore it is clear that none of the moral virtues formed is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit. For instance, it is the nature of a stone to move downwards, and it cannot be trained to move upwards, even though you should try to train it to do so by throwing it up into the air ten thousand times; nor can fire be trained to move downwards, nor can anything else

¹⁴⁶ Translation from: Irwin (1999).

¹⁴⁷ See also Irwin (1999: 254) for a similar comment.

that naturally behaves in one way be trained into a habit of behaving in another way. The virtues therefore are engendered in us neither by nature nor yet in violation of nature; nature gives us the capacity to receive them, and this capacity is brought to maturity by habit." (NE 1103a19-26)

Aristotle tells us here (NE 1103a19-26) that the moral virtues are not engendered in us by nature because if they were then they could not be changed by any form of habituating process. The agent though has, by nature, the capacity to receive them. Now if we take under consideration the passage in NE 1103a19-26 and the one in NE 1144b2-7 we can come to the following conclusions. Specifically, for Aristotle, natural virtue seems to be an ingrained capacity in humans that, if properly cultivated, can help the agent develop into a truly virtuous agent through habituation. Aristotle notes though that this cannot happen without understanding. We should not forget to add here, however, that Aristotle must not refer to all humans concerning the capacity of natural virtue; let us not forget women's diminished ability for virtue¹⁴⁸, and that of natural slaves (Pol. I, 131260a12) as well.

The importance though of natural virtue as a qualification for imitation lies in what follows. I think that natural virtue does not make young agents just apes of others' actions. This intuition becomes clearer once we put friendship into the equation. Particularly, we should remind ourselves that children start befriending other ones on their own, without necessary guidance or indoctrination by someone else. What does this show to us?

This indicates that young agents start recognizing qualities in others' character already from an early age. But how does this happen? Is it possible for the child to

¹⁴⁸ See Aristotle's Politics: I.13.1260 a13. For further analysis of this passage see also: Kraut.R. (2002: 214; 286-7n).

reach an informed conclusion regarding the nature of the other's character? Can the child choose the other for her being virtuous? These questions deserve a negative response. The reason is that Aristotle's ethical theory demands a strenuous and long lasting, habituating, and teaching process that someone must go through so that they become truly virtuous. Such highly virtuous persons *can* desire¹⁴⁹ and choose others for being virtuous as Aristotle notes in his exposition of friendship in NE VIII-IX.

There must be though some initial perceptual experience that the child goes through that guides her to choose agent x instead of y to become her friend. This is where natural virtue becomes useful to our problem. The point is here that when a child, that is prone to the virtue of bravery for instance, observes another child who acts bravely (not in the way that a fully virtuous would act bravely of course) she will probably want to befriend them. What I want to say here is that by observing the other child *b* acting bravely, child *a*, recognizes a virtue that she might be prone to. I think that a sense of familiarity is borne from child *a* to child *b*, due to their connection of virtue, even at this initial level of their life.

Now let us turn back to imitation. Will the child restrict her imitation to her new friend? I think that the correct answer here is no. The child will actually imitate most of the actions that she observes and it does not matter whether these actions are her friend's or not. The problem is now, as Fossheim has already noted, that some of these actions are good while others are bad. The difference is though, that with the qualification of natural virtue the perspective of pleasure that each child feels by imitating these actions changes. Let me offer an example from the point of view of mental aptitudes in order to make my point more clear.

¹⁴⁹ I have already argued in chapter 3 regarding whom the virtuous agent desires to befriend and why.

Let us assume that a child has a remarkable aptitude for chess and she really enjoys playing this game a lot. This child is exposed though in many other games (i.e. football). Now, I do not think that this child will get as much pleasure from imitating the players of other games than the pleasure she would get had she imitated a chess player. The difference is that in the case of chess, the child starts recognizing her aptitude for the game through a feeling of inherent pleasure that accompanies the activity of actually playing it. This inherent pleasure is what distinguishes the value of imitating this action-playing chess- from any other. I think that we must understand imitation regarding virtue respectively. This means that the pleasure that the child feels from imitating an action that involves a virtue on which she has an aptitude for must be far more intense than imitating any other actions¹⁵⁰. Let us imagine then a child that has an aptitude for bravery.

Now, when this child observes her environment she will be able to recognize, at least in a primary level, another child's brave action. This is going to be the starting point of who the child really is; namely, she is going to recognize virtue in itself; this virtue being bravery. In this case, the child will be more eager to imitate such an action than a vile one. The reason for this is that she will feel this inherent pleasure from acting bravely herself. I think it is the right time now to build the connection of mimesis and friendship that I promised at the beginning.

The point here is that the child (C) that observed another one acting bravely-even not in the full sense that Aristotle demands from his virtuous agent-does so due to, we could say, some sense of sympathy towards the other child's action. This

¹⁵⁰ See NE 1109b2-5.

sympathy derives from the fact that her capacity of bravery is animated in someone else. This can lead the child to want to befriend the other brave child.

Now, by imitating the brave child, C comes to understand in some first level not only that the other is "so-and-so" (brave), but, also, that C itself has, and can actualize the capacity of being brave. This is, I think, the first step for C to love the other for who he is, namely for being brave. Thus, when friendship is connected to imitation we can understand that C comes to realize -in a first level- her having the capacity and actuality for some virtue, and others having the capacity and actuality for some virtue.

I think then that we should not take children as just "pure imitators", namely apes, of others' actions¹⁵¹. When we add then the qualification of natural virtue we can see Fossheim's argument from a fresh and promising perspective. I do not deny, though, that even with the qualification of natural virtue there are still potential factors that may put at risk the child's correct moral development. The reason for this is that the young agent is exposed to myriad stimuli that can become objects of imitation; some of them might be good (i.e. magnificence) while others might be bad (i.e. stealing). The role of parents and teachers of this child is to protect her from the bad ones and encourage the good ones. My idea of natural virtue is though that parents and teachers should not only encourage the imitation of good actions generally, but, also, and more specifically, to encourage the imitation of good actions that can derive and flourish through friendship. The point is that once parents and teachers realize the

¹⁵¹ But do the children understand these actions as truly virtuous as the advanced virtuous agent does? No they do not. But the important thing is for them to start imitating something that seems to them more pleasurable than anything else. And in this case the pleasure that derives from another agent's virtuous action seems to be an ideal starting point for the moral education and development of the child.

child's capacity for virtue they should immediately support a potential friendship with another child with a similar capacity. The bottom line is that it is different for the child to develop the correct habits on her own than it could have if she was engaged in a friendship. The binding nature of friendship is crucial for the child in order for her to develop a relationship based on some primitive understanding of virtue. For instance if the child does not behave in a brave way she does not only betray herself and who she is; she also betrays her friend. Thus, if the child connects virtue and friendship it is not easy for her to fail to form the correct habits; this connection is not an easy task though.

It is not an easy connection because the child does not have a full conception of virtue just yet. Thus she can easily deviate from the path of the good. It takes close attention and correct guidance on behalf of the child's parents and teachers for her to morally develop through the correct objects of imitation. My point here is though that the child can make the first right step towards moral development through imitation of "virtuous" friends of, more or less, a similar age. The reason for this is that for Aristotle, a significant difference in virtue between agents may suppress, devalue, or more probably terminate their friendship (NE 1158b34-1159a1)

What remains now is to offer a new approach to imitation. Specifically, I will discuss the value of imitation in the moral development of morally mature agents. I will call this kind of imitation "interpretative mimesis." The reason for calling this kind of imitation as interpretative is that the agent is not aping others' actions as the child does. She now uses others' actions as potential patterns that can be used in future situations. In addition, the agent will use this pattern based on her own particular abilities. I will argue though that "interpretative mimesis" can function

ideally through the imitation of her character friends; namely those friends of the agent who are highly virtuous as she is.

6.5. Interpretative Mimesis (IM)

In this section I will introduce a new idea that has not been examined by Fossheim. Specifically, I will argue that imitation is a process that does not stop after the end of someone's ethically immature¹⁵² period of life. In contrast, even adults who have reached the highest level of ethical maturity can still benefit from the process of mimesis.

The difference though between the two periods of someone's life is that during his ethically immature period, the agent cannot easily know apart the value of the objects of imitation; and even when we add the qualification of natural virtue, their capacity for virtue has not been habituated repeatedly enough so that the child does not easily deviate from the path of the good. In this case I tried to deal with this problem by taking guidance from parents and friendship with other children as possible tools that could offer a solution to this baffling issue.

But in the occurrence of ethically mature agents, someone could argue that Aristotle does not make imitation a necessary tool for the agent's moral development; and this objection would make sense. For one thing, the agent's correct habits have been formed. Also, the agent has, after years of experience, developed practical wisdom, and he is able to have a sharp mental judgment to confront new situations. But does the fact that he has practical wisdom render his further moral development needless? I will try to show that this question deserves a negative answer.

¹⁵² I have taken the expression “ethical immaturity” from NE 1095a8: ἡθoς νεαρός.

We will see later on in our discussion of interpretative mimesis that the ethically mature agent learns from others' experiences¹⁵³ as in the EVCF. I will argue that the agent uses these "mimetic patterns" that derive from these forms of experiences for her own benefit.

Specifically, the patterns I am talking about function as images and examples of virtuous actions that can be useful for future reference in case the agent faces a similar situation¹⁵⁴. These patterns can enrich and deepen her understanding of the good. The point is that the agent might, on the one hand, have been habituated correctly by repeating good actions, but, on the other hand, this does not mean that she has learned everything that concerns virtuous actions in general.

Learning¹⁵⁵ from other agents' experiences can fill this gap. Therefore, the most significant result of interpretative mimesis is that it facilitates the agent to ameliorate her epistemic tools for future situations of practicing the virtues¹⁵⁶. But before getting deeper into this outcome we should first determine two things: (1) that moral development does not stop after the agent reaches ethical maturity, and, (2) that character friendship plays a crucial role in the MD of the agent during this period. If we cannot show that (1) and (2) are true then my theory of IM will not be of any use.

¹⁵³ In chapter 5 I explained these experiences mainly in the cases of EVCF. Now I will use these experiences here as mimetic patterns that the highly advanced agent may use interpretively in future situations.

¹⁵⁴ Someone could say here that the child has memories of examples as well. The problem is though with children that they lack the level of sophistication of the highly advanced moral agents in using these memories as patterns in the best possible way. Instead, they mostly tend to ape others' actions than interpret them in their own particular way.

¹⁵⁵ Now someone could ask here: Is this phronesis or a difference type of learning? We should not consider this type of learning as phronesis since the agent has already reached this level. We could say though that it is a type of learning that helps the *phronimos* to have even more epistemic tools in order to confront new situations with the maximum precision possible.

¹⁵⁶ We may say here then that this process might enrich the abilities of those capable of phronesis.

6.6. Character Friendship and Moral Development

In this section, I will first of all try to establish two things: (1) that moral development does not stop after the agent reaches ethical maturity¹⁵⁷, and, (2) that character friendship plays a crucial role for the MD of the agent during this period of her life. Now (1) and (2) are interconnected; and we are going to see why right away.

In NE 1156b7-10 Aristotle argues: “...it is the friendship between good people, those resembling each other in excellence, which is complete; for each alike of these wishes good things for the other in so far as he is good, and he is good in himself.” Aristotle recognizes here the friendship that is formed between good (*ἀγαθοί*) people as the one that is complete¹⁵⁸. He emphasizes the value of this form of friendship, especially in contrast to the other two kinds; namely, those of pleasure and utility (EN 1156a10-17).

Now the most important element that we should keep from Aristotle's idea of character friendship is that only good (*ἀγαθοί*) people can take part in it. When Aristotle's says “good” here he means, of course, those agents who have achieved moral excellence¹⁵⁹ after years of moral development. But the fact that highly accomplished moral agents can form friendships between them does not tell much

¹⁵⁷ When I say “ethical maturity” here I mean just the completely virtuous agent and not those who belong at the EVCF category. The latter ones cannot be characterized as ethically immature though as the children certainly can. I just use the terms ethically mature and immature in this section to show the huge difference of ethical level between children and agents who have reached the level of phronesis.

¹⁵⁸ Character friendship is considered to be by Aristotle as complete or perfect because it incorporates elements such as trust, loyalty, and most of all, virtue. These elements make this form of friendship long lasting and stable. In contrast, friendships of advantage and pleasure are considered as imperfect because they lack these elements and thus they are inferior and incomplete compared to character friendship.

¹⁵⁹ But, despite saying this, Aristotle lets agents who have not reached the highest level of moral maturity to form character friendships, as we have seen in chapter 4.

by itself. Aristotle though has an agenda. In fact, character friendships provide benefits to both agents in this relationship. There are two major ones which I think are the most important for the current discussion.

On the one hand, Aristotle says that continuous virtuous activity¹⁶⁰ is difficult when the agent lives in isolation; but good activities can be carried on longer through the pleasure the agent feels from his friend's good actions (EN 1170a4-10). This claim is part of a long and complex argument in EN IX.9¹⁶¹ where Aristotle tries to explain why friends are needed for the agent. Now this passage has for the most part to do with the agent's ability to retain a constant eudaimonic state. Thus Aristotle's point is that just by watching her virtuous friend, the agent may retain some sort of vicarious activity and eudaimonic state just by the pleasure she feels because of their action. But this passage only suggests a mechanism for the agent to retain her eudaimonic state for longer periods than if she would have without friends. But still, it does not imply any ways of moral development. It will be useful though in understanding another passage from EN IX that we will see shortly.

On the other hand, Aristotle goes on to argue: "Living in the company of good people may also provide training in excellence, as Theognis says" (EN 1170a11-12). This is a very important claim from Aristotle. He argues that character friendship may be, among other things, a learning experience for the agent that takes part in it. This means that they can cultivate their virtue through this kind of friendship.

Let us see then what we have established so far and if, therefore, we can accept (1) and (2). First, we said that highly advanced agents may engage in what Aristotle

¹⁶⁰When Aristotle says "continuous virtuous activity" here he wants to imply the eudaimonic state that someone feels after it.

¹⁶¹ I have already discussed briefly this passage in 2.7.2 of the current thesis.

calls character friendships. Second, we said that the agent may not only retain her eudaimonic state, but, also, she can even morally develop through it.

Now, by establishing these two points we may support our previous claims (1) and (2). That is so because the second point shows that the morally advanced agent continues advancing and cultivating her virtue, and her MD does not atrophy after she reaches the highest level of moral excellence. Also, the second point shows that character friendship is a significant way through which the agent may continue her post-moral excellence MD. And the first point was a prerequisite for the second one; because, if the agent is not highly advanced, she cannot take part in virtuous friendship, or at least not fully anyway¹⁶².

Now that we have shown that the agents have the chance to further improve and develop their character through virtuous friendship, it is time we moved on to the heart of this chapter's argument. Namely, we are going to see in the next section that the process of MD in character friendship is actually an imitative one. I will call this process "*Interpretative Mimesis*" (*IM*).

6.7. The Theoretical Foundations of Moral Development in IM

Before getting deeper into the theory of IM, I will first of all establish the theoretical foundations of it. I have to admit here that this theory that I will propose *is* Aristotle's on the one hand, but he does not get deep into it in the text. Thus, I will try to construct an argument that is mostly inspired by his idea and I think fits the

¹⁶² I have already argued in chapter 4 that Aristotle allows character friendship to emerge between unequally developed moral agents and that they can both benefit from such a relationship regarding their moral development. But even so this kind of character friendship is not as powerful as the one I am referring to in the current chapter. See also: Vakirtzis (2013). In this paper I present a similar argument as in chapter 4 of this thesis.

general scheme he suggests for the MD of highly advanced moral agents. Let us first start then with the connection of what we said previously in the present chapter.

In the previous section, among other things, I made two points that have to do with the benefits of character friendship for the agent's moral development. I claimed that: (a) the agent may prolong her eudaimonic state through the pleasure she feels from her friends' virtuous actions, and, (b) she can cultivate the virtues through character friendship. Now if we just keep these two arguments of Aristotle under consideration then we cannot claim to have established the IM thesis.

First, because (a) seems to offer a way for someone to retain their virtuous status and not develop it, and, second, because (b) states that MD is possible inside character friendship but it does not justify the way¹⁶³ that this can be achieved. There is, however, an argument that Aristotle makes at the end of book IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where he seems to connect the assumed lack of explanation of the process of MD in character friendship in (a) and (b).

In EN 1172a9-14 Aristotle makes the following statement¹⁶⁴:

“And so it happens that the friendship¹⁶⁵ of bad people is bad. For they share bad things and are unstable, and they become thoroughly bad in coming to be like each

¹⁶³ I have already argued in chapters 1 and 2 that through the exchange of external goods the agents are able to develop and practice virtues in which they were previously slightly underdeveloped. In the case of IM though the way of MD is different as we will see in what follows.

¹⁶⁴ Nussbaum (1986: 363) has also argued that in this passage Aristotle wants to show that character friends emulate each other's actions. But she does not try to explain how this psychological process actually works. In addition, Sherman (1987: 610) also refers to the passage at NE 1172 a9-14 and says that the agent may emulate character traits- he does not possess- that he admires in his friend. However, Sherman does not explain the process of emulation. In what follows I will try to develop a new theory that will get into the details of the process of emulating our friend's action and the value of this process for the agent's moral development.

¹⁶⁵ Aristotle seems to accept here some kind of friendship between bad people that leads them to become even worse (*μολοθηροί*). But does he believe something like that? If he does then he is contradicting himself. This is so because as we saw in section 1.2 of the current

other. But that of good¹⁶⁶ people is good, since it continues to develop as they associate, and they seem to become even better people through their activity and by mutual correction, since they mold each other in what they find pleasing, which is the source of the saying, 'noble things from noble men.'”

Aristotle distinguishes here the aftereffects of a friendship between bad people and those between good ones. In the former case, the agents' constant interaction makes them thoroughly bad, while in the latter case the good agents become even better as their friend stands as a constant source and example of action for them that helps them to further improve their characters. This process is described by Aristotle as one where the agent molds her friend's actions, of what she finds pleasing.

Now in this passage, Aristotle seems to take points (a) and (b) that we examined before, one step further. Namely, he implies, on one hand, that when the agent observes their friend's good action, they are not only able to achieve some sort of vicarious eudaimonic state through the pleasure they feel from their virtuous actions. They can also mold their friend's actions in what they find pleasing. And this fact can make them better. Therefore, in this way, Aristotle tries to make clearer the way

thesis the vicious agent can neither love himself nor others (NE 1166a13-29; b6-25). This happens because the vicious agent is at variance with himself and suffers from conflicting desires (NE1166b7-8) and decisions. Aristotle then must not be talking about friendship in the case of the vicious agents as he does in all the other relationships that he considers as such. He must then refer to the relationship between vicious agents as friendship here in a way that it is just homonymous in relation to any other kind of friendship and in particular to the character one. This means that the “friendship” between the vicious just shares the same name with the other kinds of friendship but it has, in fact, a different meaning. At last, Aristotle seems as if he is mocking the nature of such a relationship that perhaps does not worth to be called friendship. This is evident from what Aristotle says at 1172a10: *ἀβέβαιοι ὄντες*. At this point Aristotle emphasizes the fact that the bad or vicious agents are deep inside indecisive, they are contradicting with themselves (see section 1.2). Now, what kind of relationship would one be where both agents had this kind of instability of character would have been a good story for a fictional writer. Therefore, I think that Aristotle might be calling friendship the vicious agents' relationship but he does not believe that it actually qualifies for the meaning he wants to infuse in all other kinds of this technical term.

¹⁶⁶ The Greek word here is *ἐπιεικής* (decent). Aristotle does not differentiate though much between someone being good (*ἀγαθός*), and being decent. Actually, in various cases, he uses these terms interchangeably (Pol. 1308b27; NE cf. 1102b10; 1168a33).

that through character friendship the agent may morally advance by using her friend as an example or model for her actions. But even if this passage (EN 1172a9-14) makes (a) and (b) more solid, it still sounds cryptic. What does he mean when he says (q1) that the agent *molds* their friend's actions that they find pleasing? And (q2) how does this process actually help them to morally develop?

Concerning (q1) we have to clarify what *mold* means here. I take Aristotle to mean that the agent *imitates*¹⁶⁷ their friend's actions that they find pleasing. This means that they recognize these actions as virtuous and thus they take them worthy of being copied or imitated. But is this process of imitation the same as the one that occurs during the agent's childhood? I do not think so. Let me explain.

We previously saw Fossheim telling us that even if mimesis is a very powerful tool for the child's habituation it can have very serious drawbacks if she is not exposed to the correct imitative objects. He says: "*Mimesis* has its dangerously misleading power over us, simply because it has power over us; *mimesis* can forcefully motivate us to go the wrong way, simply because it can forcefully motivate us." (Fossheim, 2006: 116) And thus, he highlights the fact that there should be extreme attention to the young learner's imitative objects because it is very hard to "re-program" someone who has been exposed to vile imitative objects or actions (Fossheim, 2006: 116).

Fossheim's argument derives from a common sense understanding about children's behavior: they tend to "ape" other peoples' actions. This is so because they

¹⁶⁷ The Greek word for "copy" is "*ἀπομάττονται*". I take Aristotle though to imply some sort of imitation-as I have already argued in chapter 2- that as we will see it is different than Fossheim's use of mimesis in agent's MD during their youth.

have not yet developed the necessary discerning¹⁶⁸ ability in order to distinguish between actions which are worthy to be imitated and those which are not.

Now the difference with the morally advanced agent is that she does not have such problems. The reason for this is that she has the necessary tool in order to discern whether someone's actions are virtuous. I have already argued in chapter 3 that this tool is pleasure. This tool though of pleasure must first of all be useful for someone both when *he* acts virtuously and when *his* friends do so as well, because we cannot assume that the agent is able to feel pleasure from others' good actions but not from themselves'. Let us first start with the fact that the virtuous agent is able to feel pleasure from her own excellent moral actions and then we will move on to the pleasure that she feels from those of other virtuous agents. Concerning the first case Aristotle says: "Pleasure completes the activity not in the way the disposition present in the subject completes it, but as a sort of supervenient end, like the bloom of manhood on those in their prime." (EN 1174a32-4)

Now when Aristotle says here (EN 1174a32-4) that "pleasure completes the activity" he does not mean that the activity is in some way defective and that pleasure comes to improve this defection. Instead, he wants to say that the agent's

¹⁶⁸ Even though I tried to show that through natural virtue the child is able to choose his friend for some virtue he might recognize in his actions, this decision is still shady. The reason for this is that the child does not have the discerning abilities that the completely virtuous agent possesses as we discussed in chapter 3. This could lead the child to imitate some characteristics from the other child which are good along with others which are bad. Therefore, he could form bad habits which are really difficult to be removed from his character. This means that Fossheim's argument is really strong even though I tried to find possible counterarguments to his position. Nevertheless, I believe that the value of natural virtue for the imitative process of the child is an idea that deserves to be dug up more. I will not pursue though such an endeavor in the present thesis.

activity is as good as it should be, but pleasure gives her an extra bonus that compliments her achievement¹⁶⁹.

However, apart from this fact, I think that Aristotle also wants to say something even simpler here. Namely, when the morally advanced agent performs a morally excellent action is able to feel an appropriate pleasure from it. And this pleasure serves not only the purpose of crowning the agent's achievement of good action. It also confirms¹⁷⁰ that her action *is* virtuous. Otherwise the agent should feel pain from such an action and certainly not pleasure. Now let us move one to see how the agent may confirm that someone else's actions are virtuous.

In order to show this we must refer to EN 1170a4-10 again. We may use this passage now to show that the agent is not only able to feel pleasure from her own virtuous actions but from others' actions as well; and especially from their character friends' ones. This means that pleasure gives them the discerning ability that is necessary to tell whether an action is good or not. And this is the major difference between children and morally advanced adults concerning potential imitative objects. The former cannot (easily) distinguish the worthy from the unworthy sources of imitation. The latter can do so with the aid of pleasure. Now that we have showed that the imitative process of the morally advanced agents does not have the dangerous repercussions of the children's we can move on to explain the process of IM.

6.8. Interpretative Mimesis at Work

¹⁶⁹ For a similar point see Kraut (2012).

¹⁷⁰ See chapter 3 for the explanation of feeling pleasure from my good actions and those of others. In this chapter I am just briefly revisiting these issues without getting into much detail.

Before entering the main argument of this section I first have to state some preliminary points that will be useful in understanding better the process of IM. In fact I want to show that each virtuous agent has her own particular¹⁷¹ way of performing a good action. Now in the case of character friendship, this means that even though the two friends are virtuous it does not mean that they will perform a good action in the same way.

I think that the particularity of each agent consists in unique abilities that they possess that help them confront various situations. Now these abilities make each agent have a different approach to every new challenge they face. One characteristic example of particularity is given by Stern-Gillet. Specifically, she says:

“No two individuals’ virtuous dispositions need be the same, nor should their virtuous actions have to be performed at a similar level or in comparable circumstances, to be deemed virtuous. Standing one’s ground in battle and backing an unpopular measure in the assembly require different kinds of courage, and most lives will not provide the opportunity for performing either or both actions” (Stern-Gillet, 1995: 47).

Stern-Gillet's point is that different experiences demand different applications of the same virtue. I agree with her. This is a good way to show that Aristotle wants his agents to express the virtues in their own *particular* way. The point I want make though about particularity is rather different. Namely, I want to show that the particularity of the virtuous agents can be manifested even in similar cases that they

¹⁷¹ At this point, I will not deviate from chapter 3 regarding the views I exposed there that have to do with the particularity of the virtuous agent’s actions. I argued in chapter 3 that each agent has his own way of performing a virtuous action; and that is so because of the “mean relative to us” idea. That is, his ability to adapt to each situation separately and judge through his practical wisdom which is the correct path to follow every time by using all means available. I referred though briefly in chapter 3 (section 3.7) that the agent’s skills and abilities also give him a very unique level of particularity that help him differentiate from other virtuous agents regarding the application of virtues. Now, I will submit in this chapter that when the agent imitates his character friend’s action, he adds an extra tool for his practical wisdom to use in order to confront new and challenging situations even more effectively.

have to face. This happens due to each one's special abilities¹⁷² that they incorporate in the action.

As we will see in what follows I will try to connect this argument with IM. I will contend that someone can imitate their friend's action in their own way. This means that they will not blindly copy their friend's action. Instead, they will interpret them by applying some part of their actions in a similar case they might confront in the future. Let us see closer this new approach that I propose.

I will divide the meaning of interpretative mimesis in two parts. In the first part, I will explain how the agent uses the example of other virtuous agents as patterns for future reference in her own moral situations. In the second part I will argue that when it comes for her to use this pattern, she incorporates the elements of her own character into the imitated virtuous action; this is in essence what I call "interpretative mimesis". Let us take the first part then.

Let us assume that we have some agent A, who has significantly advanced in ethical maturity. Now, this agent observes another virtuous agent, B, who performs let's say a courageous action. In particular, agent B saves an old lady from a thief by using her karate skills. Agent A though who is a kung-fu student is not familiar with the moves that B used to save the old lady; but those moves seemed really effective to her. Now, if the use of these pattern-acquired moves fit a similar situation she

¹⁷²I have already briefly sketched in section 3.7 what I mean by the abilities and skills that the agent builds in his action. Now, to be more specific, when I say "special abilities" here I mean: (a) some capacities that the agent might have from birth that she works on them throughout her life or (b) some abilities that she acquires during her life. For instance, (a1) someone might have a capacity for speed and she works on this capacity through her life and gets better at it. In addition, (b1) the agent might learn a martial art at some point in her life. Now in a situation where courage is demanded, she could use either or both of these abilities. She is going to be courageous though in her own particular way by using these abilities that she has.

might face at some point, she could use them in order to meet the demands of this future situation. Let us move now to examine the second part of interpretative mimesis in order to see how the agent integrates her own particularity of virtuous actions with the acquired pattern of agent B.

In essence, the second part involves the agent using the acquired pattern in her own particular way. This means that she will interpret the virtuous action observed based on her way of performing virtuous actions; thus bringing out her own personality. I will give two examples to make the case for the second part. The first example has to do with agent A being now in a position to perform a courageous action in a similar situation as agent B was when he saved the old lady. The second example has to do with an experienced actor who follows, on the one hand, the director's instructions on how to perform a scene from a play, but, on the other hand, he performs the scene in his particular way. Let me first start with the "old lady" example.

Let us suppose that agent A faces a similar situation as the one she observed B facing. In this case a thief tries to steal money from a young woman. Now agent A, having already acquired the form (pattern)¹⁷³ of B's action, will be able to protect the young woman from the thief. The difference is though that agent A will perform the courageous action in her own way. For instance she could be faster than agent B,

¹⁷³ I have already argued in the 5th chapter that in a character friendship, when one of the two agents performs a virtuous action she functions as an active power, and her friend, who functions as a passive power, receives the form of this action. Now, I know that I offered this analysis in order to substantiate the developmental process of the EVCF that I briefly sketched in chapter 4. The psychological process though of chapter 5 can also be applied to the case of highly advance moral agents as well. I take Aristotle to imply that this is a universal mental process that agents go through regardless of their level of moral development. The difference of agents in EVCF and practically wise ones is anyway that of how and, how well, they apply the pattern acquired and not the process of receiving it in the first place.

while agent B could be stronger than her. In addition she could incorporate an extra move from her knowledge of kung-fu in order to make the sequence of moves even more effective. The point is that agent A is not *strictly* imitating agent B's action. Instead, she adds her own personal elements of character, abilities, and talents in the virtuous action. Indeed, agent A interprets agent B's action and makes it a part of her overall character. This shows the maturity of agent A. The fact that she incorporates elements of her character to the form of the action of agent B is actually making her an interpreter of this action and not a blind imitator.

Let us see now the second example which I will call the "actor's interpretation." The second example is of the same kind as the first one. The main reason I offer it though is that it gives the reader a generic paradigm that someone should turn their attention to when they want to understand what IM is and how it functions.

Let us assume then that we have an experienced actor and a director. The latter wants to show the former how she wants her to perform a particular act from a play. The point now is that the actor, even though she follows the director's approach, performs the act in her own *particular* way. This happens because this actor is not a newcomer in the profession but an experienced one. This helps her incorporate elements in the act that the newcomer has not yet mastered (e.g. better sense of her body, control and manipulation of emotions, enunciation, etc.). Having mastered all these necessary elements of acting, the experienced actor is able to produce a unique performance of the act shown by the director. Thus she is able to interpret the act in her own distinct way.

In contrast, if the actor was an inexperienced one, she would have imitated the director's performance in a more faithful way. This is, I think, the greatest difference

between an inexperienced agent and an experienced one. In the first one, the mimetic process is a mechanized practice where the agent does not yet have the ability to incorporate elements of her character; this happens due to her lack of experience. In the second, however, the agent is able to apply elements of her already formed character into the action and thus interpret the imitated act in her own *particular way*.

I think that the two examples which I offered above may provide the reader a first attempt to understand Aristotle's cryptic passage at NE 1172a9-14. I will not deny of course that my argument seems speculative due to the lack of textual support since Aristotle does not explicitly describe the process of IM. I think though that the interpretation that I have offered conforms to the character of the practically wise man. We should not forget that this level of moral excellence requires experience because the agent needs knowledge of particular facts (NE 1142a14-17). I do not think that it would be unintuitive to say that these particulars function as patterns that the agent uses in the future where she might face similar situations. If we accept then my argument we could say that the agent's experience gets even richer through the use of patterns that she has acquired from her friend's actions.

The point I tried to make in this last chapter is that the highly advanced agent's moral development continues despite the fact that she has reached such a high level of moral excellence. I think that Aristotle makes this argument because he considers his agent as someone whose moral understanding and character are constantly evolving. Otherwise he would not have needed the argument in EN 1172a9-14.

Now my idea of the completely virtuous agent's moral development through character friendship is that patterns are still useful for her but in a different manner

than in the pre-phronesis period that we examined in chapters 4 and 5. At this point she imitates her virtuous friend and interprets her actions in her own particular way. And this fact is able to enrich her experience by giving her even more options for action in new and challenging situations. And the difference between the completely virtuous agent man and that of the EVCF is, as I have already argued in section 5.9 of the previous chapter, the former's ability of practical wisdom. This ability helps him use the pattern acquired from his friend's action in the ideal way, not only in his own way, but, most of all correctly, every time he might need it. In contrast, the agent from the EVCF will probably make mistakes in applying the pattern received from his friend's action. But this is normal since he will have to work up a sweat in order to perform like the practically wise man.

6.9. Conclusion

In this last chapter I argued that Aristotle proposes an imitative model of MD that takes place between character friends. This model has the advantage of eschewing some problems that we can find in Fossheim's argument on imitation in children; namely, that they cannot distinguish between worthy from unworthy objects of imitation. These issues can be overpassed in character friendship due to the capacity of virtuous agents to feel pleasure from their friends' actions.

Furthermore, the IM theory shows that Aristotle makes virtuous friendship a valuable tool for the agent to further develop her character by imitating her virtuous friend's actions; and always, of course, in her own particular way. At last, I want to stress the fact that IM does not only take our understanding of Aristotle's theory of MD as a whole one step further, but, it might also spark new ideas in psychologists for experimentation on how imitation works in adult moral agents and their friends,

and not only. Also, the theory of IM might be useful to neurophysiologists' research on “mirror-neurons”¹⁷⁴ and their function as an imitative mechanism. Perhaps Aristotle turns out to be more up-to-date than we think he is.

¹⁷⁴ See: Rizzolatti & Craighero (2004).

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