
INTRODUCTION

Moral philosophers for the most part tend to regard the Aristotelian theory of friendship much as they might a kinsman of distant and perhaps dubious descent. They treat the theory more with perfunctory courtesy than with perfect cordiality when they do not utterly ignore it.¹

These philosophers allow themselves to cultivate an unfortunate attitude toward Aristotle's theory, for they prevent themselves from comprehending his theory fully. Failing to see its integrity, they are blind to both its theoretical subtlety and its practical versatility. They indeed leave central problems in the theory without generally accepted resolutions. One rather important problem left unresolved is the very problem of what Aristotelian friendship is: Is friendship an altruistic relationship or an egoistic one? That is to say, when we enter a friendship, do we perform acts of friendship for the sake of our friend or for the sake of ourselves? Classical philosophers resolve this problem in ways diametrically opposed to one another. One philosopher argues, for example, that all friendship is altruistic. When we do something for them, we intend to act not for our own benefit but for the benefit of our friends.² But another philosopher argues that all friendship is egoistic. When we act for them, we do so with the intention of benefiting ourselves through our friends.³

Another important problem left without a generally accepted resolution is the problem of why Aristotelian friendship is: Does friendship have a motivation that is altruistic or egoistic? Again we find diametrically opposed interpretations. One commentator argues that friendship has a motivation which is altruistic. We act out of sympathy. As we relate to the

thoughts and emotions of our own, so too we relate to the thoughts and emotions of our friends.⁴ Another commentator argues that friendship has an egoistic motivation. We act out of self-love. When we benefit our friends, we really achieve our own good, for we do what is noble for us.⁵

Other related, yet unresolved, problems concerning Aristotelian friendship include the problems of what political friendship is⁶ and why it is.⁷ There also remains the problem of what affinity, if any, might exist between political friendship and justice. Is friendship of this sort a condition of justice? Or is justice a condition of it? One classical scholar argues that justice is a condition of friendship in any community. That is, we must render advantages and honors to one another if we are to have friendship.⁸ Another scholar argues that without friendship there can be no justice. Only in a community with mutual confidence do we effect private and public advantage through contract and division of labor. Unless we are friends, we secure advantage only by murder and plunder.⁹

And these philosophers are negligent not only about problems of theory but also about problems of application. They especially leave a crucial problem concerning political friendship unresolved. And so I also wish to ask: What is the likelihood of establishing political friendship in a society?¹⁰

The fact that they fail to resolve these problems, I take to be a sign that moral philosophers fail to have recourse to a principle to guide them in their consideration of Aristotle's theory. In this study I do intend to use a principle to resolve the ethical and political problems awaiting us and to show that the theory has unity as well as theoretical and practical merit. I shall not introduce any novel principle of analysis but merely make use of Aristotle's own principle, that of happiness.

My intention is both exegetic and heuristic. Aristotle's principle permits us to see that his theory of friendship is an integral part of his ethical and political theories; but it also permits us to see that his theory has a unique conception of a human good—a conception of another self. This conception of another self in turn shows us that his theory of friendship is more sophisticated and more feasible than usually supposed. His theory appears to be at once altruistic and pluralistic.¹¹

I shall accordingly apply Aristotle's conception of happiness in an analysis of his conceptions of personal friendship, political friendship, and justice. I shall begin by addressing the problem of what personal friendship is. With Aristotle's conception of happiness, we shall be able to see in the third chapter that personal friendship is essentially good will and good wishes, reciprocated and recognized, for the sake of the happiness of another person. Friendship of this kind is only accidentally good will

and good wishes, reciprocated and recognized, for the sake of profit or pleasure for ourselves. Friendship is thus essentially altruistic and accidentally egoistic.

The problem of the motivation for personal friendship I shall take up in the fourth chapter. This chapter is an analysis of Aristotle's explanation of why personal friendship is. The problem is especially acute with regard to altruistic friendship, in which we act for the sake of the happiness of another person. The problem is why we do so. In friendship of the egoistic sort, we act for the sake of our own happiness or what we conceive it to be. The problem thus has an obvious solution.

Aristotle argues that the motive for friendship is an object of mental pleasure. We act for the sake of the happiness of another person because we find that the happiness of another is an object of pleasant apperception. He also argues that the happiness of another in either its primary or its secondary sense is an object of mental pleasure. Thus friendship is also pluralistic.

Aristotle's resolution for the problem of motivation appears at first to be a paradox. Aristotle argues that we find the happiness of another to be an object of pleasant apperception because the happiness of another is a good belonging to us. But how can the happiness of another be our own good? To say that it is might seem to reduce altruistic friendship to egoistic friendship, for we might seem to act for the sake of our own profit or pleasure.

We shall see that Aristotle's conception of another self overcomes this paradox. Another self is an actualization of Aristotle's moral principle in the character and activity of another person. That is to say, it is an actualization of happiness and virtue in another person. Another self is therefore a good, for someone who is happy has human goodness; and another self belongs to us, for we make other selves ours by helping them attain or retain their happiness. They become our work, so to speak.

In the fifth chapter we shall see that political friendship is unanimity and that friendship of this type has a definition and a motivation quite similar to those of personal friendship. Political friends are fellow citizens, and fellow citizens exhibit good will and good wishes, most probably with reciprocity and recognition, for the sake of other citizens. At least citizens act for the sake of others when their constitution is healthy; but when their constitution is corrupt, they have no political friendship. Political friendship is thus altruistic.

We shall also see that fellow citizens appear to act for the sake of the happiness of others because they find the happiness of others to be an object of pleasant apperception. And they find either primary or secondary

happiness to be an object of mental pleasure. Thus political friendship, too, is pluralistic.

Those people who are political friends would accordingly appear to act for the sake of other selves as do personal friends. Indeed, we shall see that they do. But political friends have a conception of another self more general than do personal friends. Fellow citizens define their conception of happiness politically rather than personally, for they define happiness for themselves through a constitution and its laws.

The final chapter of analysis compares political friendship with justice of the political kind. We shall see that political justice is only a mark of political friendship, though its end and motive are similar. People who are just act for the sake of the happiness of other people, and they appear to find the happiness of another to be an object of mental pleasure. However, political justice differs from political friendship because just people do not act on the same emotion that political friends do. Justice is only a condition of friendship, for we exhibit marks of friendship to others before we become friends with them.

Aristotle's theory of friendship is thus an integral part of his ethical and political theories, for his theory of friendship relies on his principle of happiness. The feasibility of Aristotle's theory of political friendship is apparent if we remember that Aristotle distinguishes healthy constitutions of three kinds. If friendship underlies these constitutions, political friendship would also have three kinds. Friendship of the political variety may in fact spring up and flourish among people pursuing either primary or secondary happiness; or a statesman may attempt to introduce and cultivate friendship among people pursuing these ends.

Why other philosophers do not attempt the obvious maneuver of using Aristotle's conception of happiness to analyze his theory of friendship, I cannot say for certain. But one cause of their failure appears to be that philosophers discussing Aristotle's theory have purposes that are either very broad or very narrow. Most philosophers who discuss friendship intend to comment on the whole of Aristotle's *Ethics* or *Politics*. They thus give their attention to the theory merely in passing.¹² More recently, some philosophers consider only one or two problems in his theory and thus examine the theory piecemeal.¹³

But a more profound cause may lie in our linguistic habits. These habits appear to explain why philosophers often fail to take an appropriate perspective on the theory. We usually use "friendship" to designate a rather narrow range of phenomena, but the Greeks use "friendship" to designate a rather broad range of phenomena. We would therefore very likely bene-

fit from an effort to free ourselves from these prejudicious habits. To do this, I suggest that we make a preliminary survey of our subject.¹⁴

If we turn to the opening chapter of his discussion, we can see at once that Aristotle's arguments reflect a very wide range of human relationships. Aristotle sets out the two central problems concerning friendship in his first sentence:

After these things a discussion of friendship would follow, for friendship is a virtue or follows from a virtue, and it is most necessary for life. (*Eth.* 8.1.1155a3–5)

In this sentence he raises the problem of the nature of friendship when he states that it is a virtue or follows from a virtue. When he states that friendship is necessary for life, he raises the problem of the motivation for friendship, for a problem of necessity is a problem of causation.¹⁵

But what is of interest to us is that Aristotle takes special care to indicate that there is a problem about the necessity of friendship. He offers several arguments to show that friendship is indeed necessary, and his arguments cover relationships of several different kinds. The first argument concerns friendship and external goods and pertains to our usual conception of friendship—personal friendship:

No one would choose to live without friends though he had all other goods. For both rich men and those possessed of office and dynasty seem to need friends the most. What is the use of such property without beneficence, which is best and most praiseworthy when exercised toward friends? Or how can such prosperity be guarded and preserved without friends? For the greater it is, the more precarious it is. And in poverty and other misfortunes, men think that friends are the only refuge. (*Eth.* 8.1.1155a5–12)

Another argument concerned with goods of the soul and the body also applies to personal friendship:

The young friendship rescues from mistakes. The old it helps in their needs and supplements their actions that are failing because of their weakness. And those in the prime of life it stimulates to noble actions. For “two heads are better than one” and they are more able to intuit and to act. (*Eth.* 8.1.1155a12–16)

He thus indicates that personal friendship is necessary for rich and poor, for young and old, and even for those in the prime of life.

But Aristotle continues with an argument about parenthood among human beings and other animals and about less-intimate relationships among different races and groups traveling together:

Friendship seems to be inherent by nature in the relationship of parent to offspring and of offspring to parent not only among men but also among birds and most animals. And friendship also seems to be present among those of a similar race in their relationship with one another, especially among men. Hence, we praise lovers of fellow men. One may also see in his travels how every man belongs to each man and is friendly. (*Eth.* 8.1.1155a16–22)

And he suggests that friendship occurs among fellow citizens:

Friendship also seems to hold cities together, and statesmen seem to be more zealous about it than about justice. For unanimity seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all and expel faction as their worst enemy. (*Eth.* 8.1.1155a22–26)

He does not quite say that political friendship is unanimity, but he does imply that unanimity is friendly relationship of some sort among fellow citizens. It apparently holds cities together because it is the opposite of faction.

We may glean an even more striking conception of the range of Aristotle's theory of friendship if we bring together several seemingly disparate statements that Aristotle makes about friendships and other relationships. These diverse statements suggest that Aristotle uses "friendship" as a homonymic genus. He appears to use the word sometimes as a specific term to signify only personal friendship and sometimes as a generic term to signify both personal friendship and other relationships. These other relationships include both kinships and political relationships. By bringing these statements together, we shall also obtain an initial glimpse of what the cause of friendship is—and of what another self is.

In the *Ethics* Aristotle divides friendship into two major genera. He distinguishes kinship and comradeship from political friendship and other friendships:

All friendship exists in a community, as we have said. One might, however, mark off from the rest kinships and comradeships. Political friendship and the friendship of fellow tribesmen and that of fellow travelers and all friendships of such sort seem to be more in communities. For they appear to be in accordance with some convention. Among these someone might also place hospitality. (*Eth.* 8.12.1161b11–16)

He apparently divides friendship into natural relationships and conventional relationships. At least, he asserts that friendships other than kinship and comradeship are in accordance with some convention.¹⁶

If we consider kinship first, we can begin to see why Aristotle might call kinship and comradeship natural relationships. Friendships of both kinds have the same natural object—another self. When he discusses parenthood, Aristotle in fact introduces his conception of another self. He asserts that parenthood is the source of kinship of all other species and explains that parents and children love one another because parents reproduce themselves in their children:

Kinship seems to be of many species, and all species appear to depend on parenthood. For parents feel fondness for their children as being something of themselves, and children feel fondness for their parents as being something from them. (*Eth.* 8.12.1161b16–19)

Apparently, because of reproduction parents and children are what he calls “other selves” or “different selves”:

Parents therefore love their children as themselves, for their issue are like different selves in being separate. And children love their parents as being from them by nature. (*Eth.* 8.12.1161b27–30)

He unfortunately does not pause to define his conception of another self explicitly. But he does indicate that other selves are different from one another in one sense and yet identical to one another in another sense. We can see that other selves are obviously different from one another, for parents and children are different individuals. Yet other selves are also identical with or very similar to one another, for parents and children have the same or very similar natural qualities. He also indicates that another self is

the cause of friendship, for he implies that someone who is another self is a lovable object of some kind.

Parents and children thus love one another because they have similar natural qualities. And so parents and children are what one might call natural other selves to one another.

Though they are primarily natural other selves, Aristotle suggests that parents and children are also what one might call cultural other selves to one another. He implies that parents perpetuate their cultural characteristics in their children. Parents are the cause not only of the existence of their children but also of their upbringing and their education:

The friendship of children to parents, and of men to gods, is a relationship to them as to something good and superior. For parents have rightly done the most things, being the cause of the existence and the upbringing and also the education of their children. (*Eth.* 8.12.1162a4–7)

He argues that children love their parents not only as the source of their natural existence but also as the source of their moral and intellectual development. And he implies that parents act for the sake of the moral and intellectual virtues and activities of their children. He thus takes into account the biological life of children as well as their moral and intellectual life.

Parents and children are thus cultural other selves, too. Parents and children again are in one sense different from one another, for they are different individuals; but they are again in another sense the same as one another, for they have the same or very similar moral and intellectual qualities.

Aristotle confirms our inferences about his conception of another self when he discusses brotherhood. He argues that brothers, too, are natural other selves. Brothers love each other because they have the same parents:

Brothers love each other as being born of the same parents, for their identity with them makes them identical with each other. That is why people speak of the same blood and the same stock and so on. They are somehow the same thing in different individuals. (*Eth.* 8.12.1161b30–33)

He does not literally say that brothers are other selves, but he does say that they are “the same thing in different individuals.” And he argues that

brothers are identical with each other because they are identical with their parents. That is, they have the same natural qualities because they have natural qualities from the same parents.

He appears to imply that brothers are cultural other selves, too, when he argues that they are similar to comrades. Though he does not mention education, he explains that brothers are similar to comrades with respect to age and moral character:

Great contributors to friendship are a common upbringing and similarity of age. For “two of an age take to each other,” and people of similar habits tend to be comrades. That is why brothers are similar to comrades. (*Eth.* 8.12.1161b33–1162a1; see also 1162a9–14)

He argues that comrades have a friendship with one another because of their similar age and upbringing. He would thus imply that they have some natural identity with each other, for they have natural similarities because of their similar age. But he also implies that they have some cultural identity with each other. Because of their common upbringing, they have similar habits.

We conclude then that in more natural friendships the friends appear to be both natural and cultural other selves to one another. Parents and children are primarily natural other selves to one another because the parents are the cause of the existence of their children; but parents and children are also cultural other selves to one another because parents are the cause of the moral and mental development of the children. Siblings are both natural and cultural other selves, too, because they have the same parents and the same upbringing.¹⁷

We can also see that the friends in more conventional friendships appear to be other selves to one another. Though initially they have more of a natural identity, these friends eventually acquire an identity that is more cultural. Aristotle’s conception of their development shows that not only the family but also the village and the city rest on his conception of another self. As he argues in the *Ethics* that parents and children love each other because they are other selves, so, too, Aristotle implies in the *Politics* that fellow villagers and fellow citizens love each other because they are other selves.

Aristotle argues, of course, that the family naturally develops into the village, and the village into the city. He appears to assume that family members are primarily natural other selves, for marriage arises from a natural desire to create other selves:

Those who are not capable of being without one another must first of all be united. For example, male must be united with female for the sake of reproduction. And this they do not do from choice. But as with other animals and plants, they naturally long to leave behind another of the same sort as themselves. (*Pol.* 1.2.1252a26–30)

He does not literally assert that parents and children are other selves, but he does say that parents reproduce “another of the same sort as themselves.” He thus implies that they are different individuals with a natural identity. He also argues that the family comes to be for the sake of daily needs (*Pol.* 1.2.1252b12–15). If they come to be for these needs, parents and children again appear to be primarily biological other selves.

Aristotle implies that parents have some cultural identity, too, for he argues that marriage extends beyond reproduction:

But human beings dwell together not only for the sake of reproduction but also for the sake of the things important for life. For their functions are clearly divided, and the functions of men and women are different. They therefore toil for one another by contributing their own good to the common good. (*Eth.* 8.12.1162a20–24)

He even asserts that marriage may promote virtue:

But their friendship may also exist for the sake of virtue if they are good. For there is a virtue for each, and they may delight in virtue of such sort. (*Eth.* 8.12.1162a25–27)

If it promotes virtue, marriage promotes cultural other selves, for humans cultivate virtuous activity.

Aristotle argues that the village is an expansion of the family. At least, the village that is “most in accordance with nature” is:

The village most in accordance with nature appears to be an expansion of the family, composed of children and grandchildren, whom some say to be suckled with the same milk. (*Pol.* 1.2.1252b16–18)

By stating that it is “composed of children and grandchildren,” he clearly implies that this village has villagers who are natural other selves.

He also argues that cousins are friends because of their ultimate common parents:

Cousins and other kinsmen have ties by derivation from the ties of brothers, for they have ties as being from the same parents. And they belong more to each other or more to others in accordance with the nearness or distance of their ancestor. (*Eth.* 8.12.1162a1–4)

Cousins, too, thus appear to be natural other selves.

But he implies that fellow villagers are at least in part cultural other selves as well, for he argues that these villages satisfy “not only everyday needs” (*Pol.* 1.2.1252b15–16). These villages accordingly appear to satisfy some cultural needs, too.

By referring to the village of this type as most natural, Aristotle leaves open the possibility that villages may also be of other types. These other villages more clearly advance an identity that is cultural. He appears to refer to these villages when he argues that tribes and clans, sailors and soldiers, religious congregations and social clubs are friendships. Though they do not develop from a family, relationships of these kinds are villagelike relationships because they develop into cities:

Cities cannot be established among those who do not live in one and the same place and do not intermarry. That is why families arise in cities, and kinships and sacrifices and festivals. Relationships of such sort are the function of friendship, for friendship is the choice to live together. And the end of a city is to live well, and these relationships also exist for the sake of this end. (*Pol.* 3.9.1280b35–40)

He implies that not only families and other kinships but also religious groups and social gatherings are the means toward a city, for he argues that these relationships have the ends of living together and living well, and he explicitly asserts that a city has the end of living well and implies that a city has the end of living together.¹⁸

Aristotle explains that relationships of these sorts are parts of a city. They are parts because they only partially advance the interest of a political community:

All communities seem to be parts of a political community. For men journey together to attain some interest and to provide something that pertains to life. (*Eth.* 8.9.1160a8–11)

He explicitly asserts that religious congregations and social clubs, sailors and soldiers, tribesmen and clansmen, all advance the interest of a city only in part:

These other communities seek their interest in part. For example, sailors seek their interest at sea, either monetary profit or some such thing, and soldiers seek their interest at war, whether they desire money or victory or a city. Similarly tribesmen and clansmen. Some of these communities also seem to arise for the sake of pleasure—religious congregations and social clubs. For they exist for the sake of sacrifices and social events. (*Eth.* 8.9.1160a14–20)

He promptly states again not only that these relationships are parts of a city but also that all these relationships are friendships:

All these communities appear to be parts of the political community. And friendship of these kinds attend communities of these kinds. (*Eth.* 8.9.1160a28–30)

He asserts at least that friendships attend them.

Aristotle does not explicitly say how people in these friendships are other selves to one another, nor does he even say that they are other selves. We might, however, conjecture that these people are primarily cultural other selves. People clearly do not have to have natural identities with one another to join religious congregations or social clubs or to serve in armies or navies. Neither are all tribesmen nor all clansmen kin. But people in these relationships do have cultural identities with one another. Individuals in congregations and clubs, in navies and armies, and in tribes and clans have moral and intellectual identities of some kind. Though they provide some biological benefits, members of these groups primarily provide moral or intellectual benefits for one another, for they do have—in part at least—the end of living well.

Finally, Aristotle argues that several villages may combine into a city, and that a city satisfies all needs of its citizens:

The complete community formed from several villages is the city, a community having, in a word, the goal of full self-sufficiency, coming to be for the sake of life, and being for the sake of good life. (*Pol.* 1.2.1252b27–30)

He asserts explicitly that a city exists for the sake of happiness:

A city is a community of families and villages in a complete and self-sufficient life. And, as we say, this life is to live happily and nobly. Therefore, that the political community is for the sake of noble actions and not merely for living together, must be laid down. (*Pol.* 3.9.1280b40–1281a4)

Fellow citizens appear to be primarily cultural other selves and to have some moral and intellectual identity with one another. If it exists for the sake of happiness, their city exists for the sake of a moral and intellectual life, for happiness consists in a life of such sort.

Fellow citizens also appear to have moral and intellectual identities because a political community advances the interest of an entire life and other communities only the interest of part of life:

But all other communities seem to fall under the political community. For the political community seeks not present interest but an interest for an entire life, even making sacrifices and arranging assemblies for them and assigning honors to the gods and providing pleasant relaxations for themselves. For early sacrifices and assemblies appear to have arisen after the grain harvest as first fruits. (*Eth.* 8.9.1160a21–28)

The interest of an entire life would surely include both moral and intellectual interests. But citizens most clearly have a moral identity, for they have a common interest, which is justice:

And a political community seems to come together in the beginning and to endure for the sake of an interest. For this statesmen aim at, and they say that justice is the common interest. (*Eth.* 8.9.1160a11–14)

We see then that Aristotle's theory of friendship includes not only what we call personal friendships but also families, villages, and cities and that these natural and conventional relationships all rest on his conception of another self (Figure 1.1). We see, too, that Aristotle's conception of another self is a conception of people who are different individuals but who have natural or cultural identities. And, we begin to grasp the unity and diversity of Aristotle's conception of friendship, not to mention its sublimity.¹⁹

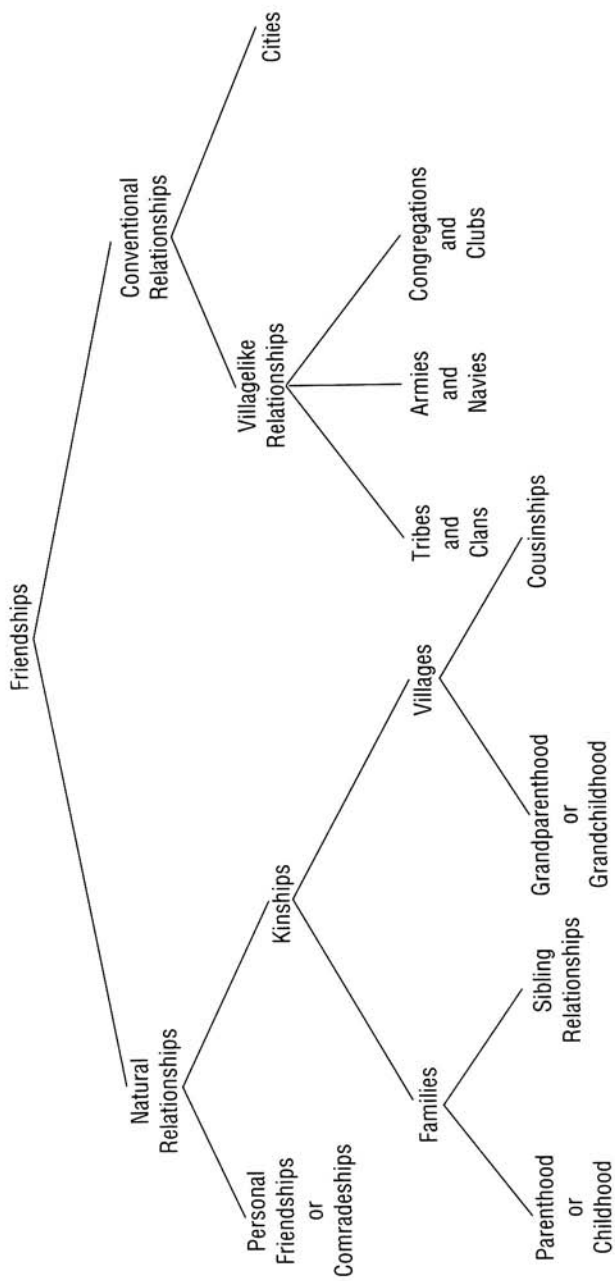


Figure 1.1

In the chapters that follow we shall use Aristotle's principle to examine the extremes in this spectrum of human friendship. I shall analyze personal friendship and political friendship. I wish to analyze personal friendship in order to determine what friendship is and why it is. Aristotle discusses friendship of this kind to define friendship and to explain its cause. I wish to analyze political friendship and also justice in order to compare Aristotle's definition of personal friendship and his explanation of it with his definition and explanation of political friendship and justice. I also intend to see what insight, if any, this comparison might yield for political philosophy. I would suggest that Aristotle's political philosophy might turn out to be both altruistic and pluralistic and that these properties would make his theory more sophisticated and more feasible than usually supposed.