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Friendship : Bridging the Gap Between Self and Other

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**Friendship:
Bridging the Gap Between
Self and Other**

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Dedication

To my brother Shri Amaresh Chandra Shukla, whose affection and kindness have been a constant source of inspiration in the completion of this work.

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Friendship: Bridging the Gap Between Self and Other

Rajesh Chandra Shukla

Abstract

Friendship is a significant aspect of our lives. We make friends, engage in activities with them, and share an emotional bond with them. However, despite its familiarity and prevalence, there is no common agreement regarding what constitutes friendship and what its proper role in our lives is. Some people consider it an intrinsically good relationship and prioritize it in their lives and conduct, and others view it as a valuable relationship, alongside other relationships, having no primacy or priority of its own. My purpose in this dissertation is to critically examine friendship and to determine its proper nature, content and value in our lives.

I discuss the above issues with specific reference to three major moral-political traditions. These are virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism. I focus on a leading representative of each tradition, namely, Aristotle, Kant and Mill. Both deontology and utilitarianism, Kant and Mill, construe friendship in terms of certain abstract universal moral principles. They contend that, as a moral person, one must accord equal considerations to both friends as well as non-friends. That is, one must act impartially in friendship.

Against Kant and Mill, Aristotle holds that a friendship is a personal relationship, and that it is inherently incompatible with impartiality. He argues that friendship either is virtue or necessitates virtue, and as such, it is an essential constituent of a good life and flourishing existence. Aristotle's view that a good friendship and a good life require effective moral co-operation with others in society has generated interest in the present times. On the one hand, it is argued that Aristotle provides us with a fulfilling account of friendship and a good life. On the other hand, it is claimed that Aristotle's view is in disagreement with an individual's freedom of choice, and inconsistent with the central tenets of present-day liberalism.

In this thesis, I argue that Aristotle provides us with an enriching account of friendship, and that his view of friendship and the good life is fully compatible with an individual's free choice and moral autonomy. I further argue that Aristotle's view complements liberalism; hence, it is a mistake to see these views as adversaries.

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Introduction

Friendship is a familiar aspect of life. We make friends, engage in activities with them, and share an emotional bond with them. However, despite its familiarity and prevalence, there is no common agreement as to what constitutes friendship. It is equally unclear as to why we make friends with certain individuals and not with others, what principles, if any, inform friendship, and what its proper place in our life is. Accordingly, the precise nature and content of friendship, and its true value, require a philosophical investigation.

Some people consider friendship an intrinsically good relationship. They view friendship as a critical constituent of their lives, and prioritize it in their daily activities and conduct. On the other hand, others view it as a valuable personal relationship, alongside other relationships, having no primacy or priority of its own. Similarly, some people view friendship as a virtuous relationship, having important ethical and moral implications, and take it as essential to the cultivation of social fraternity and civic fellowship. However, for others, friendship has no such significance.

Friendship can be commonly identified by various attributes.¹ In the first place, friends are affectionate towards one another. That is, I want my friend to be happy and to do well. In the second place, friendship is a voluntary relationship. I freely choose to be friends with someone. My choice of friends is often determined by my interests, orientations, and tastes. Furthermore, I freely choose to cultivate a friendship, to develop

¹ The following list is not intended to be exhaustive. It is also not intended to constitute an account of friendship itself.

it, and even to terminate it. Finally, friendship is reciprocal. It requires mutual affection and commitment to one another's good. It is not a one-sided relationship. I cannot be friends with someone who does not reciprocate my friendly sentiments, who does not value my friendship and who is not willing to contribute to the friendship that we share.

However, one may still ask what the precise nature, depth and scope of this bond is. That is, what elements define a good friendship, how should we choose friends, and what is the proper domain of friendship in our lives? In particular, are friendly bonds purely personal in nature, or do they have any broader social connotation? Is friendship merely a private relationship, with purely emotional value, or does it have any bearing on our overall social and moral conduct? Any plausible answer to these questions necessitates understanding the fundamental principles that underlie friendship.

In this dissertation, I examine the above issues with reference to three major moral-political traditions. These are virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism; specifically, I ask how friendship may be founded on either virtue, or duty, or utility, and what the implications of each foundation are. Accordingly, I treat the theories of a leading representative figure from each tradition, namely, Aristotle, Kant, and Mill.

Aristotle situates friendship in the broader context of human fulfillment (*Nicomachean Ethics*² 1155a1-34). He argues that human beings have a natural propensity to associate with one another, to live in one another's company, and to form personal and social associations. He holds that this propensity is morally good (*Politics*³

² Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. and ed. Roger Crisp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

³ Aristotle. *Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett. *Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 1941.

1280b30-40). Friendship, he contends, is both natural and a necessary constituent of a flourishing life (*Politics* 1280a31-32, 1280b30-40).

Aristotle argues that friendship is critical to the realization of happiness in two main ways. Friends have similar propensities and are inclined towards similar activities and interests (*NE* 1155a10-20). They also provide an intellectual impetus to one another's thinking and enhance one another's ability to make considered decisions and judgments regarding various issues, aims and objectives. Aristotle recognizes that an individual's life is full of prospects and happenings and that an individual by himself may not be fully equipped, at all times and on all occasions, to make knowledgeable decisions. For instance, I may not know if a certain interest is good to pursue, whether or not it will enhance my satisfactions and lead to the development of virtuous qualities. In a situation like this, I can turn to my friend for advice and guidance, and since he knows me well and cares for my well-being, he can clarify my doubts and help me in resolving my uncertainties: "With friends...[we] are more capable of thinking and acting" (*NE* 1155a15).

In a further way, friendship, Aristotle argues, is an important medium of virtue, because genuine friends are truthful, just, friendly, and generous towards one another. That is, friendship facilitates virtuous conduct and leads to the realization of virtues in everyday life. More broadly, it is a running theme in Aristotle's moral and political thought that a virtuous individual must establish a harmony between the personal and civic spheres of life (*Politics* 1178b15-29). Aristotle maintains that virtues cohere with one another, such that an individual cannot truly possess one virtue without possessing the other. As a result, on Aristotle's understanding of virtue, it is impossible for an

individual to be virtuous in one sphere of life, and not elsewhere. An individual cannot be virtuous towards his friends and un-virtuous (non-virtuous, or vicious) towards others.

For Kant, a true friendship necessitates certain *a priori* conditions. These conditions are provided by an individual's pure practical reason, that is, they are not to be found in his sensory experiences (*Metaphysics of Morals*⁴ MMDV 469:14-30). Kant argues that an individual's experience has an invariable reference to feelings, emotions, psychological propensities and pathological inclinations, but that none of these have a moral value. They are incapable of providing the rational imperatives that are required to act in moral ways. He writes: "For since men's sensible inclinations tempt them to ends (the matter of choice) that can be contrary to duty, law giving reason can in turn check their influence only by a moral end set up against the ends of inclination, an end that must be therefore be given a priori, independently of inclinations" (MMDV⁵ 381:1-5). So, Kant insists that an individual must ground friendships in pure practical reason.

Kant's view that a true friendship must be based upon an individual's moral attributes and not upon his inclinational interests has major implications. It entails a division of ends in friendship. Friends can pursue either their natural ends, such as personal happiness and satisfactions, or their moral ends, such as duty and moral law, but not both together (*Foundations of The Metaphysics of Morals*⁶ 398:1-24). But this conflicts with our ordinary experiences of friendship. George Kerner writes: "The natural tendency of most of us, I presume, is to believe that the actions to which we are led by

⁴ Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* is divided into two parts: *The Doctrine of Right* and *The Doctrine of Virtue*. In this dissertation, I will abbreviate them respectively as MMDR and MMDV.

⁵ Immanuel Kant. *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

⁶ Immanuel Kant. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals: With Critical Essays*, trans. Lewis White Beck, ed. Robert Paul Wolff. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969.

our impulses and inclinations – if they are unspoiled, healthy, beautiful, admirable, and the like – can have worth which is at least equal to the worth of actions which we perform from a cold rational consideration of duty.”⁷ Kerner questions Kant’s view that one must only approach one’s friends as rational moral agents, as ends in themselves, and not as intimate associates or virtuous individuals.⁸ Kerner argues that Kant puts exclusive emphasis upon the moral obligations of duty but fails to respect its inclinational concomitants.⁹

As a result of the above theoretical commitments, Kant’s theory of friendship poses a stark contrast to Aristotle’s. Unlike Aristotle, who believes that a true friendship requires an all-round (that is, moral and natural or inclinational) gratification for the friends, Kant argues that natural ends cannot, and must not, constitute the ends of a friendship (*Foundations* 426:7-21). Natural ends and desires, Kant argues, corrupt the moral value of a friendship. Hence, they must be excluded from its content (*Foundations* 434:1-34). Accordingly, Kant contends that I must not pursue my happiness in friendship. Likewise, he also censors my contributions to my friend’s moral development, believing that any such contribution would undermine my friend’s moral capacities and autonomy.

Mill reacts sharply against Kant’s view that the natural and moral ends are two different and opposite ends, and that a friendship can pursue only one of them

⁷ George Kerner. *Three Philosophical Moralists: Mill, Kant, Sartre*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 87.

⁸ Allen Wood writes: “Moral virtues first enter into Kant’s account of friendship not (as with Aristotle) through the fact that you must be virtuous for me to have a relation to wish you well. It enters instead through the perception that I must seek to be virtuous and act virtuously in relation to you in order to be worthy of the trust and benevolence I hope you will show me as a friend” (Allen Wood. *Kant’s Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 277).

⁹ Ordinarily, we associate our moral duties with certain legitimate inclinations, such as a desire to be virtuous and morally upright. But for Kant this is not so. He argues that duty is a “constraint” (*MMDV* 379:11), and it excludes all inclinations (*Foundations* 379:1-22).

(*Utilitarianism*¹⁰ 1:4:28-34). Against Kant, he holds that the natural ends of friendship are intimately connected with its moral ends, such that the two ends cannot be separated and that it is impossible to conceive of one end without the other.

According to Mill, happiness provides the sole content and criterion of a true friendship (*U* 2:2:1-14). Human beings by nature desire pleasure and resist pain; that is, we are so constituted by nature that we are naturally drawn towards pleasurable objects and activities, and naturally driven away from their contraries. In addition, Mill holds that our moral principles must reflect our inherent human propensity towards pleasure and resistance towards pain. He consequently contends that a true friendship must enhance our happiness and lead to the reduction of our pain.

Happiness, for Mill, has two central aspects. It entails a complete satisfaction of an individual's desires and wants, including sensuous and intellectual inclinations (*U* 2:6:10-44). So he holds that a friendship must provide friends with total fulfilment, such that friends realize all the interests that they have and attain all the objects that they wish to find. In sum, for Mill, a friendship must enhance the overall happiness of the friends, and must not have a missing element.

Moreover, the happiness that a true friendship facilitates is not simply the happiness of the friends but that of all fellow beings. Mill explicitly argues that in friendship an individual must not simply focus on the gratification of his own desires and interests; rather, he must attend to the maximum happiness of the maximum number of people concerned. That is to say, while pursuing my pleasures and seeking my emotional, psychological, and moral contentment, I must be sensitive to the similar satisfactions of

¹⁰ J.S. Mill. *Utilitarianism*, ed. Roger Crisp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

my fellow beings. I must attend not simply to my own happiness or that of my friends, but to our overall collective and social interests.

Despite his theoretical differences with Kant, Mill thus believes, like Kant, that in the realm of morality I must act impartially, such that I must not assign a moral primacy to my friends over non-friends (strangers). Like Kant, Mill argues that I must subdue my personal affections towards my friend in favour of my larger moral commitment towards all human beings (*U* 4:2:9-13). In ordinary terms, we can say that Mill, like Kant, retains the dichotomy between personal commitments and moral commitments, and argues for the priority of the moral commitments at the expense of the personal commitments.¹¹ But this is deeply problematic as it applies to friendship.

This robs friendship of its personal meaning and significance. That is, both Kant and Mill reduce friendship to an artificial relationship, devoid of genuine personal attachment and considerations. Both Kant and Mill conceive of friendship in terms of abstract, universal moral obligations. Kant argues that duty can exclusively account for moral motivations in friendship. Mill disagrees only partially: Mill substitutes for the Kantian obligations of duty the utilitarian creed of maximum utility, but like Kant, he defines the moral value of friendship with reference to an abstract moral principle. In sum, both Kant and Mill fail to appreciate the personal elements of a friendship and they both relegate friendship to the level of an emotionally barren relationship.

¹¹ Will Kymlicka writes: "We all have commitments – to family, political causes, work – which form the focal point of our lives and give some identity to our existence. But if I am to act as a U-agent [utility agent], then in each of my decisions, my commitments must be simply added in with all the projects of other people, and be sacrificed when I can produce more utility by promoting someone else's projects. That may sound admirably unselfish. But it is in fact quite absurd. For it is impossible to be genuinely committed to something and yet be willing to sacrifice that commitment whenever something else happens to maximize utility" (Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 25).

As I conduct my enquiry, I will bring out in detail the above entailments of Kant and Mill on friendship. I will show that both deontology and utilitarianism suffer from some major weaknesses, and that they both fall short in providing us with a satisfactory concept of friendship. That is to say, they both indulge in theoretical abstractions, and fail to recognize the personal aspects of a friendship. And, I will argue that Aristotle provides us with a more enriched understanding of friendship.

Against Kant, Aristotle argues that a friendship consists of the proper satisfaction of both natural and moral ends, such that an individual's happiness and moral fulfilment in virtue cannot be separated in friendship. And unlike Mill, Aristotle does not conflate an individual's natural ends with his moral ends. According to Aristotle, a friendship is a reasonable and simultaneous gratification of both natural and moral ends, happiness and virtue. These must exist harmoniously in a friendship. Only such a harmony of ends and their harmonious pursuit in both the personal and civic domains of an individual's life, Aristotle argues, will lead to the realization of a good life.

Aristotle's view that a good life requires a harmonious pursuit of both personal and civic satisfactions in an individual's life has generated much interest in modern times. On the one hand, it is argued that by construing a good life in terms of an individual's personal and social fulfilments, Aristotle provides us with a meaningful conception of our personal and social relationships. Alasdair MacIntyre writes: "We are to think then of friendship as being the sharing of all in the common project of creating and sustaining the life of the city, a sharing incorporated in the immediacy of an individual's particular friendships."¹² On the other hand, it is contended that Aristotle blurs the boundary between the personal and social domains of an individual's life and

¹² Alasdair MacIntyre. *After Virtue*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p. 156.

interactions, and fails to respect their separate moral contours.¹³ On this critical view, these two shortcomings together render Aristotle's view almost irrelevant to our times. It is argued that any application of Aristotle's concept of a good life in our times will impede an individual's freedom of choice and will result in coercive regimes and institutions. Will Kymlicka remarks: "This doctrine [Aristotle's concept of a good life] could only be implemented through a coercive form of state perfectionism, in which the government pre-empts and constrains individuals' own judgements about the good life. This violates liberal commitments to individual autonomy and state neutrality."¹⁴

In this thesis, I defend Aristotle's conception of friendship and a good life against its modern critiques. I argue that Aristotle views human life as a teleological progression towards the good, such that it requires a full-fledged and thorough gratification of an individual's natural and moral propensities in association with others, that is, fellow-citizens.¹⁵ In particular, I want to elaborate and uphold Aristotle's view that a good life and flourishing human existence necessitate a cultivation of virtuous qualities in meaningful association with others, and that this individual and social ideal does not compromise moral autonomy but completes it.

¹³ Julia Annas remarks: "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Aristotle has overstretched the concept [of friendship]" (Julia Annas. *Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism. Mind*, 86, 1977, p. 553).

¹⁴ Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 299.

¹⁵ I use the term 'fellow-citizen' in an inclusive sense, such that it exemplifies all the inhabitants of a society or state.

Aristotle's Concept of Friendship

I. Friendship and *Philia*: Preliminary Remarks

*Philia*¹⁶ is the Greek counterpart of the English word 'friendship.'¹⁷ *Philia*, both in ordinary ancient Greek and in Aristotle's writing, applies to several kinds of activities and relationships. On the one hand, it is used to describe a host of personal relationships, such as one's love and affection for one's family members, relatives and friends, and on the other hand, it stands for a set of social relationships, such as one's associations with one's fellow-citizens and participation in civic activities. However, this broad use of *philia* often creates a difficulty in understanding its precise meaning and connotation. Below I will discuss various possible uses of *philia* to determine its proper signification in Aristotle's moral and political thought.

According to W. D. Ross, Aristotle's use of *philia* "can stand for any mutual attraction between two human beings."¹⁸ Ross takes Aristotle's application of *philia* to cover diverse kinds of relationships seriously. He argues that Aristotle uses *philia* in a very rich and comprehensive sense, such that it signifies any positive attraction between two human beings. Accordingly, on Ross' interpretation, any relationship that exhibits

¹⁶ It is controversial if *philia* can be translated as friendship: "*Philia* is a term of broader significance than our 'friendship'; a citizen of ancient Athens would have included his family and political and business associates among those who were 'dear' (*philos*) to him, as well as others for whom he felt affection, whereas we are apt to distinguish our friends both from our family and from our associate" (William J. Prior. *Virtue and Knowledge: An Introduction to Ancient Greek Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 172). However, it is matter of common practice in the Aristotelian scholarship to translate *philia* as friendship. Following J. M. Cooper and Michael Pakaluk, I will use them synonymously.

¹⁷ In this dissertation I will use the word friendship in a morally good or refined sense, unless otherwise clearly stated or contextually implied.

¹⁸ William David Ross. *Aristotle*. New York: Meridian, 1959, p. 223.

some mutual attraction constitutes a proper object of *philia*, and consequently its proper signification. Ross is partly right. Aristotle uses *philia* to cover a variety of personal and social relationships. In the first place, he considers one's emotional association with another person as a manifestation of *philia* (*NE* 1157b5-24), and in the second place, he finds *philia* an essential constituent of any meaningful civic relationship (*NE* 1155a21-28). Accordingly, for Aristotle, *philia* appears to capture any interest that one may show towards another human being (*NE* 1155a17-21). Ross' description of *philia* as a "mutual attraction" (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 223) captures this sense.

However, the difficulty with Ross' description of *philia* is that it is too broad, almost ambiguous. First, though Ross construes *philia* in terms of "mutual attraction;" he does not spell out clearly what the nature and content of this attraction is. Ross also leaves unexplained what properly constitutes the object of attraction in *philia*, and why one person is attracted towards another in the first place. Note that attraction can occur in several ways, and it can take several forms. For instance, one may be attracted towards one's friends and relatives, or towards strangers. Clearly, on Ross' account both of the above attractions would constitute legitimate objects of *philia*, but on Aristotle's they would not (*NE* 1167b32-34, 1166a30-35, 1167a1-20).

Second, Ross' understanding of *philia* in terms of mutual attraction towards one another has a tremendous psychological pull to it. In other words, it fails to capture the moral connotations that Aristotle attributes to *philia* (*NE* 1157b5-35). Ordinarily, one can be attracted towards the people who have good looks and pleasing manners. Such attractions have some 'physicality' to them; they are largely conditioned by one's psychological make up. If we accept Ross' account, then all such attractions would

constitute *philia*. Furthermore, Ross' sole emphasis on attraction seems to either compromise or underplay the moral attributes that Aristotle often ascribes to *philia* (*NE* 1157b25-35). Accordingly, J.M. Cooper remarks: "People can be 'mutually attracted' to one another without in any way developing active ties – without doing anything together, or for one another – and such mere attraction would not be counted as *philia*."¹⁹

For Cooper, a proper use of *philia* requires some mutual engagement between two or more individuals. That is to say, friends must be well disposed towards one another and must be willing to do good things for one another, at least in some minimal ways. This includes wishing one another well, helping one another whenever possible and showing some interest in one another's life and projects. Accordingly, on Cooper's interpretation, *philia* requires a "mutual well-wishing and well-doing out of concern for one another."²⁰ On Cooper's interpretation, *philia* is a consistent commitment to the good of one another, and as such, it cannot be construed merely as a "mutual attraction".

A proper understanding of Cooper's above interpretation of *philia* necessitates an examination of the necessary conditions that Aristotle attaches to the use of the term friendship. In the first place, friendship, Aristotle argues, involves mutual affection; that is, one loves and respects one's friend for who he is as a person (*NE* 1157b25-35). Mutual affection in friendship is grounded in one's knowing who the friend is as a person, what he likes and dislikes, and what the central aspects of his being are. That is to say, affection in friendship involves familiarity with the friend and is different from a sudden spurt of attraction or goodwill (*NE* 1167a1-20), for instance, towards a stranger.

¹⁹ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 313.

²⁰ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. p. 314.

Next, friendship is a mutual relationship.²¹ Friends recognize each other's affection and love and contribute to each other's well-being. I recognize my friend's affections towards me the way he recognizes mine. This includes sharing an emotional bond with the friend, doing mutual activities together, and participating in each other's lives and projects.

Finally, friendship is a voluntary relationship. Both friends rationally and voluntarily choose to make the friendship; so, friendship is not an accidental attraction or an unplanned relationship (*NE* 1169a18-34). Friendship is a consciously cultivated relationship. I like someone and find myself drawn towards his good qualities, virtues and character, and then I make friends with that person. Similarly, my friend has a fair knowledge of my good qualities and strengths, and is aware of my drawbacks and weaknesses. We voluntarily choose to make friends with each other and engage in friendly activities.

Accordingly, any satisfactory description of *philia* must account for the above conditions of friendship. It must show what friendly affections entail and how they are different from ordinary affections and good wishes. It must also demonstrate that affections in friendship are voluntary and reciprocal, and that one desires to promote the good of one's friend exclusively on the grounds of one's friendship, and not due to any other reason. Lawrence Blum rightly remarks: "In friendship one desires and acts for the

²¹ Lorraine Smith Pangle writes: "Aristotle insists firmly that friendship must be reciprocal. He thus remains true to our experience of friendly affection, which is never directed to an abstract good but always to another human being" (Pangle. *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.38).

good of the friend, not simply because he is another human being but precisely because he is one's friend."²²

The merit of Cooper's interpretation of *philia* as a reciprocal relationship lies in the fact that it specifically accounts for the above conditions of friendship. That is, in friendship, on Cooper's interpretation, I exhibit a sense of concern towards my friend, and love and respect his personhood. I value him as a human person. I want to contribute to his well-being and desire to enhance his good. Aristotle himself reinforces these aspects of friendship throughout in his moral and political philosophy, and Cooper's interpretation is intimately grounded in Aristotle's own exposition of the issue.

In this chapter I will show that Aristotle construes *philia* in terms of partnership. He argues that friends desire to participate in one another's life and contribute to one another's good (*NE* 1169b18-25). He holds, in particular, that this desire to participate in one another's life and contribute to one another's good has a teleological purpose, and as such, it is morally good (*Politics* 1280b35-39, *NE* 1155a20-31). Accordingly, he believes that friendship, in its pure form, manifests our desire to associate with others in a morally noble and virtuous way (*NE* 1155a1-5, 29-32). Furthermore, for Aristotle, this manifestation has two aspects: personal, and social. At a personal level friendship symbolizes one's propensity to associate with one's immediate friends and relatives, and at a social level it reflects one's desire to associate with one's fellow-citizens (*Politics* 1280b30-39). Moreover, though he accepts that the bonds of personal friendships are thicker than those of civic friendship, he argues that both friendships manifest the same natural propensity to associate with others and to promote others' good; hence, they are qualitatively of the same kind (*NE* 1155a21-28, *Politics* 1280b30-39, 1281a1-10).

²² Lawrence A. Blum. *Friendship, Altruism and Morality*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 44.

Accordingly, Aristotle argues that friendship fosters civic relations and is critical to securing justice in the social domain (*NE* 1155a21-28). That is to say, a true partnership for Aristotle requires a just and fair interaction with others in both personal and civic domains of one's life.

In sum, Aristotle considers *philia* as a necessary constituent of an individual's personal and social life. On the one hand, he argues that friendship brings personal satisfactions and moral fulfillments, and as such it is critical to a happy and flourishing life (*NE* 1169b1-23). On the other hand, he finds it a necessary constituent of a purposive social association. Accordingly, he believes that true friends are a mirror image of each other (*Magna Moralia* II XV:5:1-6, 6:2-14), and that a society marked by *philia* often exhibits a strong sense of justice and fairness (*NE* 1155a22-30). As such, for Aristotle, friendship is a necessary constituent of a good life.²³

II. The Nature and Definition of Friendship

Aristotle never defines friendship in a formal and unequivocal way. That is to say, he does not provide us with a definition or even a set of definitions that can be construed as his standard statement on friendship. Aristotle's treatment of friendship defies the conventional mode of scholarship, that is, to clearly define a concept prior to its application in an ethical discourse. By contrast, Aristotle uses friendship under different circumstances to describe a host of personal and social relationships (*NE* 1155a3-28). On the one hand, he employs friendship to capture the meaning and depth of personal relationships, and argues that all important personal relationships reflect friendship in some ways. On the other hand, he finds friendship a necessary component of all socially

²³ James V. Schall rightly remarks: "To be human in the fullest sense and to have friends are synonymous" (Schall. *Friendship and Political Philosophy. The Review of Metaphysics*, 50, Sept. 1996, p. 123).

fulfilling relationships. As such, Aristotle uses friendship to signify almost every meaningful relationship that we form during the course of our lives (*NE* 1155a29-32).

However, this is not to suggest that Aristotle's treatment of friendship is lacking in focus.²⁴ Instead, his approach towards friendship is rather eclectic. He often discusses friendship with a specific purpose in mind. For instance, sometimes he wants to illuminate our desire to associate with others, to live in their company, and to wish them well, and at other times he considers it as a necessary condition of any meaningful social interaction (*Politics* 1280b30-40). Accordingly, for Aristotle a purposive understanding of friendship is more important than precision in definition. We may note some of his remarks:

i) *NE*: Friendship is a relationship between two separate individuals consisting in reciprocal well-wishing and affection, where each friend wishes the other well "for his own sake" (*NE* 1155a3-4, 1156a3-5, 1156b6-12).

ii) *MM*: "Friendship as we define it exists only where the friendly affection is returned" (*MM* II XI:6:2-4); "when we wish to know our own characters and personalities, we can recognize them by looking upon a friend; since the friend is, as we say, our second self" (*MM*²⁵ II XV:5:5-10).

iii) *Rhetoric*: Two people are friends who like each other, in the sense of "wanting for someone what one thinks is good, for his own sake and not for one's own,

²⁴ By contrast, Aristotle discusses at a considerable length and provides very involved arguments to show its relevance to our lives. A focused discussion of friendship takes place in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book VII and IX), *Magna Moralia* (II, XI – XV), *Rhetoric* (Book II), *Eudemian Ethics* (Book VII) and *Politics* (1262a, 1262b, 1280a, 1280b, 1281a, 1287a, 1295a, 1295b).

²⁵ Aristotle. *Magna Moralia*, trans. G. C. Armstrong, London: William Heinemann Limited, 1935.

and being inclined, as far as one can, to do such things for him” (*Rhetoric*²⁶ 1380b35-1381a2).

Aristotle’s above remarks on friendship contain two main features of friendship, and a third feature can be derived from them. The first is that friends are affectionate towards one another. That is to say, they have some positive emotional dispositions towards one another, and are devoted to one another’s emotional well-being. I am loving and caring towards my friends, and expect them to show similar affections towards me. More strongly, for Aristotle, affection constitutes the very basis of friendship (*NE* 1167a10-18).

However, affections in friendship must not be construed *merely* as positive emotional dispositions. In particular, emotional dispositions have their seat in the psychological aspect of one’s nature, and as such, are subject to constant change. That is to say, they are quick to arise and quick to dissipate (*NE* 1158b28-33). Hence, Aristotle does not consider them a reliable source of affection in friendship (*NE* 1157b28-33). By contrast, he grounds friendly affections in the moral aspect of our nature (*NE* 1157b33-37). In other words, friendly dispositions arise from a true sense of concern for the sake of the other, i.e. the friend, and not merely from one’s emotional inclinations. As such, friendly affections have moral connotations (*NE* 1157b33-37).

The second main characteristic of friendship is well-wishing (*eunoia*). Well-wishing, like friendly affections, has moral entailments. It can be described as a genuine sense of concern for the friend (*NE* 1156b6-8). In other words, my love and affection for my friends are unconditional. I value my friends for their moral goodness and not for any contingent reason (*NE* 1156b6-23). I see my friends as intrinsically lovable and good, and

²⁶ Aristotle. *Rhetoric*, ed, Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 1941.

bestow my well-wishes upon them solely on those grounds. Furthermore, my friends reciprocate my well-wishing. That is to say, they want me to be happy and well. Accordingly, well-wishing is critical to Aristotle's concept of friendship.

Thirdly, for Aristotle, friendly affections must be manifested in practice (*NE* 1169b18-25). Friends must be willing to act upon their feelings and dispositions. That is to say, friendship is not merely a disposition towards each other, but an actual reflection of such dispositions in one's acts. In other words, friends must translate their affections and good wishes in the practical spheres of life. This involves giving help and support, showing love and care, and contributing to one another's life and projects. These activities and interests give a positive meaning and direction to the friendship.

According to Aristotle the above aspects of friendship find a fuller expression in the friends' desire to live together (*NE* 1171b33-37). Friends want to spend time with each other, share each other's views and perspectives, and participate in each other's activities. In other words, they want to be close to one another. More strongly, living together translates the emotional dispositions into concrete realities (*NE* 1172a1-9). Friends get an opportunity to know each other, learn from each other, and facilitate each other's intellectual and emotional development. They get an exposure to each other's strengths and weaknesses, and by living together friends help each other overcome their weaknesses and strengthen their good qualities. As such, living together fosters the bond of friendship.

Taken together, what do all these characteristics of friendship point to? In the opening passage of *NE*, Aristotle remarks: "every activity and rational choice is thought to aim at some good" (*NE* 1094a1-2). Later on, in the same text, he identifies this good as

happiness (*NE* 1101b36-37). That is to say, for Aristotle all meaningful relationships are directed towards the pursuit of the good, namely, happiness. Friendship is no exception to this general moral prescription. However, this pursuit of the good in friendship has its distinctive merit.

In the first place, I love and respect my friend for who he is as a person and not for any other reason. I value my friend for his intrinsic qualities and attributes and not merely for his extrinsic qualities and contingent attributes; specifically, I value him for who he is as a person, in his own right (*kath' hauton*), and wish him well for his own sake (*ekeinon heneka*). That is to say, for Aristotle, the association and pursuits in friendship are truly grounded in the virtue and character of the friends (*NE* 1105a28-34). Cooper rightly remarks: "What gives a friendship its character as a friendship of a particular kind is the state of mind of the partners – their intentions towards and their conception of one another."²⁷ In the second place, the good pursued in friendship is beneficial to both the friends and not merely to only one of them. In other words, while promoting my friend's good, I do not compromise my own good. My own ends and aims, in friendship, are harmoniously balanced with my friend's. In sum, friendship provides us with an opportunity to pursue our good together (*NE* 1172a1-9).

The above view that friendship actively promotes, preserves, and enhances our good is critical to Aristotle's concept of friendship (*NE* 1157b33-37, *Politics* 1280b30-39). He argues that friendship is a medium of personal and social fulfillment. Friends wish each other well and actively engage in each other's life. They reach out to each

²⁷ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 318.

other and participate in each other's life and projects. As such, friendship becomes necessary to their overall development and satisfaction.

However, for Aristotle, the above pursuit of the good in friendship is not restricted merely to the personal domains of our lives (*Politics* 1295b23). Aristotle extends friendship to cover both personal and social aspects of our interactions. He argues that the same human propensity that, in the first place, leads to the formation of personal friendships, takes us beyond them, and leads to the formation of civic friendship (*Politics* 1280b30-39). Therefore, for Aristotle, civic friendship is a natural extension of our personal friendships (*NE* 1159b25-30).

To summarize the above discussion, for Aristotle, friendship is a natural relationship (*Politics* 1280b30-39). He writes: "For a human being is a social being and his nature is to live in the company of others" (*NE* 1169b18-19). He argues that the love and affection in friendship are based upon the character of the friends. That is, friends genuinely seek to promote one another's good and friendship symbolizes a convergence of their good (*NE* 1166a10-34). This is not to suggest that my friend and I always seek the same things in life. By contrast, Aristotle recognizes that each person has distinctive traits, particular interests and specific requirements. The convergence of the good in friendship, for Aristotle, means an agreement on the larger moral principles and priorities in one's life. In particular, it means that there are certain goods, such as virtue and nobility, that are critical to a good life and that we should never compromise them. That is to say, for Aristotle, the pursuit of moral goods and cultivation of a virtuous character are central to friendship. This puts us in a position to describe the final implications of Aristotle's concept of friendship.

The first is that friendship is an essential part of our happiness (*NE* 1169b21). This implies two things. In the first place, my association with my friends makes me happy. I enjoy my friends' company, spend time with them and do meaningful activities with them. I like my friends and they reciprocate my sentiments. This makes us happy. In the second place, for Aristotle, one can never be truly happy by oneself or in isolation (*NE* 1170a4-13). That is to say, Aristotle rules out the possibility of a self-sufficient and happy life apart from the community or *polis*; friendship represents our natural disposition to be with others. Hence, "no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all the other goods" (*NE* 1155a3-30). As such, friendship is a necessary constituent of our happiness.

Next, friendship is a medium of self-knowledge (*Magna Moralia* II XV:5:1-6). I can know my own qualities and attributes by looking at my friend. Aristotle argues that we are often inclined to make friends with similar people; that is, those people whose nature, character, views and orientations are akin to our own (*Magna Moralia* II XI:6:14). In other words, my friend and I share similar qualities and attributes, and when I look at him I come to develop an understanding of my own nature and character, positive and even negative qualities. He argues that just by looking at my friend, I can know who I am, and what the central aspects of my being are. Note that this understanding is grounded in the moral intimacy that I share with my friend and the goodness that he exhibits. Accordingly, my association with my friend is an effective medium of self-knowledge.

Finally, for Aristotle, friendship is crucial to social cohesion (*Politics* 1280b30-39). That is, friendship leads to a prominent recognition of the role of others in our lives,

and a consequent desire to assist them in their endeavors and facilitate their success (*NE* 1171b32-35). It helps us understand that the other individuals in our society, just like us, desire a good life (*Politics* 1280a31-34). The fact that we do not know most of them personally is immaterial here; that is, our association is based upon a shared belief that all human beings want to be happy and well, and that it is our moral obligation to wish them well (*NE* 1159b25-34). Even though I am not directly acquainted with most of my fellow-citizens, I develop a concern for their well-being and wish them well in their pursuits.

These three points, taken together, show that friendship as Aristotle conceives it is critical in our association with others. That is, friendship can make a bridge between self and others (*NE* 1171b33-36). Furthermore, he argues that since the desire to associate with others and to live in their company is natural to us as human beings, this desire is intrinsically good (*Politics* 1252a1-6). On these grounds, Aristotle concludes that friendship is an essential element of a harmonious life, and critical to the cultivation of social fraternity.

In the final analysis, Aristotle argues that friendship is a necessary constituent of a good life (*Politics* 1280a31-39). He conceives of a good life in association with other fellow beings and holds that friendship is critical to its realization in two main ways. On the one hand, friendship manifests this association in our lives at a very basic level. By doing so, it strengthens our social instincts and reinforces our social natures (*NE* 1171a18-21). On the other hand, friendship involves, in a substantial way, the promotion of the good of the other. This aspect of friendship is indeed crucial to the forging of personal ties and fostering of civic relations. In short, it is necessary for the fulfillment of

our personal and social natures. Given these factors, Aristotle rightly calls friendship “the greatest external good” (*NE* 1169b10).

III. The Principal Characteristics of Friendship

To recall Aristotle’s definition of friendship, friendship consists of reciprocal affection, well-wishing for the other’s sake, and living together. Here I will discuss each of these in turn and bring out their implications for Aristotle’s concept of friendship.

III.1 Reciprocal affection

Affection is the most basic characteristic of friendship (*NE* 1167a3-10). In its most primary sense affection involves attraction, liking and fondness towards the friend. However, in a deeper sense it symbolizes the love and respect for the friend, and also includes a desire to promote the friend’s good. Below I will discuss these two aspects of friendly affections and draw out their implications for friendship.

In the first place, affection means a positive psychological disposition towards the friend. I like my friends, enjoy their company and welcome them in my life (*NE* 1169b10-23). I also share my feelings and emotions with my friends and value their affections. This includes hosting the activities that my friends like and inviting them to participate in such activities. With time, our friendly affections grow and in due course they form an emotional bond. As a result of this bond, our intimacy grows and it takes a mature form of confidence, trust and sympathy in our friendship.

In the second place, for Aristotle, affection in friendship reflects a state, more precisely, a moral state (*NE* 1157b5-11): “The love that Aristotle claimed to characterize primary [moral] friendship stems not only from affection but also, and more importantly,

from a proper appreciation of the moral stature of the other.”²⁸ That is, friends love one another for their moral qualities, and not merely for their emotional aspects.²⁹ I value my friend for his intrinsic worth and not for his contingent attributes. I am always willing to contribute to his life and projects. My contribution is based upon a rational recognition that my friend is worthy of my unconditional love. Moreover, I translate my affection into my actions by acting in positive ways to contribute to my friend’s well-being.

Only a virtuous person, Aristotle argues, possesses the affections that constitute moral states (*NE* 1106b10-11). That is to say, virtue teaches us to value our friends and have unconditional affection for them. A virtuous person knows that social relationships, particularly friendship, are intrinsically valuable. He does not form friendships for convenience; rather he sees them as a medium of personal and social fulfillment. As such, a virtuous person approaches his friendship in an intrinsically good way and exhibits affectionate dispositions towards his friends. This includes being magnanimous towards one’s friends (*NE* 1123a6-8), showing generosity in thought and conduct towards them (*NE* 1120a23-27), and acting in a fair and just manner (*NE* 1160a25-35).

On what grounds, though, would someone extend friendly affections towards another? According to Aristotle, there are two main qualities that are central to the formation of a friendship. First, one is easily drawn towards those who are lovable (*NE* 1156b6-12). Here ‘lovable’ (*phileton*) has a specific connotation. It means that one is attracted towards those who possess good qualities, have pleasing manners and are good company. This excludes those who are bad, irritating and boring. Likewise, one is

²⁸ Suzenne, Stern-Gillet. *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, p.40.

²⁹ Aristotle remarks: “Affection seems to be a feeling, but friendship a state” (*NE* 1157b29).

inclined towards the temperate and generous people, and resists the vulgar and sleazy (NE 1120b3-10). In sum, one finds noble people lovable.

Affection, Aristotle argues, is easily bestowed upon those who are disposed towards the good (NE 1156a4-10). We develop affection towards those who exhibit virtue in their thought and conduct. Virtue is a major motivating factor in the formation of a friendship.³⁰ The fact that good people want to associate with those who are good is not surprising; but it is interesting that even those who have contrary propensities and run to extremes (which is vice, for Aristotle) seek to make friends with the good people (*Magna Moralia* II XI:12:1-7). The underlying idea behind Aristotle's argument here is his teleological reasoning that by nature we all desire the good (NE 1094a1-2), namely, happiness; however, due to our ignorance or some other lapse, such as weakness in character, a lot of us fail to realize that (NE 1145a2-6). Thus, we have a natural attraction towards the good (*Magna Moralia* II XI:11:1-4).

Furthermore, Aristotle argues that though friendly affections take their start in the immediate company of the friends, they extend beyond them; and as such, they cover all aspects of our lives and relations (NE 1161b11-16). We carry these affections into the civic domains of our relations (*Politics* 1280b30-39). This includes acting in virtuous ways in one's social interactions; that is, it requires one to be truthful, friendly and honest in association with others.

That is to say, for Aristotle, virtue involves a desire, and a will to promote the interests and activities of other fellow-citizens, even though they are not directly known to me (*Politics* 1280b30-39, NE 1160a8-30). Virtue requires me to take an interest in the lives of others and promote their well-being. Moreover, I must do so out of a genuine

³⁰ "It [friendship] is a virtue or it involves virtue, and is an absolute necessity in life" (NE 1155a2).

sense of concern for the others. Accordingly, I cultivate civic interests and carry out my civic responsibilities. As such, the happiness and satisfactions of my fellow-citizens take a prominent place in my life.

In sum, Aristotle understands friendly affection in a very broad and morally effective sense. He views it as a medium of love and respect for the friend as well as an instrument of larger social cohesion. On his view, I value my friend and care for his well-being, and at the same I must also genuinely wish well to distant-others (fellow-citizens) who share my social space or live in my society or *polis*. In short, for Aristotle, friendly affection involves both personal and social fulfillments.

III.2 Well-wishing for the friend's sake

Well-wishing can be described as a genuine sense of concern for the good of the other (*NE* 1156b6-10). In friendship, this implies two things. On the one hand, this means my well-wishing for my friend is grounded in my moral character (*MM* II. XI:11:1-4). That is, well-wishing in friendship comes naturally to me. It is an exemplification of my own moral conduct in my association with my friends. Furthermore, well-wishing gives me an opportunity to develop the finer qualities of my nature and character, and as such, I must not compromise it under any circumstance. In other words, I must wish my friends well even when I do not fully agree with them; indeed, it is quite possible to have some serious differences in friendship (note that differences here presume some moral goodness, for instance, I would not wish my friend well if he plans to do something terribly wrong), but my well-wishing for my friends is affected by such differences. That is, my differences with my friends neither obstruct nor stop my well-wishing towards them and I continue to have affection and well-wishes for my friends even under testing

circumstances. As such, well-wishing in friendship is an established character trait and not merely an emotional disposition (*NE* 1159a33-37).

On the other hand, well-wishing in friendship entails a deeper agreement on the goods that friends pursue. That is to say, my friend and I share a fundamental understanding regarding the goals and pursuits that we seek in our lives (*NE* 1156a1-10). Though we may want different things and construe our aims differently from each other, yet at the core of our pursuits resides a fundamental unity that keeps us together. This unity has its locus in our virtuous nature; hence, it constitutes the very crux of our social nature and it provides a strong foundation to our friendship.

Accordingly, Aristotle argues that well-wishing in friendship can never be compromised. And if a compromise is made, then it will have negative consequences to both friendship as well as those who make such compromises in the first place (*NE* 1167a2-10). First, it will jeopardize friendship itself; it will substitute mutual affection and trust by mutual disaffection and suspicion. It may lead to the termination of friendship itself, more so, because well-wishing for the friend is a necessary condition of friendship (*NE* 1167a3-4). Second, any such compromise will also undermine one's own moral character. Aristotle, specifically, requires virtuous individuals to show virtue in their thought and conduct and any such compromise will undermine this requirement. In other words, any compromise on well-wishing in friendship implies an abdication of one's own moral principles.

Aristotle aptly describes well-wishing as the "first principle" (*NE* 1167a3-4) of friendship. He argues that well-wishing constitutes the very genesis of friendship; specifically, in well-wishing, we can trace the initial seeds of friendship. Well-wishing

captures one's preliminary desires to associate with someone as well as to be friends with that person. Over the course of time and, indeed, through mutual efforts of the individuals involved, well-wishing leads to the formation of the friendship. Hence, Aristotle calls it a "latent friendship, which becomes friendship as intimacy develops over time" (*NE* 1167a10-15).

Notice that though well-wishing for Aristotle is a necessary condition of friendship, yet by itself it is not sufficient to constitute friendship (*NE* 1166b30). More clearly, all friendships necessarily require well-wishing for their formation but well-wishing by itself does not establish friendship between two individuals. Aristotle writes: "though people cannot be friends if they have not already developed goodwill for each other, those who have goodwill are nevertheless not friends" (*NE* 1167a10-11). That is to say, friendship requires a mutual reciprocation of well-wishing. Both friends must wish each other well, and must be willing to carry out their well-wishes in practice.

Though there is wide agreement in Aristotelian scholarship on the fact that friendship requires a mutual reciprocation of goodwill, it is a matter of debate what, precisely, constitutes this reciprocation and what form reciprocation takes in different kinds of friendships.³¹ On this point, the definition of friendship given in the *Rhetoric* is controversial. Recall that in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle defines friendship as "wanting for someone what one thinks is good, for his sake and not for one's own, and being inclined, so far as one can, to do such things for him" (*R* 1380b35-1380a2).

John M. Cooper argues that the *Rhetoric's* definition of friendship constitutes the core of Aristotle's understanding of friendship; that is, friendship involves goodwill for

³¹ Aristotle classifies friendship into three kinds: moral, pleasure, and advantage. I will discuss his classification in the next section.

the friend. Cooper says that well-wishing in friendship is for the sake of the friend and as such it reflects a genuine regard for his well-being.³² Cooper further argues that goodwill can be found in all types of friendships. Accordingly, on Cooper's interpretation, well-wishing for the friend for his own sake is a critical requirement of friendship, and that *all* friendships contain it, at least to some extent.

In response to Cooper, Michael Pakaluk refers to a distinction between strict and schematic definitions.³³ In a strict definition, its elements occur in the same way in all the cases of the thing being defined. In other words, the definition accounts for and incorporates any modification of its terms. A schematic definition, on the other hand, is loose and harmonious; furthermore, it allows its elements a variety of applications with "most of the important work of classification undone" (Pakaluk, p. 61). Accordingly, Pakaluk maintains that the traditional readings of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* definition are schematic, and that Cooper's reading is "strict" (Pakaluk, p.62).

Pakaluk argues that under a schematic reading we can attribute some goodwill to all friendships without necessitating any *sameness* among them; more clearly, all friendships may not have a goodwill that strictly requires 'loving the friend for his own sake.' Accordingly, for Pakaluk, different species of friendships exhibit different kinds of goodwill; in particular, though every friendship involves well-wishing for the friend, not all friendships necessarily require well-wishing for the friend's sake. The distinctive merit of Pakaluk's schematic reading is that it takes the difference among various kinds of friendships seriously; that is, it does not attribute to them all the same form of

³² J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 313.

³³ Michael Pakaluk. *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 61-62.

goodwill. By doing so, Pakaluk makes room for lesser friendships in their own right; in particular, he respects the moral weaknesses of pleasure and advantage friendships, takes them as they are and assesses their merit in their own right without making any direct reference to a morally superior friendship.

However, in Cooper's support, it can be said that his strict reading of the *Rhetoric* neither compromises the particularity nor the difference of the lesser friendships; by contrast, Cooper is conscious of such particularities, and respects such differences: "At the center of Aristotle's analysis of *philia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* stands his theory that there are three basic kinds or species of friendship."³⁴ Though Cooper recognizes the difference among various kinds of friendships, yet he views them within the framework of Aristotle's larger vision, that is, human life and relations entailing a drive towards a "good life" (*Politics* 1280a32). In sum, both Cooper and Pakaluk make a strong case for their respective positions; Pakaluk's schematic reading specifically adheres to the letter of Aristotle's texts, but Cooper's strict reading reflects the spirit of the text.

III.3 Living together

Aristotle uses the term 'living together' (*suzēn*) to describe diverse kinds of relationships, both at a personal and civic level (*NE* 1159b24-30). On the one hand, he construes living together as a deliberate decision of the friends to interact with one another and to participate in one another's life (*NE* 1098b25-30, *Politics* 1295b24-25). And on the other hand, he uses it to describe any association of people that occurs within a specific geographical area, such as *polis* (*Politics* 1280b30). Understandably, these two uses are of different kinds, and sometimes they cause difficulty in a precise understanding

³⁴ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 315.

of the word 'living together' and its proper Aristotelian meaning and import. Below I will show that despite their apparent differences both the above uses of living together share a common Aristotelian theme, namely, that by nature we want to live in the company of others.³⁵

Living together means a conscious decision to be with certain people, particularly with one's friends (*NE* 1169b11). It involves a rational choice to associate with one's friends, to spend time with them and to do activities with them. Living together provides a distinctive opportunity to the friends to participate in one another's life and endeavors. Accordingly, it gives a concrete manifestation to friendly emotions and strengthens friendly bonds.

That is to say, living together provides friends with a unique opportunity to know one another. They get to know one another's likes and dislikes, interests and activities. Moreover, it assists their understanding of one another's character traits and moral attributes (*Magna Moralia* II XI:11:1-4). The knowledge of these things is essential for a proper conduct of friendship. For instance, if I truly want to make my friend happy, then I should invite him to participate in those activities that he likes, and not the opposite ones that he dislikes. Furthermore, living together provides me with an opportunity to know the values of my friends, and the priorities that he has in his life. I get to know what principles are central to his being and which ones are peripheral to it. However, in order to make such determinations, friends must spend time together in order to understand

³⁵ Aristotle writes; "We are applying the term 'self-sufficient' not to a person on his own, living a solitary life, but to a person living alongside his parents, children, wife, and friends and fellow-citizens generally, since a human being is by nature a social being" (*NE* 1097b8-11).

each other's hopes and dreams, wants and expectations.³⁶ This emotional involvement never changes and its continuity constitutes the crux of the emotional bond in friendship. My friend knows that irrespective of empirical realities and events I will always share his satisfaction and joy, and give him unconditional encouragement whenever he requires that. As such, living together solidifies the emotional bond in friendship.

Aristotle further argues that living together is a necessary condition for the cultivation of one's moral qualities, specifically, virtue.³⁷ Virtue necessitates the company of other human beings. Aristotle constantly emphasizes that virtues are neither acquired nor practiced in isolation; and in order to attain and practice virtue one must live in the social company of friends, relatives and other fellow-citizens (*NE* 1168b1-6). Accordingly, living together fulfills this Aristotelian requirement. It does that in several ways. Here I will focus on two such leading aspects of living together: the acquisition and manifestation of virtue in an individual's life.

First, living together is necessary for the acquisition of virtue (*NE* 1103a11-25). Virtues by nature are such that they require a social context for their acquisition. For Aristotle only human beings can acquire virtue (this is not to rule out other supernatural realities); but to be human is to live in association with others, such as family and friends, and not by oneself (*NE* 1169b18-19). So, Aristotle concludes that living together is necessary for the acquisition of virtue.

³⁶ Aristotle writes: "For there is nothing so characteristic of friends as living in each other's company (because while people in need desire benefit, even the blessed desire to spend their days together, since solitude suits them least of all)" (*NE* 1157b19-23).

³⁷ D. S. Hutchinson remarks: "Living a well-lived life is the best possible good for man, and this is what to succeed as a human being. Living well means living one's life under the guidance of the virtues of the soul" (Hutchinson. *Ethics. Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 202).

Second, living together is essential for the manifestation of virtue (*NE* 1103a11-25). In particular, it provides me with an opportunity to cultivate my virtuous qualities and attributes in the company of my friends.³⁸ That is to say, the cultivation of virtues requires a context and some virtues grow faster in personal associations rather than distant ones. For example, consider generosity, magnanimity and friendliness. By nature, Aristotle argues, one is more inclined to carry out these virtues in association with one's friends rather than strangers. This is not to say that one cannot exhibit these virtues with regard to strangers; it simply means that in the case of one's friends one has a stronger psychological propensity to exhibit them. Recall that, for Aristotle, this propensity is naturally good and morally valuable. Accordingly, living together is naturally good and morally meritorious.

Aristotle extends living together to cover both the personal and civic aspects of one's life. For him, civic associations illustrate living together in a significant sense; that is, members of a social association contribute to one another's life and promote one another's good.³⁹ Note that though civic relationships, for Aristotle, manifest living together in a very concrete and practical sense, they cannot be put on a par with personal relationships, such as a personal friendship. That is to say, personal friendships, for Aristotle, are emotionally intense and as such they manifest living together in a "thick"

³⁸ James O. Grunebaum writes: "Friendship, insofar as it can be considered a virtue for Aristotle, is a shared activity between two people according to a right reason" (Grunebaum. *Friendship: Liberty, Equality, and Utility*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 54).

³⁹ Aristotle's view presents a sharp contrast to the dominant view of the present world that construes civic relations largely in terms of restricted co-operation rather than a full-fledged engagement with fellow-citizens. Alasdair MacIntyre remarks: "The notion of the political community as a common project is alien to the modern liberal individualist world. This is how we sometimes at least think of schools, hospitals or philanthropic organizations; but we have no conception of such a form of community concerned, as Aristotle says the *polis* is concerned, with the whole life, not with this good or that good, but with man's good as such. It is no wonder that friendship has been relegated to private life and thereby weakened in comparison to what it once was" (MacIntyre. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p.156).

sense. However civic friendships are a bit emotionally distant and exhibit living together in a thin sense. Both friendships, he argues, are important and meaningful in their respective spheres, and are essential constituents of a “good life” (*Politics* 1280a31-32).

IV. The Forms of Friendship and their Relation

In Book VIII, Chapter II of *NE*, Aristotle categorizes the objects of human love into three kinds: the good, the pleasant and the useful (*NE* 1155b). He categorizes friendship accordingly into three kinds: friendship of the good, of pleasure, and of advantage (*NE* 1156a). Furthermore, he holds that the nature of a given friendship is largely defined by the object(s) of its pursuit. He shows that moral friendship aims at the good as its object, pleasure-friendships desire pleasurable objects, and finally advantage-friendships seek useful objects. In this section I will examine the nature and content of the above forms of friendships, and discuss their relationship.

IV.1 Moral friendship

Moral friendship, for Aristotle, is the perfect form of friendship (*teleian philian*, *NE* 1156b6-10). It fulfills all the requirements of an ideal friendship, and exemplifies virtue and goodness in an individual’s relations and conduct (*NE* 1156b10-12). Aristotle describes moral friendship as: friendship of the good (*NE* 1156b7-8), perfect (*teleia*, *NE* 1158a6), to the greatest degree (*malista*, *NE* 1155a31), and without qualification (*haplōs*, *NE* 1156b11-15). All these descriptions share a common theme, namely, the manifestation of the good in moral terms (*MM* II. XI:11:1-4). The above descriptions are consistent with the human *logos* (reason and prudence), and manifest a common human *telos*; that is, they symbolize human beings’ progression towards the good (*Politics* 1253a27-35).

Hence, a proper exposition of moral friendship requires us to draw out the precise meaning and import of the good in Aristotle's thought. In other words, we must ask what it means to be good, or what such goodness entails. More specifically, what does it mean to say that someone is pursuing the 'good' in his life, and what constitutes the nature and content of such pursuits? The Aristotelian scholarship on this subject is largely divided. My purpose here, however, is restricted. I want to find out what it means, for Aristotle, to be good. So, I will focus on the work of one eminent Aristotle scholar, namely, John Cooper. Cooper writes:

On Aristotle's theory of the good, there is a distinction to be drawn between what is good absolutely and without qualification (good "by nature" he sometimes calls it) and what is good for a particular person or a class of persons. A thing is good absolutely if it is good for human beings as such, taken in abstraction from special and contingent peculiarities of particular persons: these peculiarities may provide additional interests, needs, and wants, and on the basis of them one can speak of additional, possibly divergent, things as good for this or that particular person.⁴⁰

Thus, on Cooper's analysis Aristotle's understanding of the good can be classified under two broad categories: qualified good and unqualified good. Qualified good has two noticeable elements to it. First, qualified good has an instrumental value; in other words, it satisfies our immediate desires and wants, and as such, it is relevant to the immediate gratifications that one may seek in one's life, for instance, sexual pleasure. Second, qualified good invariably has a local character; that is, its value is determined by the individuals who seek it, and the circumstances that condition its pursuit. For instance, those who are poor desire wealth, and those who are wealthy want a stress-free life. Therefore, for Aristotle, wealth is a qualified good.

⁴⁰ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 336.

The unqualified good, on the other hand, stands in a sharp contrast to the qualified good. Unlike the qualified good which has a contingent nature, the unqualified good is permanent or immutable. That is to say, the unqualified good remains always good; it remains good under all circumstances and for all people. Unlike the instrumental nature of the qualified good, the unqualified good is intrinsically good. An object or a quality is said to be intrinsically good when it is desired for its own sake and not for something else (*NE* 1097b1-7). Aristotle singles out virtue as an unqualified good (*NE* 1098a15-17).

For Aristotle, the very pursuit of an unqualified good has an invariable reference to virtue; virtue constitutes the content and criterion of the unqualified good (*NE* 1103b30-32). The unqualified good, by nature, is morally meritorious and its pursuit requires virtuous methods. To illustrate this, consider a practical example. Suppose someone wants to be generous towards others. Generosity, as a virtue, requires a generous distribution of one's own wealth and resources, and not that of others. If someone distributes stolen goods among the needy, such an action would not illustrate virtue; rather it would constitute its gross violation. That is to say, virtue requires both a rational ability to know the good as well as a practical character to act upon the knowledge of the good (*NE* 1104a1-9). This includes knowing what is right and what is wrong in practical life situations, what makes them so, and how to do the right thing and avoid the wrong ones.⁴¹ Furthermore, it requires knowing the mean between two extremes and making a right choice in accordance with the practical wisdom.⁴² Aristotle

⁴¹ Alasdair MacIntyre remarks: "According to Aristotle then excellence of character and intelligence cannot be separated. Here Aristotle expresses a view characteristically at odds with that dominant in the modern world" (MacIntyre. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p.154).

⁴² D. S. Hutchinson writes: "All in all, practical wisdom is an appreciation of what is good and bad for us at the highest level, together with a correct apprehension of the facts of experience, together with the skill to make the correct inferences about how to apply our general moral knowledge to our particular situation,

remarks: "Virtue, then, is a state involving rational choice, consisting in a mean relative to us and determined by reason – the reason, that is, by reference to which the practically wise person would determine it" (*NE* 1107a1-3).

With the above understanding of virtue and the good, we can determine now, more precisely, what moral friendship is and what its chief characteristics are. First, moral friendship, for Aristotle, involves a love of the good; that is, moral friends by nature want the good (*NE* 1156b6-12). Moral friendship is formed on a mutual recognition that the good is a noble object of pursuit (*NE* 1168a28-34). This recognition draws moral friends towards one another. As such, moral friendship exemplifies virtue and the good: "Now friendship between the virtuous consists in their loving one another, and they love one another inasmuch as they are lovable; and they are lovable inasmuch as they are good" (*Magna Moralia* II XI:11:1-4)

Next, moral friendship entails a mutual belief in the intrinsic goodness of one another. That is to say, it is an unconditional acceptance of the friend's being. This includes loving the friend for who he is as a person, admiring his excellence and character, offering him support when he requires it, and valuing his reason when it comes to the determination of his own good. In other words, I must value my friend in his own right (*kath' hauton*) and for his own sake (*ekeinon heneka*). Accordingly, my friend shows similar love and respect towards me. He values me for what I am as a person and bestows his affections upon me solely on that ground. He does so without expecting any profit or reward. Aristotle remarks: "Complete friendship is that of good people, those

and to do so quickly and reliably. It is used in our own cases when we are obliged to commit ourselves to some course of action. Obviously it is very important asset; if we had it, we would always act in the right ways and our lives would be successful and happy" (Hutchinson. *Ethics. Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 207).

who are alike in their virtue; they each wish good things to each other in so far as they are good, and they are good in themselves (*NE* 1156b25-28).

Finally, moral friendship involves a deliberate recognition by the friends that friendship is critical to their lives and pursuits, specifically, to their happiness (*NE* 1169b18-23, 30-35). We must point out here that, for Aristotle, happiness has two aspects: personal and social. The personal aspect is about the satisfaction of one's personal inclinations, emotions and desires, such that they all cohere with one another, and help one secure one's overall psychological contentment and satisfaction. Aristotle recognizes that an individual's feelings and emotions (such as affection and love) and their proper cultivation require association with others, especially with friends (*NE* 1155a1-15). The social aspect deals with an individual's natural inclinations to associate with other human beings. Aristotle argues that human beings have a natural propensity to be with others, and to live in their company, and that a proper realization of this propensity is essential for a good and flourishing life.

Accordingly, for Aristotle, moral friendship symbolizes a broader personal and social harmony. He argues that though friendly associations and engagements start at a personal level (one personally decides what one wants to do, what interests one wants to pursue and what the things are that one wants to prioritize in one's conduct); soon they acquire a larger social connotation. For instance, suppose, if I decide, as a moral person, that I want to be truthful, generous, temperate, and just, then my practice of these virtues will not stop at a personal level. Rather, I would carry all these virtues in the social domains of my interactions. In other words, my friendship becomes instrumental in promoting social good, and a medium of social fraternity and cohesion.

Thus, moral friendship, for Aristotle, exemplifies friendship in its pure and ideal form. That is to say, it exhibits the ideal elements of friendship both in the personal and social spheres of one's life, and reinforces the relevance of virtue in the lives of the friends. Pakaluk rightly calls it the "instantiating" model of friendship.⁴³

IV.2 Pleasure/Advantage friendship

Pleasure and advantage friendships differ radically from moral friendship. Unlike moral friends who have virtue and moral goodness as the objects of their pursuit, pleasure and advantage friends focus on the pursuit of their contingent desires and wants. Accordingly, their friendships are driven by the motives of pleasure and profit, and they lack a virtuous regard for one another's individualities. More strongly, pleasure and advantage friends treat one another as a means, and not as an end in themselves. Aristotle writes:

Those who love one another for utility love the other not in himself, but only in so far as they will obtain some good for themselves from him. The same goes for those who love for pleasure; they do not like a witty person because of his character, but because they find him pleasing to themselves. So those who love for utility are fond of the other because of what is good for themselves, not in so far as the person they love is who he is, but in so far as he is useful or pleasant (*NE* 1156a15-20).

That is to say, there are two main aspects to pleasure and advantage friendships. In the first place, pleasure and advantage friends love one another for immediate personal gratifications and not for one another's moral being. Accordingly, love, affection and liking in pleasure and advantage friendship have an invariable reference to one's own personal satisfactions; furthermore, it leads to a neglect of the true moral being of the

⁴³ Michael Pakaluk. *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 90.

friend. Pleasure and advantage friends do not love one another for who they are as persons or for one another's intrinsic worth but for the personal gratifications that they seek in friendship. Aristotle argues that pleasure and advantage friendships lack a proper respect for the moral being of one another.

In the second place, irrespective of the objects of pursuit, pleasure and advantage friendships remain seriously deficient in moral character.⁴⁴ For Aristotle, a moral character involves valuing others for their own sake and not merely for the satisfactions that they provide. Moreover, the moral deficiency of pleasure and advantage friends is not merely limited to the selection of the objects that they seek, it goes further than that; this deficiency lies in their attitude towards others in general, and the objects of their pursuit in particular.

That is, for Aristotle, moral deficiency has two main aspects to it: the *object* of pursuit and the individual's *intent* that determines this pursuit (*NE* 1156a23-36, 1156b6-8). The nature of an object has a direct bearing upon the moral value of its pursuit. For instance, if the object sought is ignoble or bad, then its pursuit will be morally defective. However, a good or noble object does not necessarily make the pursuit good. For instance, generosity is good, but it will not be so if the intent of the generous person is corrupt. Generosity must not be used as a tool to win someone for selfish gratifications. Aristotle contends that the moral merit of an action lies in a noble selection of object and pure intent. Both intellectual and practical wisdom must co-operate to secure a morally worthy pursuit. To illustrate this issue, consider, the moral aspects of a sexual encounter between two people. There are two specific ways in which such an encounter can suffer a

⁴⁴ Neera Kapur Badhwar remarks: "Although there is mutual and reciprocal goodwill, trust, affection, and enjoyment between the friends, these are limited in depth and scope by the requirements of each friend's own goals" (Badhwar. *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 3).

moral depreciation. First, if the moral dignity of the partner is not respected, the encounter would be morally deficient. Second, even if one respects the moral dignity of the partner, it would be morally reprehensible to switch partners at will. Pleasure and advantage friends appear to fail on both the above counts. They *often* fail to choose a worthy object of pursuit; but *always* fail to show a noble intent. Their desire for instant gratification often takes over their concern for others.

Needless to say, Aristotle finds pleasure and advantage friendships morally deficient and criticizes them for their lapse (*NE* 1157a4-15). He remarks: “these friendships, then are also incidental, since the person is loved not in so far as he is who he is, but in so far as he provides some good or pleasure” (*NE* 1156a18-20). Note that though pleasure and advantage friendships do not match the moral standards of virtue friendship, they still have a significant role in the individual’s life and relations,⁴⁵ and partake of some features of morally good friendship. We will discuss this aspect of pleasure and advantage friendships in the next section.

IV.3 Relationship between the forms of friendship

At first glance, the very possibility of any relationship between moral friendship and pleasure/advantage friendships looks extremely problematic. However, Aristotle seems to attribute *some* common ground to all the friendships, namely, moral friendship as well as pleasure/advantage friendships (*Magna Moralia* II XI:15:1-11, 16:1-7). Accordingly, my purpose in this section is to examine his reasons for doing that, and to assess their merit. I will ask why and on what grounds Aristotle attributes this common ground to these friendships; and also, if his reasons substantiate his claim.

⁴⁵ Suzanne Stern-Gillet remarks: “Although lesser kinds of friendship inevitably fall sort of the standard, they nevertheless succeed in lifting themselves up above purely instrumental, exploitative, or manipulative relations” (Gillet. *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*, p. 38).

Though pleasure and advantage friendships are diametrically opposed to moral friendship in the object of their pursuit, it is not uncommon to see that they are extremely popular friendships, and outnumber moral friendship by a big margin. So, if Aristotle assigns a major role to friendship in the personal and social domains of our lives and conduct, as he does, then he must give a plausible explanation as to *how* and *why* pleasure and advantage friendships contribute to his overall cause. Aristotle observes: “these kinds of friendships [moral, pleasure, and advantage], in fact – the friendships of virtue, or pleasure and of profit – are not identical; and yet they are not wholly alien to one another, but partake of a common principle” (*Magna Moralia* II XI:15:1-5).

We must ask here, what is the common principle that Aristotle is referring to? Any satisfactory answer to this question must be in agreement with the fundamental characteristics of friendship, namely, goodwill and affection in friendship and living together of the friends. It must establish that these characteristics are shared across the board by all three friendships, namely, moral friendship, pleasure and advantage friendships. Aristotle must show that the fundamental unity that he attributes to different kinds of friendships is in agreement with the definitions of friendship that he offers. He must show that the defining qualities and characteristics of friendship are *shareable in principle*, and that they are *shared in practice*.

Recall that in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle defines friendship as well-wishing for the friend’s sake and not for one’s own. If we strictly adhere to this definition as some scholars, particularly Cooper, do, then it will be incumbent upon all friends to love one another for one another’s sake, at least in some shape or form, and not for any extrinsic and contingent reason. (Note that I have argued earlier, along with Aristotle, that pleasure

and advantage friendship are seriously deficient on this ground). Hence, the critical question: is this deficiency conceptually grounded, such that pleasure/advantage friends, by definition, can never wish one another well for one another's sake? Or, is it that they can wish one another well for one another's sake under the right circumstances? A third possibility in this regard could be to hold that pleasure and advantage friends, despite all their drawbacks, do wish one another well but in a very elementary way.

To say that there is a conceptual difficulty in attributing a genuine well-wishing to pleasure and advantage friends is inherently problematic. In the first place, any such conceptual difficulty would imply that friendship has a restricted role in our lives. And since the majority of friendships fall in the pleasure and advantage category, Aristotle's claim that friendship is essential to our lives and critical to social harmony would be empty. This is not to deny the value of moral friendship, which exhibits a high virtuous standard, but to recognize the practical reality that the fostering of social ties requires more than a few moral individuals. In other words, a substantial number of people must desire social fraternity and contribute to its cause, in order to secure it. Interestingly, though Aristotle holds that pleasure/advantage friends seek their own good, he still argues that friendship has a prominent place in our social life. Following Cooper, I will show that Aristotle has good grounds to assign friendship the lead role in his moral and political thought, and I will defend Aristotle's view that different friendships share a common principle and exhibit, at least in some form, a shared characteristic. Finally, I will argue that there is no conceptual difficulty in attributing genuine well-wishing to

pleasure and advantage friendships,⁴⁶ and that the very assumption of any such difficulty is flawed.

On Cooper's analysis, Aristotle's definition of friendship in the *Rhetoric* is crucial to the proper understanding of his theory of friendship. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines friendship as wishing the friend well for his own sake and not for anything else. Note that he does not qualify this definition by restricting it to some form of friendship and denying it to others. In other words, if the *Rhetoric's* definition of friendship captures Aristotle's intent and his intellectual position (and Cooper thinks it does) then it should be applicable to all friendships. Cooper illustrates the issue thus;

The overriding concern of the advantage-friend is for his own profit. But this does not mean that every action and wish of his is ultimately aimed at the realization of something profitable to himself. He genuinely likes his friend and has a genuine and unself-interested concern for his good, and he will do him services that are not motivated, at least not entirely, by self interest.⁴⁷

In order to understand Cooper's remark properly, we must draw a distinction between a substantive goodwill (a pure or perfect good will) and elemental goodwill (incidental good will). Moral friendship indeed exhibits the first kind of goodwill, but pleasure and advantage friendship, Cooper seems to suggest, exhibit the second kind of goodwill. In other words, even while seeking the realization of their own interest, pleasure and advantage friends wish one another well; and their good will has a tangible form. To explain this further, consider a practical example. The owner of the convenience store next door wishes me well (for the sake of the argument consider him as an

⁴⁶ James O. Grunebaum remarks: "Friends' reciprocal goodwill can arise from anyone of the three bases of friendship: pleasure, utility and [moral] goodness" (Grunebaum. *Friendship: Liberty, Equality, and Utility*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 60).

⁴⁷ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 328.

advantage friend), and assume he wishes well to all his customers. His well-wishes earn him customer satisfaction and more customers come to his store. Yet, *as a matter of fact* he genuinely wishes well to all his customers. He is truly concerned about the well-being of his customers and wants them to do well in their lives. Hence, "...there is no special difficulty in understanding Aristotle's attribution of *eunoia* (goodwill) to all types of friends [including pleasure and advantage friends]."⁴⁸ Accordingly, on Cooper's interpretation, pleasure and advantage friendships do have some genuine good will,⁴⁹ no matter how elemental that good will is.

Cooper's second argument deals with the objects of friendship, that is, some friendships seek moral good, such as virtue, and other friendships seek pleasure and advantage, such as physical gratifications or economic advantages. Cooper holds, as we saw, that on Aristotle's theory of the good, a distinction has to be made between qualified and unqualified good. While pleasure and advantage friends seek the qualified good, specifically, pleasure and profit, moral friends seek the unqualified good, namely, virtue. This much is clear. Yet, it raises a paradoxical question: why would some individuals prefer the qualified good over the unqualified good? After all, we have it on common sense that the unqualified good is indeed better than the qualified good. Cooper provides a very interesting and textually grounded analysis of this paradox. According to Cooper, all friendships, including pleasure and advantage friendships, seek the unqualified good; but they fail to comprehend properly what that good is and as a result of this failure they end up pursuing a qualified good, such as pleasure or profit. The pleasure and advantage friends misconstrue the good that they *actually* desire – true happiness and virtue – and

⁴⁸ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 323.

⁴⁹ He writes: "Friends of all types, then, on Aristotle's theory in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, wish for their friend's well-being out of concern for the friend himself" (Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*, p. 327).

indulge in the pursuit of mundane goods. It is the *misunderstanding* of the real nature of the good that diverts pleasure and advantage friends towards the pursuit of extrinsic or contingent goods. Accordingly, this misunderstanding can be corrected with a proper inculcation of virtue in one's nature and character, with intellectual exercise and practical education. In other words, a proper exposure to virtue can rectify the mistakes that pleasure and advantage friends commit.

Here, one may argue though that Cooper is deflecting the question (concerning the pursuit of mundane objects by pleasure and advantage friendships) rather than answering it. It is quite possible that pleasure and advantage friends *truly know* what they desire, that is, pleasure and advantage; and yet, that they still desire these objects knowing full well that the objects that they seek are of a contingent kind and morally deficient in nature. That is to say, pleasure and advantage friends *rationally* and *consciously* seek pleasure and advantage, and that their pursuit is not conditioned by any lack of knowledge of the true nature of the goods that they seek.⁵⁰ If so, then, Cooper's interpretation will simply not hold. But this conclusion I think misses Cooper's main point by a substantial margin. Let me explain how.

The fundamental idea that informs Cooper's thinking in his *Reason and Emotion*, I think, is Aristotelian teleology; all actions, enquiries and relationships, by nature, aim at some good (*NE* 1094a1-3, *Politics* 1252a1-6). Aristotle himself discusses all human associations, including friendship, in the larger context of the good (*NE* 1155a1-30, *Politics* 1252a1-6). He writes: "...every community is established with a view to some

⁵⁰ Norman O. Dahl observes: "There is something that all people aim by nature, the good relative to man, even though not all people consciously aim at it in all that they do. Some people only consciously aim at the apparent good" (Dahl. *Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of the Will*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, p.106).

good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think is good” (*Politics* 1252a1-2). Later, Aristotle identifies this good as happiness and virtue (*NE* 1095a13-21), and discusses friendship in this context. Cooper’s exposition of Aristotle’s pleasure and advantage friendships builds upon Aristotelian teleology, and places them in the larger context of the pursuit of the good that Aristotle attributes to all human beings. It is this good that constitutes the common object of all friendship: different friendships “partake of a common principle” (*MM* II XI:15:1-5). In other words, Cooper’s interpretation holds once we accept the fundamental premises of Aristotelian teleology - viewing human life as a progression towards the good. We can see the merits of Cooper’s interpretation, once we take the aim of life as a good life in association with our friends and in the company of our civic members (*Politics* 1280a33-32, 1280b30-39, *NE* 1095a13-15).

Now, we can summarize the findings of this section. I have established along with Cooper that pleasure and advantage friendships indeed share some elemental good will and desire to attain the unqualified good in their own way. True, the good will that they have is not perfect, and the good that they seek is not pure. But this does not negate the fact that they do contain some elemental good will, and as such they do wish one another well for their own sake, their well-wishing lacks the true moral attribute of good will in virtue friendship. Similarly, the good that pleasure and advantage friends seek is also morally inferior to the good that moral friends desire. Though pleasure and advantage friends misconstrue the good, they still want to attain the unqualified good. In sum, pleasure and advantage friends share common attributes of moral friendship, though in a very limited way.

V. Friendship and Justice

Aristotle sees a close and complementary relationship between friendship and justice. For Aristotle both friendship and justice are virtues. Both are about the good of others, along with one's own good. And both, in their ideal form, are exhibited by a virtuous individual (*NE* 1160a5-8). A good friend is a just person, and a just person is good friendship-material. Aristotle observes: "friendship and justice seem to be concerned with the same things and to be found in the same people" (*NE* 1159b25-26). That is to say, for Aristotle, there is a *convergence* of the subject and object in the case of friendship and justice. Below, I will provide an outline of Aristotle's theory of justice to facilitate our discussion of this convergence.

Justice in its complete moral sense, for Aristotle, has two aspects: personal and social. The personal aspect of justice deals with an individual's life and actions at a private level, that is, in conducting one's life according to virtue and living a noble life (*NE* 1129b23-33). The social aspect of justice deals with one's association with others; for instance, how I should conduct myself in the social domain or in my civic relations; *what objects* I should desire and *how much* of these objects I should take or possess. Justice in the social domain deals with the *distribution of the goods*, particularly with the material goods (note that moral goods, such as a development of one's intellectual capacity and character, are not excluded here; however, our focus is on the material goods). Accordingly, justice entails two things: a doctrine of proper proportion or doctrine of mean, as Aristotle calls it, and a set of rules that determine this proportion (*NE* 1134a1-7), specifically, the laws (*NE* 1129b20-24).

That is to say, for Aristotle, laws determine the worth or merit of an individual's interactions at the social level. This means that our actions in the social domain are measurable (and are measured that way in a good society) in accordance with an objective set of rules, decrees, and legislations. The enforcement of laws is the safest guarantee to secure everyone's interest; everyone gets what is due to them, neither more nor less: "So the just is a sort of proportion" (*NE* 1131b18). Accordingly, proportionate equality is critical to Aristotle's theory of justice.

With this outline in mind, we can now discuss how, for Aristotle, friendship and justice converge in terms of their subject and object. For the purpose of clarity, we can break this claim down into two heads: first, that friendship and justice share a unity of object, and second, that friendship and justice reside in the same individual. That is to say, friends are just to one another and a just individual would make a good friend. In this context, we must bear in mind that, for Aristotle, both friendship and justice are primarily virtues, and as such, both are crucial to an individual's happiness and moral fulfillment (*NE* 1095a13-15, 1097b1-8, *Politics* 1295b23-24, 1280a31-32).

V.1 Common object (first argument)

Aristotle argues that both friendship and justice have a shared object. That is, in their ideal form, they both deal with the pursuit of virtue. Justice seeks to secure virtue in civic associations, and friendship aims at virtue in a more personal context. Both friendship and justice, he argues, are the surest safeguards against *pleonexia*.⁵¹ Aristotle argues that friendship and justice converge in terms of their objects in two specific ways.

⁵¹ The term *pleonexia* is usually translated as 'desire', 'greed', 'graspingness', and a tendency to possess more than one's own share; clearly, these translations have different grammatical form and structure; however, without debating the merit of these translations, I will use *pleonexia* in the sense of a tendency or desire to possess more than one's legitimate share.

In the first place, both friendship and justice seek to promote the good of the other, and not merely oneself. Aristotle argues that friends love and respect one another for their intrinsic moral properties and desire to enhance to one another's happiness and satisfactions. This implies that friends want to contribute to one another's interests, goods and welfare, and treat one another in a fair and virtuous way. Justice, he contends, shares this object with friendship, that is, it seeks to promote the good of others. Justice is a virtue (*NE* 1129b25-31). Hence, only a virtuous person can truly *promote* the good of the other, and act always in a just manner.

In the second place, justice, like friendship, seeks to *protect* the good of the other. Friendship, we have seen, entails not only positive contribution to the other's good, but also a protection of the other's good from any possible harm. This includes friends watching over one another's interests, goods and projects. For instance, I must help my friend secure his belongings and save him from vulnerable situations that can potentially cause him harm (*NE* 1155a1-33). Similarly, justice protects the other's interests and goods. In its rectificatory form justice seeks to undo the harm that has been inflicted upon someone; that is, it makes *pleonektes* accountable for their actions and restores the rule of law (*NE* 1132a1-36). Thus, both friendship and justice, Aristotle holds, protect the other's interests.

Accordingly, Aristotle concludes that both friendship and justice share a common object, that is, the good of the other. He holds that virtue is critical to the realization of this object, and that virtue constitutes the core of the above convergence.

V.2 Common subject (second argument)

Aristotle's second argument for the convergence of justice and friendship is that they have the same subject (*NE* 1159b25-26). To establish his claim, Aristotle must substantiate two things here. First, he must show that a friend is a just person, and second, that a just person is either a friend or, with a minor concession to Aristotle, a friendly person. Furthermore, any reasonable Aristotelian explanation must be in harmony with empirical instances of friendship and justice. In other words, it cannot be abstract.

Aristotle seeks to establish the above identity of friendship and justice in two specific ways. On the one hand, he uses virtue to explicate the true nature of friendship as well as justice (*NE* 1155a25-28). That is, for Aristotle, both friendship and justice are virtues (*NE* 1129a25-30, 1155a3-5). Moreover, he argues that virtues exist only in harmony with one another, that is, they do not exclude one another. For Aristotle, a just person cannot be just in isolation, either from other virtues or individuals.⁵² That is to say, a just person must exhibit other virtues, such as truthfulness, courage, generosity and friendliness. Similarly, a true friend cannot be unjust, fearful, indulgent and mean; by contrast he is just, courageous, temperate and generous. For Aristotle, all virtues go hand in hand. And since both friendship and justice are virtues, and virtues, by nature, are inseparable, they must coexist in the same subject (*NE* 1155a22-32). So, both justice and friendship reside in the same subject.

Aristotle argues that there is an intimate correlation between friendship and justice.⁵³ That is, they not only have a strong bearing upon our social associations but also approximate such associations in a significant way (*NE* 1171b30-35). Our personal

⁵² Alasdair MacIntyre remarks: "The virtues are all in harmony with each other and the harmony of individual character is reproduced in the harmony of the state" (MacIntyre. *After Virtue*. P. 157).

⁵³ Aristotle writes: "...the highest form of justice seems to be a matter of friendship" (*NE* 1155a25).

and social associations, friendship and justice mirror each other (*NE* 1155a22-29). More clearly, if friendship is strong in a given society, that society reflects a reasonably good manifestation of justice, and by contrast, if friendship is weak then justice suffers as well (*NE* 1161b6-10). For instance, both friendship and justice exist in greater degrees in an aristocracy and oligarchy but are negligible (absent) in a tyranny. Thus, for Aristotle, aristocracy and oligarchy are superior forms of social governance than tyranny, which inflicts harm upon its people.

Thus, friendship and justice are interdependent; friendship promotes a just constitution and a just constitution promotes friendship. By implication, they share the same good and pursue the same end – virtue - and are critical to social harmony and human flourishing. Keeping all these things in mind, Aristotle concludes that friendship and justice cohere in the same subject.

V.3 Julia Annas' critique of the subject-object unity

Aristotle's above arguments for subject-object unity in friendship and justice have important consequences. First, friendship is not, as ordinarily construed, merely a personal relationship. Rather it has a wider social connotation. Second, for Aristotle, justice is not an impartial medium of securing fair play in social activities and interactions; it has a deeper moral purpose. It seeks to improve the character of civic members and inculcate a sense of fellowship among them and make them virtuous. However, some critics find these implications inherently problematic; specifically, they reason that Aristotle's proposed subject-object unity undermines both friendship and justice in significant ways. Julia Annas remarks:

To our mind the parallel drawn out between the concepts makes justice too personal and friendship too impersonal. Justice, for Aristotle is not a matter

of rights held independently of one's social relationships, and friendship not merely a matter of one's personal likings but to a great extent defined by one's social position as subject, son, demesman, etc.⁵⁴

Prior to examining the merits of Annas' observation it is essential for us to have a full comprehension of her views. That is, we must know what, precisely, Annas is saying here, and what are the proper entailments of her views. She is not denying that friendship and justice are important to us, indeed, any such denial would be unwarranted; she is making a more focused claim. She is saying that friendship is a personal relationship, and justice a set of rules and norms, laws and equity of our social behavior. Accordingly, she argues that friendship and justice must each be *confined* to their specific domains *without meddling* with one another.

She conceives of friendship as a mutual relationship involving affection and well-wishing for the friend and justice as an impartial principle of public conduct (Annas, p. 553). For Annas, my friend and I share an emotional bond based upon our good will and affection. We like each other, help each other, spend time together, and value each other's company. But from the commonality of all these interests and activities, it does not follow, Annas reasons, that my friend and I are partners in character-building as Aristotle wants us to be: "Aristotle is wrongly insisting that friendship involves approval of and respect for the friend's character, and ignoring the irrational element in friendship, which can lead us to like and love people of whom we strongly disapprove."⁵⁵

Once we strip off the role of character in personal friendships, as Annas does, it would logically follow that an individual's character, to a large extent, is immaterial in carrying out justice in the social domain. If character is not a determinant in our personal

⁵⁴ Julia Annas. Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism. *Mind*, 86, 1977, p. 552.

⁵⁵ Julia Annas. Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism. *Mind*, 86, 1977, p. 549-50.

friendship, as Annas argues, it would not be surprising to conclude that it has no role in civic friendship. Certainly, personal friendship is prior to civic friendship and if our character is not an important ingredient of personal friendship, it cannot be so in the case of civic friendship. Accordingly, “The Aristotelian notion of justice is not quite the same as ours [impersonal in nature]” (Annas, p.552). That is to say, Aristotelian justice prescribes a leading role to one’s character and virtue, but Annas and those who share her views do not. That is why Annas construes justice as an impartial principle of social conduct.

A satisfactory reconstruction of Aristotle’s reply to Annas must meet two conditions. It must show that character is indeed a critical aspect of friendship, and it cannot be dispensed with. Next, it must establish with some certainty that bias is not the only alternative to impartiality; that love and affection in friendship can go hand in hand with fairness and justice, and that a preferential treatment towards the friend does not entail prejudiced treatment towards non-friends. In other words, it does not compromise fairness and justice at any point.

According to Aristotle, character is critical to friendship (*Politics* 1280b20-39, 1326a5-8, 1332a39-43, *NE* 1105a1-4). Character, he believes, plays a crucial role in the determination of one’s actions, aims and objectives in life: “With regard to virtues, knowledge has little or no weight, while the other two conditions [character and rational choice] are not just slightly, but all-important” (*NE* 1105b1-4). Accordingly, Aristotle makes his classification of friendship into three kinds on the basis of what we love in our lives, and argues simultaneously, that our character is central to our choice and pursuit. He shows that those who want instant gratification and are of unstable character are

drawn towards friendship of pleasure, and by contrast, people with noble character form virtue friendship. For example, consider the friendship of the young. Such friendships are often driven by pleasure and physical gratification rather than a genuine moral concern for the other's well-being (*NE* 1156b1-5). Thus our character determines the friendships that we form, and as such it is critical to the formation of friendship in the first place. It is an important factor in the determination of the aims, objectives, interests and projects that a friendship pursues. Hence, Annas' segregation of character and friendship cannot be realistic. She demands a conceptual separation that has no regard for the practical instances of friendship, and Aristotle's [our] empirical instances of friendship refute her claim (*NE* 1156b1-30).

A cultivated character, Aristotle contends, provides a strong foundation for friendship and facilitates the manifestation of justice in the civic domain. That is to say, with a cultivated character, my friend and I love each other for our intrinsic goodness and being. A cultivated character is a safeguard against bias and favoritism in friendship.⁵⁶ Consider a practical example. I appear for a job interview, and my friend turns out to be the sole interviewer. My friend deliberates over the abilities of all the interviewees, including myself, and finally selects another candidate who meets the job requirements. Now, my friend's decision should be in accordance with his professional obligations and in agreement with virtuous conduct. For Aristotle, friendship, at least virtuous friendship, does not mean favoritism – a violation of virtue; rather it means a genuine affection for the friend. Though my friend does not hire me, he regrets my loss. And this is important to me personally and to our friendship. I want my friend to be not only affectionate and

⁵⁶ Aristotle remarks: "There are three things which make men good and virtuous; these are nature, habit, rational principle" (*Politics* 1332a39-40).

loving, but also upright and virtuous. In other words, I would not want my friend to help me secure a job at the expense of our common commitment to fairness, virtue and moral goodness. Here, my knowledge of my friend's nature and character is crucial. For, I know that he would take all pains to promote my good, and he knows that I would not want him to compromise fairness, and neither would he.⁵⁷ Accordingly, character secures friendship in difficult circumstances.

Much of the above discussion sounds repugnant to an ordinary understanding of friendship, including Annas'. For Annas construes friendship largely as a personal and emotional relationship without any specific reference to virtue and character. But it would be a mistaken step to dismiss Aristotle's proposed subject-object unity in friendship and justice without understanding them the way Aristotle understands them – both manifesting virtue in their respective spheres – and as such forming a symbiotic relationship.⁵⁸ Moreover, Annas must not place the high demands of justice upon pleasure and advantage friends or friends of weak character, only to conclude later that friendship and justice do not exist in the harmony that Aristotle envisions for them. The subject-object unity of friendship exhibits Aristotle's ideal of friendship, which is attainable in principle if we view human life the way he does – as a moral progression towards the good or a manifestation of human *telos* - and indeed this unity will look arbitrary bereft of its Aristotelian moral purpose.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ J. L. Ackrill writes: "Successful handling of complex circumstances requires complex virtues (and skills) and no one of these [concern for the friend or a mere preservation of fairness] will be good enough on its own. The virtues of a good man are not to be likened to a set of separately operating functions, each displayed in its own private set of actions, but to a set of nicely balanced inter-related functions all of which must be in order if good results in any direction are to be achieved" (Ackrill. *Aristotle's Ethics*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1973, p.23).

⁵⁸ He writes: "...for the will to live together is friendship" (*Politics*, 1280b39).

⁵⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre writes: "Human beings, like the members of all other species, have a specific nature; and that nature is such that they have certain aims and goals, such that they move by nature towards a

Accordingly, we can conclude that there are missing premises in Annas' critique of Aristotle. Her understanding of friendship, we have seen, is sharply different from Aristotle's and hence her critique is misplaced. In the next section I will bring out the further implications of Aristotle's proposed subject-object unity in friendship and justice and its underlying reasons. I will also show in greater detail why Annas' critique of this unity is misplaced.

V.4 Justice and civic friendship

Annas' critique of Aristotle presents two main contentions: first, that friendship cannot be applied to the civic domain, and any attempt to do so would be replete with difficulties, and second, that any such attempt would jeopardize both friendship as well as justice. In order to reply to her more specifically, we need to reconstruct Aristotle's positive arguments showing that both friendship and justice are interconnected and essential aspects of our social associations. We must show along with Aristotle that both share the same object and reside in the same subject. Accordingly, our task in this section is to present a full-fledged exposition and analysis of Aristotle's theory of civic friendship.

Aristotle gives two sets of arguments to establish his case for civic friendship: normative, and practical. Here, normative arguments stand for a set of ethical proposition(s) that have some ontological necessitation, such as that the aim of life is a good life (*Politics*, 1280a31-32). And practical arguments refer to the empirical state of affairs that easily admit some kind of application in practice, for instance, while aristocracy is conducive to virtue (*Politics*, 1293b39-42), tyranny is not (*Politics*,

specific *telos*. The good is defined in terms of their specific characteristics. Hence Aristotle's ethics, expounded as he expounds it, presupposes his metaphysical biology" (MacIntyre. *After Virtue: A study in Moral Theory*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p.148).

1295a19-24, *NE* 1161b9-10). Aristotle employs both kinds of arguments to establish his view of civic friendship, without making any sharp separation between them.⁶⁰ Accordingly, I will use these arguments side by side to illustrate Aristotle's case for civic friendship. I will argue that civic friendship is not a matter of choice, as Annas and those who share her view believe, but a matter of moral necessity. Furthermore, I will show that civic friendship has distinctive practical advantages and is critical to our social well-being. I will use these findings to establish, along with Aristotle, the subject-object unity in friendship and justice. Aristotle remarks:

Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good. But if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good (*Politics*, 1252a1-6).

Aristotle's above passage claims that a state is a community, and that a community contains the good of all of its constituent members. For Aristotle, these claims are conjoined; that is, they can neither be dissected nor separated. Accordingly, we need to work out the precise implications of both these claims to understand Aristotle's moral and political thought, and to formulate a strong reply to Annas' objections.

For Aristotle, the state is a community. It is natural in that we have an inherent propensity to live with others, and to form associational ties with them (*Politics* 1252b27-30, 1280b30-39). Such ties at an immediate level include familial and friendly associations, and at distant level, social and commercial associations. For Aristotle, our natural propensity to associate with others gets its most robust expression in our

⁶⁰ He writes: "For friendship is a community, and as we are in relation to ourselves, so we are in relation to a friend. And, since the perception of our own being is worthy of choice, so is that of the being of a friend" (*NE* 1171b32-35).

immediate personal associations, but our personal associations do not exhaust its full potential (*Politics* 1252b27-35). Though personal ties reflect our natural propensity in critical ways, that is, they nourish our natural instinct to associate with others, they do not fully satisfy it (*Politics* 1253a1-40). Our natural propensity contains a teleological progression: it leads smaller associations to develop into larger ones and elemental perfections to grow into full-fledged perfections: “When several villages [smaller associations of human beings that exhibit elemental perfections] are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing for the sake of good life” (*Politics* 1252b27-35, 1253a19-39). Accordingly, for Aristotle, state or *polis* entails a higher degree of perfection than individual human beings.⁶¹

For Aristotle, there is no discrepancy between personal and social relations. That is, *polis* or social relations embody the same natural propensity that constitutes, and in turn, conditions, personal relations. Personal relations and civic relations coexist side by side. They complement each other, enhance each other and make each other grow. They form a continuum. They capture two sides of human nature and being, bring them into harmony with each other, lead to overall satisfaction and fulfillment, and finally to the realization of a good life.

Civic relations and associations provide the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities, such as trade, commerce, material pursuits and physical gratifications (*Politics* 1263a22-25). These gratifications are important. As much as we desire to live with others, we equally desire material satisfactions. For a good life cannot be a life of want or

⁶¹ Aristotle remarks: “The *polis* is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part” (*Politics* 1253a19-20).

depravity; it requires material goods, pleasure, wealth, companionship, and a pursuit of those endeavors that exhibit material goodness.

Social relations also impart a new form of perfection to one's life;⁶² a perfection that is unknown when one lives in the smaller associations of immediate fraternity, family, village or any other association of that kind (*Politics* 1252b27-35). Civic associations provide one with an opportunity to share one's interests, activities, thoughts and ideas on a larger level. Association with other citizens gives one a chance to cultivate intellectual faculties, an opportunity to test the veracity of one's views and coherence of one's ideas. Furthermore, civic associations provide citizens with an occasion to acquire virtue and to exhibit it in conduct. In sum, through civic associations, one develops a sense of concern for other fellow-citizens, and realizes one's own satisfactions.

The very idea that we can attain our material and moral satisfactions only in association with others in a social context in which people of different streams come together to contribute to one another's life looks like a platitude⁶³ to a modern reader. But by making my good dependent upon my association with others, Aristotle makes my good vulnerable.⁶⁴ In other words, since I can never be fully sure how others will behave and what their likes and dislikes are, any attempt to define my good in association with others would be a non-starter. Even when I like someone, it may not follow that my

⁶² C. C. W. Taylor writes: "The good life is the life directed by phronesis, and the most perfect exercise of phronesis is the application of that virtue to the common good of a community" (Taylor. *Politics. Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 241).

⁶³ Richard W. Miller remarks: "Our central moral anxieties are directed questions of how to avoid objectionable interference with others and not how to develop ourselves in the best possible way [in association with others]" (Miller. *Moral Differences: Truth, Justice and Conscience in a World of Conflict*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992, p.30).

⁶⁴ Martha C. Nussbaum write: "All this [Nussbaum's exposition of Aristotle's friendship] makes it abundantly clear that the best sort of love between persons is highly vulnerable to happenings in the world. Indeed, we wonder how often the world has ever allowed such thorough going intimacy to flourish" (Nussbaum. *Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 359).

liking has the same moral strength (or for that matter should have the same moral strength) that Aristotle ascribes to civic interactions. Annas writes: “Its [Aristotle’s theory of friendship] main weakness lies in Aristotle’s tendency to assume too readily that liking an individual for himself and liking him because one approves of him are more closely related than they in fact are.”⁶⁵

If Annas’ overall critique of Aristotle is correct, then Aristotle would be guilty of two main mistakes: epistemological, and factual. Aristotle’s epistemological error would be in believing that our personal and social relationships, friendship and justice share the same subject and object; and the factual error would be that Aristotle almost identifies a *mere approval* of an individual with a *genuine liking* for that individual, when clearly it is not, Annas argues. Below, I will unearth the premises that lie beneath Annas’ argument against Aristotle, discuss their merits, if any, and finally show that they are either misplaced or baseless.

The main idea behind Annas’ objection against the sameness of subject and object in friendship and justice can be summed up in the following way. For Annas, personal relations and social relations deal with two different aspects of our lives. Personal relations, such as my relation with my family and friends, have an emotive connotation and exhibit a thick bond. One has love, affection, care and concern for one’s family and friends, and feels a sense of bond with them. But the same cannot be said in the case of social relations and civic ties (Annas, p. 553). Civic ties, for Annas, involve a large scale of association, such as social and political groups, cultural and economic organizations. As such, for Annas, our personal and social relations fall into two different categories:

⁶⁵ Julia Annas. Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism. *Mind*, 86, 1977, p. 550.

personal relations involving affection and attachment, and social relations requiring a universal perspective and fair conduct in the public domain. To this point, Aristotle may agree with Annas.

However, Annas goes a step further. She claims that concerns that we exhibit in our personal associations, such as friendship, stop at the level of personal associations, and that it is not possible to extend them to the civic domain in *any shape or form*. For Annas, my personal concerns towards my friends are *qualitatively different* from social concerns towards other fellow-citizens, and they can never share any proper commonality unless we *stretch* them beyond their known frontiers, as Aristotle apparently does (Annas, p. 553). Accordingly, she writes: "It is even more inept to apply them [goodwill, affection, well-wishing] to commercial relationships, or demand that these require a long time of association and be enduring."⁶⁶

Here, it is critical to bear two things in mind. First, we must ask how and why Aristotle sees an intimate connection between personal and social relations, while Annas does not. And second, to establish our position that Aristotle has legitimate reasons to see this connection, and that Annas' objection is either misplaced or wrong, we must spell out the precise nature and content of good will and affections in civic friendship. I will discuss these issues in order.

The most basic characteristic of a good association, whether personal or social, Aristotle argues, is its purposive coherence; that is, it seeks to pursue those aims and goals that are consistent with the pursuit of the common human *telos*, a progression towards the good, and as such are necessary for the well being of its members (*Politics* 1253a19-39). For Aristotle, both friendly and civic associations in their ideal form must

⁶⁶ Julia Annas. Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism. *Mind*, 86, 1977, p. 553.

exhibit this coherence of purpose, otherwise they will be a mere amalgamation of human beings and not a proper association. He infers that both personal and social associations, friendship and community, share the same object as well as objective, namely, a good life for their members, and are critical to their well-being.

For Aristotle, the pursuit of a good life requires both personal and social associations (*Politics* 1280a31-34).⁶⁷ Our personal associations bring us tremendous gratification but never fully satisfy our propensity to associate with others. Society for Aristotle is a progression, from immediate associations (family and friends) to intermediate associations (social clubs, village) to the final association (*polis* or society). *Polis* or society has the same natural origin, and manifests the same moral end⁶⁸ that family or friendship does. Clearly, *polis* or society is a large-scale association and it encompasses many people, and as a result, its bonds are not as thick as familial or friendly bonds. But the bonds of *polis* or social relationships are not qualitatively different from familial or friendly bonds. All these bonds reflect the same human propensity to associate with others. The difference between social and personal relationships and associations is that of quantity, one thicker than the other, and not of quality, as Annas thinks.

For Aristotle, a good life involves a shared living with one's family, friends, relatives and fellow-citizens (*Politics* 1252b20-30, 1295b22-24). All these associations serve the same purpose, namely, facilitation of material and moral satisfactions, and are

⁶⁷ J.M. Cooper rightly remarks: "...On Aristotle's view civic, and not just personal, friendship is an essential component in the flourishing human life. In order to flourish a person needs the more fully realized forms of the moral virtues that only civic friendship brings. Hence, for Aristotle, to achieve the best possible human life, one must develop sentiments of attachment to others with whom one is joined in a common social life (Cooper. *Reason and Emotion*, p. 335).

⁶⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre observes: "We are to think of friendship as being the sharing of all in the common project of creating and sustaining the life of the city, a sharing incorporated in the immediacy of an individual's particular friendships" (MacIntyre. *After Virtue*, p. 156).

critical to a harmonious life. In other words, I need to have care and concern for my family and friends, and show emotional and moral commitments towards them, but these emotional and moral dispositions are neither at the expense of social commitments nor contrary to them. To live a good life I must strike a fine balance between my personal and social relations, reason and emotion, theoretical and practical wisdom. This balance is critical to my overall life and happiness. It reflects virtue in my life, and a good life is a life of virtue.

Up to now I have argued against Annas' conceptual separation of personal and social relations, of personal friendship and civic friendship, of friendship and justice. However, Annas may very well concede to Aristotle the subject-object unity in friendship and justice, and still question civic friendship on the grounds of practicality. In other words, she may say that, though Aristotle's theory of friendship provides us with a cohesive model of conduct at a theoretical level, it is less clear if civic friendship will translate into reality, at least the way Aristotle envisions it. The practical instances of civic friendship may never exhibit the original purity that Aristotle ascribes to them. If so, then, Annas would be raising a legitimate point and her objection would have some strength. Practice, indeed, is an important test of any moral or political theory. In other words, to answer Annas' present objection Aristotle must show that civic friendship is an empirical reality or at least is capable of becoming so (under the right circumstances), and is not merely a pure idea inapplicable in practice. This includes showing that I can have goodwill towards my fellow-citizens even though I do not know them personally, and that there is no conceptual or practical inhibition to my good will towards them.

Recall that earlier we drew a distinction between two kinds of goodwill: substantial or pure, and elemental or incidental good will. This distinction is crucial to the understanding as well as unfolding of civic friendship. Since substantial good will is found only in personal friendship, it would be a mistake to attribute it to civic friendship as I have argued earlier. Accordingly, Aristotle must show that civic relations involve an elemental good will. This does not exclude substantial goodwill in civic relations; indeed a virtuous person may exhibit that. More clearly, an elemental goodwill towards fellow-citizens is a necessary condition of civic friendship, and a substantial good will is not.

Given that good will or a sense of concern for others as well as for their good is a critical constituent of civic friendship, one may ask why Aristotle requires us to have this disposition towards fellow-citizens in the first place. On what grounds do I manifest good will, and what purpose does it serve? Aristotle argues that goodwill for fellow-citizens springs from our natural disposition to associate with each other (*Politics* 1280b30-39). In other words, by nature, we are positively inclined towards our fellow beings. In the second place, he grounds civic good will in the mutual rational recognition of citizens that their association is critical to the pursuit of their interests, objectives and common goods (*Politics* 1252b27-30, *NE* 1094b1-12). That is to say, I wish my neighbor and other community members well, believing that their satisfaction, progress and well-being will lead to larger satisfactions in the social space that I inhabit. We live in the same geographical space, share the same health care, and are associated with the same political and social institutions. Despite our immediate distance, we share certain fundamental goods, such as a desire for a good life (*Politics* 1280a31-32).

The very recognition that my own good and well-being are intimately connected with that of others has some substantive practical consequences. While pursuing my own interests and objectives in my civic life, I am careful not to encroach upon others, and I am willing to contribute to the good of others whenever I have time and opportunity to do so. In the civic spheres of my life I conduct myself in accordance with civic laws that seek to promote the overall social happiness. I do not view civic laws as negative constraints but as a positive set of rules and regulations directed at the pursuit of a good life in the civic sphere. As such, I view my satisfactions in association with other fellow-citizens, and certainly not at their expense.

Accordingly, Aristotle argues that civic friendship is a bulwark against injustice (greed) and a safeguard against unjust individuals (*pleonektes*). It stops an individual's desire to take more than his share or possess more than what he deserves under the schema of proportionate distribution of goods (*NE* 1131a30-31, 1134a35-36). Civic friendship exposes *pleonektes* to virtue and fair conduct, good habits and honorable rewards. An individual's civic conduct, for Aristotle, is largely determined by his character, habituation, and social ethos (*NE* 1102a14-25, 1103b22-26). Thus, civic friendship addresses injustice at its root – an individual's desire to take more than his fair share - and places justice at the core of an individual's life and conduct.

To sum up our discussion of civic friendship, we can state our finding thus: both friendship and justice are virtues for Aristotle and both are critical constituents of a good life, that is, a flourishing life in association with one's friends as well as one's fellow-citizens. Accordingly Aristotle remarks: "A state [larger association] exists for the sake of good life, not for the sake of life only" (*Politics* 1280a31-32). Clearly, Annas fails to

recognize that civic associations entail a fellowship that springs from personal friendships, and shows a reservation on the personal connotations of social associations with others. She fails to notice that our personal and social relationships are intimately connected and interdependent and that their separation will do harm to both. It will weaken justice and make friendship poorer. Aristotle sees friendship and justice serving a common end of the good life in their respective domains, both intrinsically connected and inherently meaningful.

VI. Friendship, Self and Other

Up to now I have shown that friendship is crucial to the realization of one's personal and social good. In this section I will argue that friendship is a critical constituent of one's happiness, self-knowledge and moral motivations. I will argue for the incorporation of friendship in our daily lives and conduct, and I justify this incorporation on both moral and practical grounds.

VI.1 Friendship and happiness

In the opening passage of Book VIII, Chapter I of *NE*, Aristotle makes a remarkable observation: "No one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all other goods" (*NE* 1155a5-6). The observation is striking for a very simple reason. Ordinarily, we construe friendship as a matter of free choice and not of moral necessity. More clearly, on the ordinary view of friendship, I am completely free to make friends or not to make friends, and that my choice in either case is fully determined by my own free will. That is, my choice is purely voluntary and personal, and it has no moral entailments. In sum, on the ordinary view, friendship is not a *necessary* constituent of my happiness.

Against this ordinary view, Aristotle argues that friendship is a necessary constituent of a happy life. An individual must make friends to live a happy life. We must point out though that by making friendship obligatory for a happy life, Aristotle is not compromising an individual's free will here (*NE* 1111b7-8). That is, he is not proposing a "coercive" concept of a happy life, which forces an individual to associate with others and to make friends. Rather, he is saying that friendship is such a good that no one would deliberately choose to relinquish it (*NE* 1155a1-24).

Aristotle offers a threefold argument to establish the necessity of friendship in our lives. In the first place, he argues that friendship is the greatest external good, and as such, it is a necessary constituent of our happiness. For instance, he argues that in the category of material goods, such as wealth, pleasure, and other physical possessions, friendship comes first; in other words, a proper enjoyment of all other goods requires friendship (*NE* 1155a3-11). That is to say, we need friends to share our success and satisfactions in life, and get comfort from them in the time of need and necessity. Accordingly, when my good fortune brings me success and wealth I can share that moment with my friends and such sharing, Aristotle adds, is personally gratifying (*NE* 1155a5-10). Similarly, friendship is a great asset in times of economic stress and deprivation. Friends support each other and comfort each other under such circumstances. They provide emotional and even material assistance in the hours of need (*NE* 1155a10-16). Furthermore, this sharing of material satisfactions is a critical constituent of all friendships [moral, pleasure, and advantage] and is found in all age groups. Aristotle therefore concludes that friendship is the greatest external good (*NE* 1169b10-11) that life has to offer.

In the second place, friendship is either virtue or involves virtue. That is, friendship is intimately associated with virtue, and since we cannot be truly happy without virtue or moral goodness, Aristotle finds friendship to be a critical component of our happiness. He brings out the intimacy of friendship and virtue in two specific ways. On the one hand, friendship is a necessary condition in the pursuit of virtue (*Magna Moralia* II XI:21:1-6). We need to make friends to cultivate virtue in our lives. On Aristotle's account, virtues have an invariable and indispensable social element to them. He argues that we need to live in social groups and associations to acquire virtue. In simple terms, this means that my friends impart a sense of good conduct and moral awareness to my thinking and show me, through their good conduct, that a happy and fulfilling life requires a focused pursuit of moral goodness. Aristotle writes: "With friends [we] are more capable of thinking and acting" (*NE* 1155a15-16).

In addition, friendship gives manifestation to the virtues that I seek or possess. That is, in the company of my friends I get a chance to exhibit my virtues, practice them and strengthen them (*Magna Moralia* II XI:22:2-6). For Aristotle, the possession of virtue is closely related to its reflection in one's actions and conduct. He argues that true possession of virtue necessitates its true manifestation in practical life.⁶⁹ For instance, the virtue of generosity requires me to act in generous ways, truthfulness requires truth-telling, and courage makes it obligatory to get over fear and face difficult circumstances with equanimity. So, friendship necessitates virtue in my conduct and my virtuous conduct necessitates friendship.

Aristotle's above argument requires a clarification. By treating friendship as a medium of the acquisition and reflection of virtue in one's life and conduct, Aristotle is

⁶⁹ He writes: "Virtues...we acquire by first exercising them" (*NE* 1103a33-34).

not making friendship an instrumental relationship in any way. An instrumental relationship can be defined, for our purposes here, as one that *uses friendship as a tool* to some form of gratification. In an instrumental relationship individuals do not believe in the intrinsic moral goodness of one another, but instead, they view their relationship solely in terms of the advantages that it accrues. By contrast, Aristotle believes in the moral goodness of friends and their friendship. His point is that virtue, by definition, requires practical necessitation and that friendship is critical to its actualization in practice. In particular, friends care for each other and are willing to promote each other's good (that is, they help one another acquire virtue), and since they live together, their friendship provides them with a distinctive opportunity to manifest virtue in association with one another. Accordingly, Aristotle's argument builds upon the intrinsic goodness of friendship and has no instrumental connotation.

Aristotle's third argument is intimately connected with his previous two arguments. The third argument uses the findings of the earlier two to establish the intrinsic connection between friendship and happiness: "For a human being is a social being and his nature is to live in the company of others. So this will be the case with the happy person as well, because he possesses the natural goods, and is clearly better to spend his days with friends and good people than with strangers or anybody he happens to bump into. So the happy person does need friends" (*NE* 1169b18-22); and "Happiness, which we all say and believe is the End of all good things and most complete, we may now proceed to identify with living well and doing well" (*Magna Moralia* I. III:2:3-5).

Aristotle's third argument places friendship at the core of one's happiness. It shows that human beings have a natural propensity to live together and that a purposeful

living necessarily requires friendship. One cannot be happy in isolation. In order to be happy an individual must make friends, spend time with them and live in their company. A happy life for Aristotle is a life of all-round satisfaction. Such satisfaction involves a cultivation of virtues and other noble qualities in one's life. Accordingly, a happy life, for Aristotle, requires a harmony of thought and purpose, good intent and noble conduct.

In the light of the above arguments and considerations, we can conclude that Aristotle rightly considers friendship as a necessary constituent of our happiness. He views human life in terms of virtue and perfection and argues that a truly happy person must exhibit them both. Accordingly, he concludes that friendship is a critical constituent of such perfections, and an essential ingredient of a happy life.

VI.2 Friendship and self-knowledge

For Aristotle, friendship is also a crucial medium for self-knowledge. Before proceeding with this point, we must clarify the precise meaning and implication of self-knowledge in Aristotle's thought. There are two main ways to understand self-knowledge. Self-knowledge involves an ontological understanding of the self. That is, I truly discover myself and get to know my existential status in the world. More strongly, such self-knowledge invariably has a metaphysical reference; it includes answering questions regarding the nature of the self, for instance, is the self a substance or a bundle of perceptions? Clearly, for Aristotle, friendship is not a medium of self-knowledge in this sense.

However, there is another way to understand self-knowledge. Instead of trying to unlock the metaphysical nature or attributes of the self, it seeks to understand the self in a more concrete and practical sense. It focuses on the empirical qualities and attributes of

the self, and asks certain fundamental questions; such as, what are one's true qualities and attributes, what constitutes one's true nature and character, and what principles inform the core of one's being? Self-knowledge in the present sense becomes synonymous with an intellectual understanding of one's nature and character, strengths and weaknesses. Through such self-knowledge I get an opportunity to refine my perceptions, clarify my doubts, get hold of my likes and dislikes, and cultivate good and noble aspects of my nature and character. Friendship, for Aristotle, is critical to this kind of self-knowledge.

He writes:

Now supposing that 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 him to be a kind of second self, as in the common saying “This is my second Heracles.” Now to know oneself is a very difficult thing – as even philosophers have told us – and a very pleasant thing, knowledge of self being (proverbially) pleasant. Direct contemplation of ourselves is moreover impossible, as is shown by the censure we inflict on others for the very things we ourselves unwittingly do – favor or passion being the cause, which in many of us blind our judgment. And so, just as when wishing to behold own faces we have seen them by looking upon a mirror, whenever we wish to know our own characters and personalities, we can recognize them by looking upon a friend; since the friend is, as we say, our “second self” (*Magna Moralia* II XV:5:4-8, 6:1-13).

This passage is tremendously complex. Moreover, it has critical consequences for one's understanding of oneself as well as that of others, particularly one's friend. It requires a careful explanation. In this passage, Aristotle is making three points. First, he almost discounts the possibility of self-knowledge by oneself. For Aristotle, it is “very difficult” to attain self-knowledge by one's own exclusive efforts, through a private intellectual contemplation. In other words, I need a social context to know myself; notice that Aristotle's view that the self has a social fabric is in sharp contrast to the ordinary

view of self that considers self-knowledge as a matter of private reflection, and even spiritual contemplation.

Aristotle gives two specific arguments to establish the above claim. In the first place, he maintains that self-knowledge must contain a full and genuine account of one's nature and character, but reasons, on empirical grounds, that while seeking self-knowledge by oneself one often tends to ignore one's drawbacks and weaknesses, and tends to amplify one's positive qualities (*MM* II XV:6:1-4, 8:1-4). Such a self-knowledge becomes a mode of self-deception. In other words, it is not authentic. In the second place, he questions the possibility of such knowledge on teleological and moral grounds. Recall that for Aristotle, one's humanness is contingent upon one's participation in society; also note that this participation does not mean that one cannot have one's private space, but that any such private space invariably has a teleological and social reference (*MM* XV:9:4-10, *Politics* 1252a1-6). Even when I am by myself my existence presupposes a social setting, a context that conditions my existence as a human being. I cannot separate myself from this social context without stripping away my humanness. Accordingly, for Aristotle, we require friendship and companionship to acquire self-knowledge.

Next, Aristotle holds that an authentic self-knowledge must bridge the gap between oneself and others, particularly one's friends. His reasoning is that one's true self is intimately connected with one's friend's and that this intimacy has a teleological purpose.⁷⁰ For Aristotle, self-knowledge is not a matter of an artificial understanding of

⁷⁰ A.W. Price remarks: "There is [in Aristotle's thought] an implicit distinction between two notions of the 'self': a subject of choice and desire (a person and a substance), and a persona constructed by forming desires and making choices (compare the phrase 'my better self'). A practical persona is realized in sequence of, especially, desires, choices, actions, and results; these are what are most relevant to a man's success in the life he leads, to his *eudaimoniā* or 'activity of the soul in accordance with virtue'. Now while, normally, no organ is shared by two organisms, parts of lives can be shared: one and the same act may count as contributing, as a constituent and not as a cause, to the *eudaimoniā* of two persons. It is this

oneself; rather, it is an authentic understanding of oneself in association with others. That is, the core constituents of one's nature, character and being match with one's friend's and one must develop a fuller understanding of one's friend's to understand one's own. Indeed it is easier to observe the nature and character of others than one's own. A focus on others secures objectivity whereas a focus on oneself has a very subjective connotation. So, self-knowledge acquired through observation of the friend has a concreteness that is not found in subjective contemplation.

Self-knowledge in the above sense, Aristotle argues, becomes a medium of one's personal and moral development and flourishing.⁷¹ That is, I approach my friend and our friendship with a deep sense of affection and attachment. I value him for his intrinsic moral qualities and attributes, and I see him as a mirror of my own self. Furthermore, I see him reflecting my own qualities and character, and am naturally drawn towards his companionship. This way, my friend becomes my alter ego, and we complement each other's moral development.

VI.3 Friendship, self-love and altruism

In the earlier sections I have shown that Aristotle establishes the relevance of friendship to our lives on two main grounds. First, friends love one another for one another's sake (*NE* 1156b9-12). I view my friend as an intrinsically good person, cherish his companionship and contribute to his good. That is to say, I want to make him happy. Second, friendship is also essential to my happiness. It gives an expression to my natural

possibility that grounds Aristotle's ideal of friendship" (A.W.Price. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p.105-106.

⁷¹ Suzanne Stern-Gillet writes: "Aristotle views psychic unity as the result of a slow process of integration which is broadly co-extensive with the acquisition of moral virtue. Practical reason, in his outlook, constitutes the hub around which the self is formed, since it alone can effect the integration of the various psychic elements into a whole. Whenever it fails to do so, either through *akrasia* or vice, the individual remains unfree, a mere bunch of unstable elements and discordant parts" (Gillet. *Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship*, p. 26).

propensity to associate with others. Moreover, my friend contributes to my life and promotes my good. He wants to make me happy. Accordingly, on Aristotle's theory of friendship, there is *no clash* between my good and happiness and that of my friend's good and happiness; on the contrary, they complement each other and converge with each other in the moral sphere.⁷²

However, the practical instances of friendship often appear to pose a challenge to Aristotle's theory of friendship. As a matter of fact, we observe in our daily lives that friends compete for a variety of goods, such as jobs, wealth, honor and excellence. In other words, the goods that we desire in friendship are often limited. So, sometimes one is required to make a determination as to whose good one ought to pursue and whose happiness one ought to secure. What should I desire when I see a clear disagreement between my good and that of my friend's good. On the grounds of self-love I am more inclined to seek my own good, but on the grounds of altruism that of my friend's. Accordingly, Aristotle must explain what ought to be prioritized in friendship: self-love or altruism. Annas presents the issue thus: "I take egoism to be the doctrine that an agent has no reason for acting unless it can be shown to be in his interests in some way, and altruism to be the doctrine that at least on some occasions the interests of another person can be a reason for his acting, without any reference to his own interests" (Annas, p. 535).

Interestingly, if we apply Annas' above criterion to our understanding and interpretation of Aristotle's theory of friendship, then we find that Aristotelian friendship exhibits both egoistic and altruistic elements at the same time. Recall that I have argued

⁷² Suzanne Stern-Gillet remarks: "Motivating humans to feel for and with others, as well as to act in their interest, complete friendship also uniquely contributes to the cognitive self-actualization of virtuous persons" (Gillet. *Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship*, p. 4).

that friendship promotes, simultaneously, my good as well as the good of my friend. But this mutual reciprocation of the good does not satisfactorily settle the issue at hand. It does not answer the question of what I ought to do when I have to choose between my good and that of my friend's good. It reinforces that my own good and that of my friend's are intimately connected and complementary to each other's; hence, there can be no real conflict, but this seems to leave it unclear as to what I should do if a conflict occurs somehow. Indeed, Annas remarks: "Surely he [Aristotle] has begged the question in merely asserting that one can regard one's friend as oneself; is not the whole point *whether* this is possible?"⁷³ But the question is: has he? I do not think so. Below I will examine Aristotle's theory of moral motivation to explicate the issue.

Aristotle's theory of moral motivation has two critical elements to it. These elements are: the intent of action, and the object of pursuit. That is to say, whenever I adopt self-love or love of others as a motive, it has an invariable reference to the object (physical or moral) that constitutes the focus of my intent. I may be motivated by the pursuit of certain kinds of goods for myself or for my friend. Irrespective of the motive of self-love or altruism, the object that I seek is important. The nature of the object adds credibility to my motive and often determines my pursuit. It is easier to be altruistic if the goods at stake are in abundant supply. Accordingly, for Aristotle, both the intent and the object play an interdependent role in the determination of our moral motives, and they cannot be separated.

Aristotle classifies the objects under two broad categories: moral and non-moral objects. He emphatically holds that a friend's interests hold priority in the case of non-moral objects, such as physical gratification and economic satisfactions, provided that

⁷³ Julia Annas. Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism. *Mind*, 86, 1977, p. 543.

they remain in agreement with virtue and prudence (*NE* 1169a18-36). For instance, I must sacrifice my economic interests for my friend's, yet make sure at the same time that I do not land up in poverty; especially since poverty would compromise my virtue of generosity (it requires wealth to be generous). However, under ordinary circumstances, as a virtuous person, I am required to promote my friend's economic interests. In this sense, moral motivation for Aristotle is a matter of virtue and prudence.

However, in the case of moral objects, such as virtue and unconditional good, Aristotle holds that one can assign primacy to one's own good as opposed to one's friend's good (ideally, not at the expense of the friend's good). Aristotle argues that one must acquire virtue and moral goodness whenever one can for their possession will enhance one's wisdom and strengthen one's character and thereby improve one's conduct in friendship.

In sum, for Aristotle, moral motivation lies in a consistent promotion of the friend's non-moral goods, and it also requires a continuous assisting of the friend's moral development, and a prudent pursuit of one's own moral good. More clearly, I must avoid a conflict between my moral good and that of my friend, but should such a conflict occur it would be perfectly moral and legitimate to secure my own good; still, it would be an act of exceptional nobility to sacrifice my moral good for my friend.⁷⁴

Contrary to Annas, for Aristotle egoism and altruism are not absolute categories;⁷⁵ that is, they are not separate and independent from each other, but a matter of proportion,

⁷⁴ J.L. Ackrill elucidates: "Aristotle insists that the virtuous man does what he does gladly, 'with pleasure'. But the pursuit of his own pleasure or satisfaction is not his motive. He does what he does 'for its own sake', or, as Aristotle repeatedly says, because it is *kalon* ('fine', 'noble', 'splendid'; 'right' misses the aesthetic tone and 'beautiful' forces it too hard)" (Ackrill. *Aristotle's Ethics*. London: Faber and Faber, 1973, p. 24).

⁷⁵ Arthur Madigan S.J. writes: "Aristotle's complex notion of the self and of *nous*, and his notion of the *kalon* as jointly constituted by an agent and others (or by an agent taking up the position with others),

virtue and prudence. On Aristotle's understanding of the issue, our moral motives must be in agreement with virtue, and as such, they require a fine balance in one's intellectual and practical wisdom. I must always be motivated to assist my friend's good, and my efforts should be as reliable and noble as his own: "The good person, however, acts for the sake of what is noble, and the more so the better he is; and he acts for the sake of his friend, neglecting his own interest" (*NE* 1168a32-34). Accordingly, my friend and I must exhibit a similar outlook towards our friendship, and partner each other's moral development and perfection. This way, we create a splendid harmony in our interests and pursuits, such that egoism does not threaten our relationship, and altruism becomes a routine.⁷⁶ As such, our friendship gets grounded in virtue and thrives on our moral prudence.

For Annas, the above picture of friendship, encompassing self-love and altruism, looks foreign. It is because she herself forces a separation between self-love and altruism such that one must oppose the other and the two can never coincide. On her analysis, self-love and altruism fall in the domain of contrary categories. We must always choose one at the expense of the other. They never converge. I can never rationally appreciate them both. Annas requires moral motives to equip us with clear choices and specific moral alternatives; that is, I must choose between my good and that of my friend's. That is to say, for Annas, the nature of the good (moral or non-moral) is irrelevant, and virtue and prudence do not soften her dilemma.

hamper the drawing of sharp distinctions between self and others, between the self interests and others' interests. Thus Aristotle's views of the self and of the *kalon* make it difficult even to raise that problem in a clear and explicit form. Aristotle is neither egoist nor altruist. He is not a party to the debate" (Madigan, "Eth. Nic. 9.8: Beyond Egoism and Altruism" *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy IV: Aristotle's Ethics*, (New York: State University Press New York, 1994, p. 89).

⁷⁶A.W. Price writes: "...it [Aristotle's conception of self] dissolves the obstinate dichotomy between egoism and altruism" (Price. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 106.

But Annas fails to understand that Aristotle approaches the issue of moral motivation within a larger context of the human *telos*, that is, a progression towards the good and a pursuit of the good. He views friendship as a medium of moral flourishing and any such flourishing necessitates an intimate harmony of interests between the friends. That is, my friend and I seek to promote each other's good and care for each other's moral well-being. Certainly this has an intrinsically good moral motivation. Once we absolutely separate and isolate the good of two friends, as Annas does, then no harmony can ever be properly achieved. Annas commits this mistake; Aristotle does not. I conclude that Aristotle provides us with a more refined and fulfilling theory of moral motivations.

Kant's Concept of Friendship

I. Reason vs. Inclination: Two Bases for Friendship

In the previous chapter, I showed that Aristotle conceives of friendship on two levels. First, it has a natural end for human beings. Human beings have a natural propensity to associate with one another, to live in one another's company and to form personal and social ties with one another. Moreover, this propensity has a *telos*, namely, the pursuit of happiness. Friendship, Aristotle argues, gives manifestation to this propensity. Accordingly, he concludes that friendship is a necessary constituent of human happiness. Second, friendship also has a moral end. Aristotle reminds us almost persistently that a true friendship is either virtue, or it aims at virtue as its moral end. He argues that friendship, particularly virtue friendship, is critical to one's moral and material satisfactions, personal and social happiness.

However, according to Kant the above view of friendship is fundamentally defective (*Foundations of The Metaphysics of Morals*⁷⁷ 397:11-40). By associating the natural and moral ends together, and conceiving them in a like manner, it places compromising conditions on friendship. It forces friends consistently to adjust their morality to their inclinational propensities. But it is not clear if this can be done within an appropriate moral framework, Kant argues. Natural ends spring from the inclinations of the friends, and reflect their personal interests and orientations, and as such, they are invariably conditioned by their inclinational propensities and empirical circumstances.

⁷⁷ Immanuel Kant. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals: With Critical Essays*, Trans. by White Beck, Ed. by Robert Paul Wolff. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969.

Moral ends, on the other hand, emanate from pure practical reason, and have a universal moral signification; they are equally valid for all human beings, and apply to all situations equally. They differ from the natural ends at a fundamental level and cannot be reconciled with them. Kant argues that any merger of the natural and moral ends will lead to conflicting motivations in friendship, and it will seriously undermine the morality of the friends: “A mixed theory of morals which is put together both from incentives of feelings and inclinations and from rational concepts must...make the mind vacillate between the motives which cannot be brought under any principle and which lead only accidentally to the good and often to the bad” (*Foundations* 411:4-9).

Kant is critical of the merging of the natural and moral ends in friendship for two specific reasons. First, this merger of ends implies that the moral value of a friendship can be measured in terms of its natural ends. Aristotle argues that a friendship is moral if its object is moral; that is, if the friends are motivated by the pursuit of virtue and moral goodness, their association will have a moral value, otherwise not (*NE* 1152b1-40). This view, Kant believes, is misleading and wrong (*Critique of Practical Reason*⁷⁸ 133:3-20). It construes the moral value of friendship with reference to external ends, such as the cultivation of one’s moral capacities and attributes, and not with reference to one’s pure practical reason and free will. But all external ends,⁷⁹ Kant argues, are inclinational in nature, and they have only a conditional worth. Therefore, they cannot be moral.

Kant’s second main objection against the merging of the natural and moral ends in friendship is that it makes morality dependent upon empirical circumstances. The

⁷⁸ Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Reason and other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, Trans. by T. K. Abbott. London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd, 1967.

⁷⁹ Kant divides ‘all external ends’ into two separate domains. One is the empirical world. The other is one’s psychological make-up, physical attributes, and any other contingent features that can be ascribed to a person. He puts these things together because they all fail to meet rational moral standards.

pursuit of one's natural ends, he argues, necessarily involves empirical conditions, such as one's personal surroundings, interests and orientations. For instance, on Aristotle's view, those who have a cultivated moral sense or live in a reasonably good *polis* are better equipped for virtue than those who lack such a sense or live under defective social institutions. Irrespective of its practical merits and defects, this view of morality is seriously flawed, Kant argues (*CPR* 131:17-34). It conceives morality with reference to empirical circumstances and fails to recognize that all such circumstances are contingent by nature, and therefore, incapable of grounding morality (*CPR* 221:24-30, 22:5-32). According to Kant, morality is antithetical to all forms of contingency (*Foundations* 411:1-11). It requires universal moral laws and a priori conditions; it cannot be based upon empirical circumstances (*Foundations* 398:8-24, 399:1-12).

Thus, Kant completely repudiates all inclinations and their corresponding natural ends in friendship. He believes that inclinations reflect an individual's mental and emotional dispositions, interests and orientations, personal and social propensities, and that none of these have a moral value. Similarly, the ends of inclinations, Kant argues, embody an individual's natural desires for happiness and other forms of material gratifications, but they too are deficient in moral quality (*Foundations* 428:12-15). Kant contends that friendship in its pure form can neither be subjected to inclinational principles, nor have any such principle as its constituent. He concludes that an individual's inclinations and natural ends can never provide a proper moral ground for friendship. They must be excluded from its moral content.

In his own moral theory, Kant understands friendship in terms of two major themes. In the first place, friendship represents a manifestation of an individual's pure

reason in association with others (*CPR* 126:15-30). For Kant, the constitutive conditions of friendship, such as a free will and moral law, cannot be found in empirical experiences; rather, they must be obtained a priori. To state this another way, Kant is saying that friends must not associate with one another on empirical grounds, such as profit and reward, but on moral grounds – a rational love for the moral law and respect for one another’s moral autonomy (*Foundations* 436:1-6). Accordingly, for Kant, the pure practical reason of the friends, and not their sensible experiences, provides the constitutive conditions of friendship. Even though the moral law and free will are not given in experience,⁸⁰ according to Kant, they have an empirical validity in friendship. Kant offers a set of complex arguments to establish the empirical validity of the moral law and free will. He argues, in particular, that the empirical validity of a moral concept does not reside in its empirical origin; rather, it resides in its pure practical intuition⁸¹ (*CPR* 128:1-26). The pure practical reason of the friends secures the manifestation of a moral friendship in the empirical domain; it renders the moral law and free will morally intelligible to the friends, and imparts an a priori validity to friendly associations.⁸²

In the second place, Kant conceives of friendship in terms of rational obligations. He calls them the obligations of duty (*MMDV* 469:14-25). Duty, he believes, makes it obligatory upon the friends to love and respect one another for their intrinsic moral

⁸⁰ He writes: “All moral concepts have their seat and origin entirely a priori in reason” (*Foundations* 411:10-11).

⁸¹ Bernard Williams remarks: “The moral law is the law of notional republic of moral agents. It is a notional republic, because they are real agents and because it is rationally self-imposed by each of them, it is a real law” (Williams. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 191).

⁸² Kant writes: “The rational being counts himself, qua intelligence, as belonging to the intelligible world, and only as an efficient cause belonging to it does he call his causality a will...But since the intelligible world contains the ground of the world of sense and hence of its laws, the intelligible world is (and must be conceived as) directly legislative for my will, which belongs wholly to the intelligible world” (*Foundations* 453:16-18, 33-36).

qualities, and not for any contingent or peripheral reason. That is to say, while associating with one another, friends must not be motivated by one another's empirical qualities and considerations. Duty must exclusively provide the moral motivation in friendship (*MMDV* 469:20-21). Since the commands of duty are primarily negative – they tell us what friends must not do while associating with one another, friendship, as Kant understands it, entails a set of negative injunctions, and no positive content. It requires friends not to infringe upon one another's free will and pure practical reason, but does not oblige them to contribute to one another's moral perfection and well-being. All such contributions, Kant argues, involve inclinational elements. Therefore, they run counter to the obligations of duty. Needless to say, Kant's view is completely at odds with our ordinary conception of friendship. George Kerner remarks:

The natural tendency of most of us, I presume, is to believe that the actions to which we are led by our impulses and inclinations – if they are unspoiled, healthy, beautiful, admirable, and the like – can have worth which is at least equal to the worth of actions which we perform from a cold rational consideration of what is duty.⁸³

As I discuss Kant's theory of friendship, I will show that it contains some serious theoretical problems, and is utterly unsatisfactory in experience. It conceives of friendship in terms of pure practical reason and negative moral obligations, and fails to recognize that friendship is an empirical relationship between two individuals based on personal love and affection. This failure is not surprising. Kant's theory of friendship, I will show, is deeply entrenched in his moral theory, and inherits most of its defects. First, I will argue that Kant's separation of natural and moral ends in friendship is unacceptable and wrong. It is neither based on a sound moral ground, nor substantiated by our ordinary

⁸³ George Kerner. *Three Philosophical Moralists: Mill, Kant, Sartre*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 87.

experiences of friendship. Second, Kant's view that duty alone constitutes the moral motivation in friendship is misleading. It defines moral purity in terms of negative constraints, and by doing so, it shuts the door for any possible moral cooperation among the friends. Friendship, as Aristotle has shown us, does necessitate a moral involvement in one another's life. Finally, I will show that even if we concede our earlier two points to Kant, his theory of friendship falls under the weight of the practical instances of friendship. Along with Michael Stocker, I will show that Kant's theory of friendship robs friendship of its emotional content, and renders it completely meaningless as a personal relationship.

II. The Nature and Definition of Friendship

Kant broadly classifies the motives of human conduct into two categories: self-love, and love of humanity (Collins⁸⁴ 27:422:9-22). Furthermore, he argues that these motives arise from distinct faculties and aim at different ends. Therefore, they cannot be brought together under a single rational principle. The motive of self-love, he contends, embodies one's natural desires and primitive instincts. It leads to the pursuit of one's natural inclinations at the expense of the moral well-being of others; and as such, it has no moral worth.⁸⁵ On the other hand, the motive of the love of humanity symbolizes a representation of one's pure practical reason in one's thought and conduct. It has an ontological necessitation; it obliges moral agents to constrain themselves according to the maxims of duty. For Kant, these two motives represent opposite principles and are

⁸⁴ Collins in *Lectures on Ethics*, ed. Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

⁸⁵ Kant remarks: "All the inclinations together (which can be reduced to a tolerable system, in which case of their satisfaction is called happiness) constitute *self-regard (solipsismus)*. This is either the *self-love* that consists in an excessive *fondness* for oneself (*philautia*), or satisfaction with oneself (*arrogantia*). The former is called particularly *selfish*; the latter *self-conceit*" (CPR 197:9-14).

always in conflict with one another. The rational idea of friendship evolves from this struggle (Collins 27:422:18).

Prima facie, there are two approaches for dealing with the above conflict of a clash between one's self-love and love of humanity. The first approach believes that despite their initial disagreement, tension, and consequent struggle, the two principles can be brought together under one moral umbrella such as virtue. That is to say, virtue can create a balance between one's self-love and moral obligations, between personal propensities and moral commitments. In other words, virtue can educate an individual's inclinations to cohere with his pure love of humanity. Aristotle takes this approach. The second approach sees these principles of self-love and moral motivations as inherently incompatible. It holds that they can never be harmonized without making some serious moral compromises. According to this approach, if one wants to protect one's morality, one must control one's personal and inclinational propensities of self-love. One ought to eliminate them completely from one's moral spheres. It construes the commands of one's duty as the decrees against one's inclinations. Kant takes this approach. In this section I will discuss how Kantian friendship transcends an individual's inclinational propensities and self-love, and restores morality to its pure practical form, and I will bring out the implications of this view to our daily life situations.

In his most prevalent account of friendship, Kant writes:

Friendship (considered in its perfection) is the union of two persons through equal mutual love and respect. It is easy to see that this is an ideal of each other participating and sharing sympathetically in the other's well-being through the morally good will that unites them, and even though it does not produce the complete happiness of life, the adoption of this ideal in the

disposition toward each other makes them deserving of happiness; hence, men have a duty of friendship (*Metaphysics of Morals*⁸⁶, *MMDV* 469:14-20).

In the above passage, Kant lays down the fundamental principles of a friendship, or, more precisely, he explains what it means to be a friend. Love and respect, he holds, are necessary constituents of a friendship; hence, they cannot be compromised. For Kant, both love and respect have a specific moral connotation in friendship. In their pure form they both necessitate duty. Kant also believes that on moral grounds respect is superior to love. I love my friend because I like him and care for him, but I am under a moral obligation to respect each and every human being, friends as well non-friends. Accordingly, respect requires me to value human beings for who they are as human persons, for their intrinsic human worth, and it does not allow me to differentiate them on artificial moral grounds, such as personal love and affections. With this outline in mind, we can examine the meaning and significance of Kant's position.

Love and respect are the substantial elements of any friendship, Kantian friendship being no exception. Love, in particular, represents one's natural desire to seek the presence of one's friends, to spend time with them, and to be with them against all odds (*MMDV* 401:19-20, 26-28). It constitutes the defining characteristic of a friendship, and provides it with a distinct and differentiating moral quality (*MMDV* 469:14-15). Unlike other moral associations, friendship is invariably marked by care and concern towards the friends. It requires personal affections for the friends, and necessitates empirical closeness. For Kant, love is the singular element that distinguishes friendship from other moral relations.

⁸⁶Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* has two parts: Doctrine of Right, and Doctrine of Virtue. In this thesis, I will abbreviate them respectively as *MMDR* and *MMDV*.

However, despite its moral merit, love in friendship, Kant argues, often exhibits a conflicting tendency (*MMDV* 449:8-10, 470:1-7). On the one hand, it seeks emotional proximity with the friend. Friends desire to be close to one another and want to share their feelings and emotions. This desire is natural; we often seek the company of those who are affectionate and kind towards us, and care for our well-being. In ordinary terms, I want to know how my friend's day was, what he did, and what issues occupied his mind. I am also interested in knowing his likes, dislikes and views on a variety of subjects. As such, I have a natural propensity to associate with my friends, and to stay closer to them. On the other hand, even while desiring emotional closeness with my friend, I do not want to encroach on his private space; I do not want to interfere in his personal issues and concerns. I want to draw a clear line between the areas of friendly associations and personal issues, between mutual cooperation and undue interference, and abide by its limits. Though I love my friend, value his emotional and moral well-being, I do not want to enforce my personal and moral convictions upon him. Likewise, I do not want my friend to interfere in my personal matters. Accordingly, love in friendship, Kant argues, necessitates affection and involvement, yet also reservation and distance at the same time. Love exhibits opposing elements in friendship, and it is not easy to appropriate them satisfactorily, more so, because the desire to seek intimacy with the friend is grounded in one's inclinations, whereas the desire to value the friend's personal and moral spheres has its source in pure practical reason. Hence, a stronger and independent principle is required to secure the proper manifestation of love in friendship. Respect provides that principle (*CPR* 255:19-30, *MMDV* 469:14-15).

Respect, Kant argues, resists all inclinational involvements in friendship and protects the moral autonomy of the friends. It requires friends to value one another for their intrinsic moral attributes, and follow the commands of moral law and duty while associating with one another (*MMDV* 449:14-25). Moral law and duty require friends to respect one another for their common humanity. They prohibit personal love and affection in friendship, and substitute for them rational love and affection. They put friends under a moral obligation to be loving and benevolent towards all mankind. They command friends to respect the dignity of all human persons, and not to discriminate them on contingent grounds. As such, respect accords equal moral rights to both friends and non-friends.

Furthermore, Kant conceives of respect as negative constraint. It does not provide friends with any positive duty. It does not tell them what they should do to contribute to one another's moral and material well-being, rather, it stops them from interfering in one another's moral space (*CPR* 201:3-18). Respect requires me not to infringe on the core aspects of my friend's moral being, not to influence his moral choices, and not to engage him in activities that run counter to his moral beliefs and convictions. Unlike love, which fosters an emotional union among the friends, respect sets the limit of their friendly associations: "The principle of mutual love admonishes men constantly to come closer to one another; that of the respect they owe to one another, to keep themselves at a distance from one another" (*MMDV* 449:8-11).

Thus unlike Aristotle, Kant does not see love and respect as complementary principles in friendship. He is wary of the deeper moral involvement that Aristotle proposes in friendship. He argues that when I bestow love and affection on my friend, I

put him under a moral obligation. My love and affection towards my friend necessitate some form of reciprocation from him. My love obliges my friend to show similar feelings and emotions towards me. However, all such reciprocations are inclinational by nature; they are not in agreement with one's moral obligations: "By carrying out the duty of love to someone I put another under obligation; I make myself deserving from him. But in observing a duty of respect I put only myself under obligation; I keep myself within my own bounds so as not to detract anything from the worth that the other, as a man, is authorized to put upon himself" (*MMDV* 450:10-15).

This separation of love and respect has important consequences for Kantian friendship. It segregates the personal aspects of friendship from its moral aspects. It construes love and respect in friendship independently from one another, such that they neither support one another, nor are at peace with another; my love for my friend obstructs my respect for him. It requires me to keep my love and respect separate from one another, and puts me under constant pressure to achieve a proper balance between my feelings and emotions towards my friend, and my moral obligations towards him. Furthermore, it censors all kinds of personal gratification and moral fulfillment in friendship. Kant argues that my happiness and my friend's moral perfection cannot constitute my moral end in friendship. It is so because happiness entails the feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, and joy and has an invariable reference to lovable objects, and because I am naturally inclined towards the things that I love and that make me happy. All this is inconsistent with morality which involves a constraint and not an inclinational satisfaction. Similarly, my respect restricts me from contributing to my friend's moral development. It makes me conscious of his moral capacities, and places me under a moral

obligation to acknowledge them. Accordingly, Kant disallows both my happiness and my friend's perfection as the ends of my friendship. He remarks:

For *his own happiness* is an end that every man has (by virtue of the impulses of his nature), but this end can never without self-contradiction be regarded as a duty...So too, it is a contradiction for me to make another's *perfection* my end and consider myself under obligation to promote this. For the *perfection* of another man, as a person, consists just in this: that he *himself* is able to set his end in accordance with his own concepts of duty; and it is self-contradictory to require that I do (make it my duty to do) something that only the other himself can do (*MMDV* 386:1-3, 9-14).

Kant's view that one's happiness cannot be a legitimate moral end in friendship is questionable on our ordinary understanding of friendship, and false, if we follow Aristotle's lead on the subject. Still more problematic is his view that friends cannot contribute to one another's moral perfection. Hence, Kant must explain satisfactorily why one must exclude these ends from friendship. In order to bring out the full implications of Kant's view and its underlying rationale, I will briefly discuss the chief elements of his moral theory.

There are two fundamental elements to Kant's theory of morality. First, morality, for Kant, necessitates certain universal moral laws. He argues that moral law springs from the pure reason of an individual (*Foundations* 411:10-11). That is, though each individual autonomously legislates his or her own moral law, all human beings possess the same a priori attributes that determine this law (*Foundations* 454:1-9). Since my friend and I (and all other human beings) have the same rational faculties, each of us can separately formulate our own moral laws (*Foundations* 434:21-23). I can determine my moral principles, and my friend can determine his, and since these principles are

grounded in our pure reason, they hold equally for both of us, and for all other human beings. So, moral law has universal validity.

Second, moral law commands me to respect all human beings, and not simply my friends. It makes it imperative that I treat all human beings as an end in themselves, and never as a means (*CPR* 215:1-22). This implies that I must value them for their intrinsic moral properties and not for any other purpose. Accordingly, in friendship, I must view my friend as a moral person, who deserves my unconditional love and respect for who he is as a person, and not for his contribution to my life and projects.

The above two elements constitute the core of Kantian morality, and friendship (*MMDV* 469:14-30, 470:24-27, *CPR* 208:18-25). They oblige us to adopt a universal and impartial outlook and to value our friendship for its moral qualities, and not for its emotional contents. They require us to dispense with all emotional and inclinational propensities, because they limit the scope of our moral relationship, and corrupt the moral value of our actions. As a result, on Kant's view, I must not see my friendship as a medium of personal satisfaction and moral contentment (in the ordinary sense of the term). So, Kant rules out my happiness and my friend's moral perfection as the ends of my friendship.⁸⁷

Kant is committed to protecting an individual's freedom of choice and autonomy in friendship. But he never realizes that, by expunging love and affection from friendship, he is seriously undermining its empirical attributes: "It is a serious limitation in Kant's ethical theory that he did not recognize adequately the positive significance of impulse

⁸⁷ He writes: "The direct opposite of the principle of morality is, when the principle of private happiness is made the determining principle of the will" (*CPR* 147:19-20).

and emotion for the moral life.”⁸⁸ Kant’s strict adherence to the principle of human dignity, never mind its narrow understanding, discounts even the slightest possibility of an effective moral cooperation in friendship. On Kant’s theory of friendship, it is not clear at all why we make friends in the first place. After all, they cannot be our partners in the pursuit of happiness or moral perfection. It is equally unclear how we choose our friends, what qualities and characteristics of other people attract our attention and lead to the formation of a friendship, and which of them repel us and lead to the dissolution of a friendship? Allen Wood remarks:

The general basis of friendship, therefore, cannot explain why I am friends with one individual rather than another. On Kant’s view, the explanation is rather this: If I am Paul’s friend rather than Peter’s, that is not because Paul is more virtuous to me than Peter, nor is it because Paul and I are more alike in virtue. It is rather because I have somehow succeeded in developing a special relation of intimacy and mutual trust with Paul and not with Peter.⁸⁹

The word ‘somehow’ in the above passage identifies the key issue in this part of Kant’s thought. His task here is to explain why I am friends with Paul and not with Peter. What qualities of Paul establish my friendship with him, and why am I inclined towards Paul’s friendship and not towards Peter’s; note that Kant cannot take recourse to the standard conventional explanation (as Aristotle does, for instance) that considers Paul’s nature, character, decency and his other attractive empirical qualities to explain my friendship with him. All such explanations provide contingent justifications, and lack moral strength (*Foundations* 434:23-33). They explain my friendship with Paul in terms of his good qualities, but they disregard his moral being. Kant’s task gets particularly

⁸⁸ George A. Schrader. *Autonomy, Heteronomy, and Moral Imperatives in Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals: with Critical Essays*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merill Company, Inc. 1969, p. 123.

⁸⁹ Allen W. Wood. *Kant’s Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 227.

difficult when we note that on his view both Paul and Peter have the same moral properties, free will and moral autonomy, to the core of their being (*Foundations* 436:5-6). Hence, we lack an objective-moral principle (for instance, virtue) that can differentiate Paul from Peter.

Kant seeks to resolve the above issue by having recourse to the fundamental elements of his ethical thought: “[Friends] need to have the same principles of understanding and morality, and then they can fully understand each other; if they are not alike in that, they cannot get on at all together, since in judgment they are poles apart” (*Collins* 27:429:4-6). That is to say, friends must be committed to the same understanding of friendship. They must view their relationship as a manifestation of their common humanity. Kant is saying that love and affection in friendship cannot be explained in relation to the empirical aspects of a friendship, such as the shared interests and pursuits of the friends; rather, they must be explained in terms of their common human qualities and moral principles (*CPR* 204:3-10). Accordingly, on Kant’s view friends love and respect one another for their moral qualities, and not for their practical attributes.

This forces us to ask at what cost Kant secures love and respect in friendship, and what elements he leaves out from friendship to protect its moral worth. The answer is that Kant requires friendship to set aside its empirical attributes; I must not love and respect my friend for his practical contribution to my life. On the Kantian understanding of love and respect, it is insignificant how much my friend and I desire each other’s company, how much we want to help each other, and how deeply we care about each other. What truly matters is an unconditional rational commitment to one another’s welfare.

Accordingly, we must establish our friendship on the basis of universal moral law, and not on our personal familiarity with one another. Lawrence Blum remarks:

The point is not that the Kantian view necessarily condemns benefiting one's friend. What it condemns is benefiting one's friend simply because he is one's friend. Similarly, morality does not condemn all acting for the sake of one's interest; what it condemns is doing so simply because it is one's own interest. For such benefiting gives no guarantee of being justifiable from an impartial perspective; yet such is a perspective which, on the Kantian view, morality requires.⁹⁰

Blum is questioning the merits of the Kantian view of friendship on practical grounds; he contends that Kant's theory of friendship fails to accommodate personal (emotional) aspects of friendship. The chief cause of this failure, Blum argues, lies in Kant's insistence that morality requires an impartial vantage point. Since the very idea of impartiality runs counter to the personal attachments that friendship requires, friendly affections and impartiality cannot go hand in hand.

Thus, we see Kant dissecting friendship (and by implication the human person since friendship is a relation between two or more individuals) into two parts: empirical and moral. The empirical aspect deals with an individual's inclinations and personal aspects of friendship. It is about an individual's concrete life situations, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. The moral aspect of friendship, on the other hand, is in the realm of pure rationality, of free will and human autonomy. Blum, like most of us, resists this outcome. He criticizes Kant for expunging the personal affections from friendship.

III. The Features of Friendship

In the previous section, we saw that Kant constructs his theory of friendship on the principles of love and respect. He argues that love and respect in friendship have an

⁹⁰ Lawrence A. Blum. *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 45.

invariable reference to one's moral obligations. He contends that friends must love one another for who they are as human persons, for their common humanity, and not for any other reason. In this section, I will ask, more precisely, what the chief attributes of Kantian friendship are. I will show that though Kant uses 'familiar words' to describe these attributes, he construes them in a 'specific and technical sense'. That is, they determine the moral landscape of a friendship, rather than its empirical contents.

III.1 Practical love

At the outset, Kant draws a distinction between two kinds of love: inclinational love and practical love (*MMDV* 449:14-25). Inclinational love, according to Kant, has its origin in the ordinary feelings of attraction and satisfaction, pleasure and attachment, delight and joy. It is closely associated with one's psychological propensities and its gratification is primarily a matter of one's personal interests and orientations. Kant believes that all the objects of inclinational love, irrespective of their attraction and repulsion, share a common characteristic. They all have an invariable reference to an individual's empirical experiences and their apprehension necessarily involves some form of empirical contingency. Therefore, they all lack a moral quality (*CPR* 256:1-12, 272:5-18) and are unworthy of pursuit in friendship (*MMDV* 471:22-24).

Practical love, on the other hand, is a pure love of mankind (*MMDV* 451:2-22). It is grounded in my rational understanding that all human beings possess certain common moral properties that make them worthy of my love. In other words, it transcends my personal feelings and emotions that are restricted to my friends, relatives and other acquaintances, and bestows my unconditional love upon the whole of humankind (*Foundations* 434:10-25). In this way, I show love, affection and sympathy towards all

human beings. Unlike inclinational love, practical love, Kant argues, is a representation of my true moral nature. It reflects my moral capacities in association with others, and places me under rational moral obligation to be loving and benevolent towards all persons: "In this [moral] context, however, love is not to be understood as *feeling* (*aesthetisch*), that is, as the pleasure in the perfection of other men; love is not to be understood as delight in them.... It must rather be thought as the maxim of *benevolence* (practical love), which results in beneficence" (*MMDV* 449:14-18).

Kant's division of love into two kinds has an important bearing on his theory of friendship. By removing inclinational love from friendship, Kant hopes to secure friendship against the empirical forces of affection and disaffection, liking and disliking, that often cause difficulties in friendship and sometimes lead to its breakdown. If I love my friend on inclinational grounds, due to his pleasing personality and wit, such a love is bound to diminish when my friend fails to exhibit these characteristics. For Kant, inclinational attributes are contingent by nature, they are often susceptible to change and distortion. They can never facilitate a morally meaningful relationship. Moral friendship necessitates practical love (*CPR* 210:4-8).

Furthermore, the substitution of inclinational love by practical love helps Kant in securing the moral equality of all human beings. Inclinational love is preferential, biased, and discriminatory (*Collins* 27:425:1-13, 27:426:16-28). It prioritizes my love and affection for my friends over non-friends. But this conflicts with my overall moral commitments. Morality requires me to treat all human beings equally, and not discriminate among them on inclinational grounds (*Foundations* 430:26-28). Practical love rectifies this moral weakness. It places all human beings on an equal footing, having

equal moral claims to my love and affection, and it does not allow me to value my friend more than non-friends (*Foundations* 434:21-23). My friends and non-friends deserve equal treatment as human beings. Any difference between them is bound to be empirical, and empirical differences cannot justify moral discrimination.

Kant's understanding of love as practical love helps him considerably in reducing the initial tension between love and respect. Practical love strikes a balance between my love for my friend and my moral obligations towards him. It controls my inclinational propensities to seek unrestricted emotional communion with my friend, and allows such communion only within morally permissible limits (*CPR* 210:4-8, 211:1-11, *Collins* 27:427:1-16). It ensures that while seeking emotional intimacy with my friend, I do not compromise my respect for him. Accordingly, it harmonizes my love for my friend with the commands of moral law and the obligations of duty.

Thus Kant breaks away from the traditional understanding (including Aristotle's) of love in friendship. For Kant, love in friendship does not involve an emotional inclination to be with one's friend, or desire for empirical intimacy with the friend. Rather, it entails a genuine rational awareness of one's friend's moral being and an unconditional respect for his moral spheres. In this way, practical love overcomes the personal love and affections in friendship, and safeguards the realization of one's moral duty in friendship. Allen Wood remarks: "Kant distinguishes several meanings of 'love'. Practical love or 'love of goodwill' is the policy of benefiting others on moral principle from the motive of duty. Only this kind of love can be a direct duty."⁹¹

⁹¹ Allen W. Wood. *Kant's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 270.

III.2 Friendship as a duty

For Kant, friendship is a duty; that is, it is a representation of moral law in one's association with other human beings (*MMDV* 379:11-12). Moral law alone determines the content, criterion and end of moral friendship. And moral friends love and respect one another out of their inherent moral obligations, and not due to any empirical reason (*Foundations* 431:1-6). Accordingly, for Kant, the true moral worth of a friendship resides in its strict adherence to precepts of moral law and duty, and not in the empirical gratifications that a friendship may facilitate.

Moral duties are rational commands, and categorical in nature. They cannot be subjected to hypothetical principles of one's satisfactions, pleasures, profits and losses. Hence, moral friends must follow their duties for their absolute and unconditional moral worth. Kant writes: "The concept of each rational being as a being that must regard itself as giving universal law through all the maxims of its will, so that it may judge itself and its actions from this standpoint, leads to a very fruitful concept, namely, that of a *realm of ends*" (*Foundations* 433:12-16).

In order to understand the full implications of this view, consider Kant's distinction between acting in accordance with duty and acting from duty.⁹² The former entails the pursuit of moral duty in accordance with one's empirical understanding, because it is praiseworthy and noble to follow my moral duties, and blameworthy and ignoble to abdicate my moral obligations. As a result, I consciously choose to follow my

⁹² He writes: "The notion of duty, therefore, requires in the action, *objectively*, agreement with the law, and *subjectively* in its maxim, that respect for the law shall be the sole mode in which the will is determined thereby. And on this rests the distinction between the consciousness of having acted *according to duty* and *from duty*, that is, from respect for the law. The former (*legality*) is possible even if the inclinations have been the determining ground principle of the will; but the latter (*morality*), moral worth, can be placed only in this, that the action is done from duty, that is, simply for the sake of the law" (*CPR* 207:17-26).

moral duties whenever I am called upon, or whenever my moral obligations necessitate them. I do my duty out of a concern for *something other than the duty itself*. This pursuit of duty, Kant argues, is misguided and fallacious (*Foundations* 435:37-39, 436:1-6). It confuses duty with external motivations. And by doing so, it places restrictive conditions upon my will. Hence, it cannot constitute moral duty in friendship. Acting from duty, on the other hand, represents an opposite motivation; that is, the thought of duty alone informs my moral motivation (*CPR* 207:1-25). I do something, not because I am inclined to do it, or because my actions carry certain incentives and will lead to my empirical gratifications, but because it is the right thing to do. I rationally oblige myself to act in accordance with the commands of moral law and duty. For instance, I am morally obligated to promote the happiness of my friend, and to assist him in getting through difficult times, and it is immaterial here whether my friend will show similar dispositions towards me.

Kant's above understanding of duty raises questions. Is it possible in friendship to impose the Kantian constraints of duty? And if it is possible, in a strict and specific ontological sense, at what cost? That is, what must be left out from the empirical content of friendship to secure its ontological manifestation? Barbara Herman remarks:

When the motive of duty functions as a limiting condition, there is no lessening of the agent's moral commitment if he acts from the motive of duty and nonmoral motives, so long as the motive of duty is effective: its satisfaction is decisive in the agent's going on with his proposed action. Rather than posing a moral obstacle, the nonmoral motive is in most cases necessary if the motive of duty (as a limiting condition) is to have an object of interest.⁹³

⁹³ Barbara Herman. *The Practice of Moral Judgment*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 14.

Herman is saying that it is possible to constrain oneself according to the maxims of duty, and that one's inclinational interests in friendship are not problematic, as long as they remain within the limits of moral law, that is, as inoperative motives. More clearly, my personal love and affection for my friend are not morally troublesome per se; they create difficulties only when they come to be a determinant in my moral motivations. So, Herman answers our questions in the affirmative; on her view, one can restrict the personal ingredients of a friendship to the personal domain, and yet authentically function as a moral agent. But her answer has some serious limitations.

First, Herman appears to refer to a conceptual possibility, rather than empirical actuality. On her view, no matter how much I love and care for my friend, as a moral agent, I am capable of overcoming these factors and acting in a universal and impartial manner. But it is completely unclear if this is possible in practice, and the ordinary instances of friendship point towards the opposite. Ordinarily, true love and affection often find their way into one's moral conduct. Moreover, Aristotle rightly shows that love and affection of a virtuous friend reflect his *telos*; hence, they must be operative motives in friendship, not inoperative motives, as Herman proposes.⁹⁴

Second, Herman's claim that inclinations are not necessarily obstacles to the motive of duty presupposes Kantian premises. For Kant, inclinations are necessarily required for moral conduct, not in a good sense but in a deprecating sense.⁹⁵ Duty for Kant is a constraint. There must be an empirical resistance to the moral motive, and the

⁹⁴ George Kerner provides a similar interpretation of Kant's concept of duty. He writes: "pleasure and inclinations must be there [in a moral consideration] as inoperative concomitants" (Kerner. *Three Philosophical Moralists: Mill, Kant, Sartre*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 87). But unlike Herman, Kerner does not approve of this concept of duty; see p. 87.

⁹⁵ Kant writes: "All objects of inclinations have only conditional worth, for if the inclinations and the needs founded on them did not exist, their object would be without worth" (*Foundations* 428:12-14).

moral motive must suppress this resistance for successful moral action. Hence, Herman tacitly accepts the Kantian moral apparatus of duty; she does not defend it.

In sum, Kant's view that duty alone can provide the moral motivation in friendship is extremely problematic. I will show, in the final section of this chapter, that Kant's call for a duty-driven morality is "internally incoherent"⁹⁶ and unacceptable.

III.3 Good will

For Kant, good will is the genesis of a true friendship; it is the precondition of practical love and duty in friendship. Good will ensures that friends love and respect one another for their intrinsic moral qualities and not for peripheral reasons. Kant writes: "nothing in the world – indeed nothing even beyond the world – can be called good without qualification except a good will" (*Foundations* 393:1-3). A good will, for Kant, is a will that is solely driven by the rational thought of the moral law. Kant draws a distinction between a good will and contingent will to explain the moral merit of a good will. A contingent will is determined by a variety of factors, such as the aims and objectives that it wants to pursue, the empirical circumstances that condition its pursuits, and the psychological make-up of the agent expressing this will. By contrast, a good will is a pure moral will. Barbara Herman writes: "The goodness of the good will resides in the principle of its willing, not in any special effort or virtues that allow it to make the principle of good willing the principle of all its maxims."⁹⁷ That is to say, the content of a good will is determined a priori, in accordance with the moral law.

⁹⁶ Michael Slote. *From Morality to Virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 31.

⁹⁷ Barbara Herman. *The Practice of Moral Judgment*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 238.

This implies that a good will is necessarily determined by an individual's pure practical reason.⁹⁸ More precisely, a good will is a pure will (noumenal will) made practical through the exercise of (moral) law-based reason (*CPR* 197:1-9). To explicate this point, consider the two kinds of necessities that a will may be subjected to (*Foundations* 446:17-20, 447:1-10). The first kind of necessity, natural necessity, deals with one's internally conditioned mental propensities – here, one's will is propelled by the empirical understanding of the right and wrong, good and bad.⁹⁹ It is possible that one may naturally opt for right or good course of actions in opposition to their contraries. For example, one may believe that helping a friend is noble and deserting a friend is ignoble, and one may develop a mental propensity to help one's friends and may carry out this propensity consistently under all circumstances. Still, this propensity, according to Kant, reflects one's established empirical disposition, and it has nothing to do with a moral good will.

The second kind of necessity, or moral necessity as Kant calls it, deals with the commands of pure practical reason. One's free will, under the guidance of moral law, imposes certain imperatives upon itself, and simultaneously constrains itself to follow these imperatives without exception or fail (*CPR* 208:1-24). These imperatives are categorical in nature (*Foundations* 421:1-20). They embody the principles of duty, contain certain moral obligations, and impose a pure practical constraint upon the moral agent. Only such imperatives, Kant argues, manifest good will in friendship.

⁹⁸ J. B. Schneewind remarks: "The only viable way to think of a free will, Kant holds, is to think of it as a will whose choices are determined by a law that is internal to its nature" (Schneewind in *Cambridge Companion to Kant*, p. 328-329).

⁹⁹ Kant writes: "Natural necessity is a heteronomy of efficient causes, for every effect is possible only according to the law that something else determines the efficient cause to its causality" (*Foundations* 446:16-18).

Given that a good will, for Kant, necessitates an equal amount of love and respect for the whole of mankind, a question arises as to how and in what sense a good will in friendship is different (if it is different at all) from an abstract moral will. That is, what qualities and aspects of a good will can be characterized as the exclusive properties of friendship, such that they are found in friendship alone and not in other moral relations? What attributes, if any, differentiate my good will towards my friends from my good will towards strangers? (Kant does maintain that friends share certain common moral principles and commitments, and that strangers do not. In other words, my friends are morally close to me, and strangers are not.) Hence, Kant must explain the precise nature and role of good will in friendship. This includes explaining if the emotional and moral proximity of friends makes their good will stronger towards one another, and consequently, if the lack of such proximity weakens it towards the strangers. Wood remarks: "Friendship for Kant is furthered by a morally good will, and it cultivates a good will."¹⁰⁰

Wood's above remark affirms that a good will strengthens friendship. That is, a good will in friendship necessitates a proper manifestation of love and respect towards the friends, and by doing so it fosters the bond of friendship. Under the auspices of a good will, friends truly value one another, and form a moral communion bereft of all inclinational considerations. So far, Wood is correct. However, his further point that friendship "cultivates" a good will is controversial. It can be questioned on both textual and theoretical grounds. Wood's view appears to run counter to the basic tenets of Kant's moral thought that a good will is a pure practical will, and as such, cannot be derived or

¹⁰⁰ Allen W. Wood. *Kant's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 227.

facilitated by any external source, such as a friend. Wood is thus setting down compromising conditions on the original purity of a good will; that is, on its being self-cultivated by a rational and autonomous moral agent (*Foundations* 436:1-6).

Another difficulty with Wood's interpretation is that it creates a moral asymmetry between one's friends and non-friends. On Wood's interpretation, friends can help one another in cultivating a good will, non-friends (strangers) cannot. It follows that one's relationship with one's friend is *morally superior* to one's relationship with non-friends. This inference undermines the fundamental postulates of Kant's ethical thought that all human beings are morally equal and must be treated as such (*Foundations* 434:21-23). Wood in this way errs.

Accordingly, I conclude against Wood that friendship cannot cultivate a good will; by contrast, it presupposes a good will.

IV. The Classification of Friendship

Like Aristotle, Kant classifies friendship into three kinds. These are called 'moral friendship', 'taste friendship', and 'need friendship' (Collins 27:425:1-29, 426:1-32, 427:1-34). Moral friendship symbolizes the perfect elements of Kantian friendship. It necessitates duty and moral law in association with others. By contrast, need and taste friendships focus on empirical gratifications, and they lack moral merit.¹⁰¹ In this section I will discuss these two together under one category – inclination friendship.

¹⁰¹ Kant writes: "Thus everything empirical is not only wholly unworthy to be an ingredient in the principle of morality but is even highly prejudicial to the moral practices themselves" (*Foundations* 426:6-8).

IV.1 Moral friendship

For Kant, moral friendship represents friendly associations in their pure form.¹⁰² That is, moral friends love and respect one another for their inherent human attributes, value one another's free will and autonomy and carry out their friendship in accordance with the commands of moral law and duty. Accordingly, they pursue only those ends that are consistent with the principle of duty. Kant remarks: "For every morally practical relation to men is a relation among them represented by pure practical reason, that is, a relation of free actions in accordance with the maxims that qualify for a giving of universal law" (*MMDV* 455:2-5).

Kant's above understanding of moral relations in terms of pure practical reason and universal law has critical implications to his theory of moral friendship. It makes it morally binding upon the friends to be beneficent, grateful and sympathetic towards one another, and also towards all other human beings. Moreover, the pursuit of these duties is unconditional in nature. One must carry out these duties under all circumstances and at all times, without a thought of profit, reward or reciprocation from others: "For a moral object is sacred if the obligation with regard to it cannot be discharged completely by an act in keeping with it (so that one who is under obligation always remains under obligation)" (*MMDV* 455:13-16). Hence, the duties of friendship can never be compromised.

Moral friendship must be based upon universal principles, Kant argues. Moral friends must adopt only those principles that are rational and universalizable in practice:

¹⁰² He writes: "But it is readily seen that friendship is only an Idea (though a practically necessary one) and unattainable in practice, although striving for friendship (as a maximum of good disposition towards each other) is a duty set by reason, and no ordinary duty, but an honorable one" (*MMDV* 469:21-25).

“Act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation” (CPR 141:21-27). The practical significance of the universalizability criterion in friendship cannot be overestimated. It defines the duties of friendship in concrete life situations, and it secures the manifestation of moral law in the material world. Universal moral maxims, not contingent principles, regulate the conduct moral friends’ towards one another. These maxims require friends, among other things, to keep their promises and to tell the truth under all circumstances, and at all times. Friends must also treat one another with love and respect, and value one another for their intrinsic qualities and attributes. Though these duties have a special significance in friendship, they extend beyond my friendship. They hold in the case of all moral relations. James O. Grunebaum remarks:

Intimacy friendship does not command actions that would favor friends at the expense of nonfriends or treat others merely as means. The internal morality of intimacy friendship, being willing to listen to a friend, being honest and open, and being trustworthy are not dispositions that lead to actions that violate duties to nonfriends. Thus intimacy friendship is morally compatible with the requirements of the categorical imperatives.¹⁰³

Kant’s consistent characterization of moral friendship in terms of pure practical reason, universal principles and impartial conduct must not be allowed to cloud the fact that friendship is primarily a particular relationship between two or more individuals; and Kant recognizes it that way (Collins 27:428:13-17, 27:430:10-13). By highlighting the moral qualities of friendship, Kant does not want to dispute its personal aspects; by contrast, he approves them:¹⁰⁴ “Moral friendship... is the complete confidence of two persons in revealing their secret judgements and feelings to each other, as far as such

¹⁰³ James O. Grunebaum. *Friendship: Liberty, Equality, and Utility*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 100.

¹⁰⁴ Kant qualifies this approval by moral law and duty.

disclosures are consistent with mutual respect” (*MMDV* 471:24-27). That is to say, for Kant, the promotion of moral qualities in friendship has a deeper purpose. On the one hand, Kant recognizes that in the realm of morality all human beings deserve equal consideration and that they must not be differentiated on contingent grounds, such as one’s familiarity with someone and unfamiliarity (or, even, distance) with others (Collins 27:428:24-26). On the other hand, Kant believes in the moral autonomy of all human beings.¹⁰⁵ That is, in the sphere of morality all human beings are noumenal moral agents.¹⁰⁶ They all possess free wills and are capable of formulating their own moral principles. As moral agents, I must respect others for their intrinsic moral capacities – I must neither seek to influence their moral principles nor to change them. Accordingly, I must treat all human beings, friends as well as strangers, with moral dignity and respect.¹⁰⁷

As a result, for Kant, the moral qualities, good habits and the noble character that my friend possesses are immaterial to our friendship. Wood remarks:

Moral virtue first enters into Kant’s account of friendship not (as with Aristotle) through the fact that you must be virtuous for me to have a relation to wish you well. It enters instead through the perception that I must seek to

¹⁰⁵ Paul Guyer remarks: “The dignity of autonomy is what makes the preservation and promotion of one’s own rational nature an absolute end; but it makes humanity an end in everyone else as well” (Guyer. *Kant on Freedom, Law, and Happiness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 204).

¹⁰⁶ Note that Kant’s understanding of a human person in terms of noumenal agent is substantially different from its ordinary (prevalent) account. Ordinarily, we construe a human person in terms of composite entity (possessing feelings, emotions, reason etc.), but Kant views it exclusively as a rational moral person. Bernard Williams writes: “[Kant] thought that the moral agent was, in a sense, a rational agent and no more, and he presented as essential to his account of morality a particular metaphysical conception of the agent, according to which the self of moral agency is what he called a ‘noumenal’ self, outside time and causality, and thus distinct from the concrete, empirically determined person that one usually takes oneself to be” (Bernard Williams. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 64).

¹⁰⁷ Barbara Herman remarks: “If friendship is a moral relationship or has a moral dimension, then there will be alterations in one’s deliberative field as one has friends (and different elements introduced as one has different kinds of friends). Morality does not cause the need of friends to be regarded as burdens or in competition with the needs of strangers” (Barbara Herman. *The Practice of Moral Judgment*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 180).

be virtuous and to act virtuously in relation to you in order to be worthy of the trust and benevolence I hope you will show me as a friend.¹⁰⁸

At first glance, Wood's remark appears to be correct. Clearly, there is nothing wrong in putting oneself under a moral obligation to cultivate virtue and other moral qualities. In fact, it is praiseworthy and noble to do so. If ever my friend loses his moral sight and acts in morally deficient ways, I can rely upon my own moral obligations to safeguard our friendship. I can act in morally exemplary ways, and lead my friend by example. I can inspire him to return to his original purity of thought and conduct. However, Wood's observation goes deeper than the above interpretation of his views. He is making a more subtle point than a simple restoration of self-obligation in friendship. He believes that my friend's moral qualities, virtues and nobility cannot provide the rationale for our friendship. Note that they would impart external ends to my friendship and compromise my moral autonomy. Hence, virtue can neither be a consideration nor criterion in the formation of a friendship.

However, once we get rid of virtue as a moral condition and constituent of friendship, not much is left to friendship. The duties of friendship turn out to be negative constraints; they define the limits of friendship, rather than its possibilities.¹⁰⁹ They do not prescribe a common goal or ideal (for instance, the moral development of the friends) that friends can realize by associating with one another. As a consequence of the above limitations, moral friendship, as Kant understands it, turns out to be a caricature of friendship. Unlike Aristotle's virtue friendship, it neither encourages nor facilitates the

¹⁰⁸ Allen W. Wood. *Kant's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 277.

¹⁰⁹H.J. Paton writes: "[Kant's] definition of moral friendship seems too narrow to cover even the practical side of perfect friendship" (Paton in *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 142).

happiness and satisfactions of the friends. It lacks the very possibility of genuine moral co-operation among the friends. It does not allow them to participate in one another's moral satisfactions and development. It conceives of friendship in terms of rational love, moral obligations and pure good will, and as such, it resists personal affections, emotional love and empirical intimacy. Duty prevails over friendly love, and moral law takes over from mutual affection in friendship.

IV.2 Inclination-based friendship

Inclination-based friendship can be divided into two kinds, namely, need and taste friendship (Collins 27:424:30-32). Need and taste friendships are parallel to pleasure and advantage friendships in Aristotle (Collins 27:425:1-28, 27:426:1-29). However, Kant evaluates them differently. Unlike Aristotle, who recognizes the moral limitations of these friendships and yet values them for their overall importance in the civic domain, Kant repudiates them altogether (Collins 27:426:1-29). In order to understand Kant's critique of inclination-based friendships, we must examine the nature and content of these friendships. We must ask what these friendships entail and why Kant is so much against them. Accordingly, we must spell out clearly the principles that determine the formation of these friendships, and the objectives that inform their pursuit.

Inclination-based friendships, according to Kant, are driven by one's personal desires, interests and wants (Collins 27:425:3-30). They represent one's psychological propensities, material interests, and personal taste; that is, the aims and objectives of inclination-based friendship have an invariable reference to particular individuals and their needs. For instance, if an individual desires economic gratification in his life, he

would be inclined to make friends with those who can serve his economic interest. If he is fond of intellectual activities and learning, he would like to make friends with educated people. The choice of friends in inclination-based friendships is determined by one's interests and orientations, and not by the moral quality of others. Similarly, the ends and objectives that inclination-based friendships pursue are contingent by nature (*Foundations* 428:12-15). The ends of inclination friendships spring from a non-rational will. Inclination friends lack a rational understanding of one another. And their relationship is conditioned by empirical necessities and pathological propensities. To comprehend the full implication, consider Kant's distinction between elective will and moral will (*CPR* 144:1-25). Kant attributes elective will to inclination friendships, and argues that unlike a moral will, which constraints itself according to the commands of moral law, an elective will selects its ends based upon an individual's practical requirements and considerations (*CPR* 144:1-25). This is why Kant concludes that it lacks a moral quality.

As a result of the above limitations, inclination-based friendships, Kant argues, suffer serious moral deficiencies. Inclination-friends use one another instrumentally. Grunebaum writes: "The object of Kant's need friendships are activities that jointly satisfy the need of the friends – those activities that cannot be accomplished individually and that are necessary for survival."¹¹⁰ That is to say, inclination friends make friendships for their personal conveniences, and not for a moral purpose. But this disrespects their moral autonomy and contradicts moral law: "Man as a moral being (*homo noumenon*)

¹¹⁰ James O. Grunebaum. *Friendship: Liberty, Equality, and Utility*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 73.

cannot use himself as a natural being (*homo phaenomenon*) as a mere means" (*MMDV* 430:12-13).

Kant argues that one of the most basic requirements of a moral relation is that associated individuals must overcome their natural propensities; that is, they must not pursue a natural end. While associating with one another, they must shun the feelings of affection and aversion, joy and sorrow, attraction and repulsion. Similarly, they must shun the motives of advantage and disadvantage, profit and loss, satisfaction and dissatisfaction. All such feelings and motives, Kant argues, signify natural ends and entail empirical contingencies. Since inclination-based friendships, by definition, hinge upon the above feelings, and entail the aforesaid motives, they cannot have a moral quality. Hence, any possession of emotional attachments, empirical interests or natural ends in friendship constitutes an automatic moral disqualification.

Kant's above conclusion is very troubling.¹¹¹ It construes all natural ends in the same manner. They all signify personal desires and entail contingent ends. As a result, for Kant, my desire to associate with my friends for cultivating my intellectual and moral capacities is morally on a par with my desire to associate with my friends for pleasure and profit. Both desires entail natural ends, and as such, they both are morally deficient.

IV.3 Relationship among the forms of friendship

Moral friendship necessitates moral law and represents the actualization of one's ethical obligations (*MMDV* 469:14-25). By contrast, inclination-based friendships are driven by personal ends and contingent principles (*MMDV* 471:10-23). However, despite these differences the two friendships, Kant believes, share some common characteristics

¹¹¹ It has enormous negative consequences to friendship. It takes away all the personal aspects of a friendship.

(Collins 27:428:1-32). Before we proceed with this point, a clarification is required. The common characteristics that Kant attributes to moral and inclination-based friendships are not designed to establish a legitimate connection between the two types of friendships. Nor are they intended to soften their radical differences. Rather, they express a practical recognition of an epistemic fact that two different species (moral friendship and inclination-based friendship) of the same genus (friendship) share certain common properties. Though these friendships pursue separate ends, and have different principles at their core, they both represent some form of love, affection and respect between two or more individuals.

Each form of friendship entails a sense of benevolence.¹¹² Friends care for one another, wish one another well and want one another to succeed with their lives and projects. They value one another and want to contribute to one another's satisfactions whenever they can and in whatever way possible. This includes promoting the aims and objectives of one another and helping one another realize the happiness and contentment that they desire.

This is not to suggest that all friends are benevolent towards one another in the *same way* and to the *same extent*. Benevolence in moral friendship differs considerably from benevolence in inclination-based friendships. Moral friends, Kant argues, are benevolent from duty. They recognize one another's moral qualities and respect one another's moral capacities. Accordingly, benevolence in moral friendship reflects a rational and conscious appreciation of one another's individuality, free will and autonomy: "I want everyone else to be benevolent towards me (*benevolentiam*); hence I

¹¹² Allen Wood writes: "For Kant, the basic thing in all forms of friendship is not mutual admiration but mutual benevolence. In the friendship of disposition or sentiment, it is even more fundamentally mutual revelation and understanding" (Wood, p. 276).

ought also to be benevolent towards everyone else” (*MMDV* 451:5-6). On the other hand, benevolence in inclination-based friendships invariably has an empirical reference. Inclination-friends are susceptible to one another’s feelings and emotions. They are more benevolent towards those who are near and dear to them, and less benevolent towards others, distant human beings, non-friends and strangers. The level of benevolence in inclination-based friendships is invariably determined by the level of emotional and physical proximity.

The second common feature of friendship is trust (Collins 27:426:1-16). Friends trust one another to maintain the friendship and to promote one another’s betterment. Trust imparts a sense of security to the friendship and makes the friendship stable. It protects the friendship in difficult times and testing circumstances. For moral friends, trust comes from a pure rational commitment to the welfare of one another (*MMDV* 471:24-27). It entails a promise and a moral obligation. On the other hand, the trust in inclination-based friendships depends upon the feelings and experiences of the friends (Collins 27:425:29, *MMDV* 471:10-23). Since one’s feelings and experiences often fluctuate and change, trust in inclination-based friendships changes as well. Kant is particularly critical of such trust (*MMDV* 470:10-23). He argues that it lacks a moral foundation, and can be easily abused, if ever the friendship turns sour. Against inclination-based trust, Kant approves of a reason-based trust in friendship. Wood remarks: “Kant emphasizes that no stable friendship can be based on natural feelings and desires alone, because a relationship based on feelings can never sustain the trust required

either for intimate communications or for the persisting commitment to a shared end required for mutual possession.”¹¹³

Intimacy is the third common feature of friendship (Collins 27:428:1-30, 27:429:1-13). In each form of friendship, friends share their feelings and emotions, views and perspectives, and help one another tackle issues that have an important bearing on their lives and relations. This sharing in friendship has several aspects to it. It entails a mutual recognition by the friends that they have good will towards one another. They understand and appreciate one another’s genuine commitment to one another’s happiness and good, and value one another’s opinions and trust. They engage in free and frank conversations without worrying about undue misunderstanding, fear or ridicule (*MMDV* 467:1-12). Moreover, intimacy in friendship requires and reflects the integrity of the friends. Friends believe in one another’s reasoned judgements and unshakeable character. They recognize that neither of them would misuse a friendly exchange of thoughts, ideas and facts for harmful purposes. Finally, intimacy necessitates self-disclosure. Friends reveal their true selves to one another (*MMDV* 470:1-16, 471:24-27). They confide in one another on important matters and seek refuge in one another in times of need and necessity. Kant does insist though that self-disclosure in a friendship must be in agreement with the principle of love and respect, which means that intimacy must not infringe upon the autonomy of the friends.

When all the above aspects of intimacy come together, friendship takes the form of an intimate and sympathetic communion (*sympathia moralis*) among the friends. They truly love and respect one another and care for one another’s emotional and moral well-

¹¹³ Allen W. Wood. *Kant’s Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 280.

being, and commit themselves to one another's happiness and fulfillment, to their personal and social satisfactions. In the case of moral friends, this commitment has a precise connotation. It entails a rational understanding of one another's moral capacities and attributes, and is grounded in their pure practical reason and free will. Hence, it is a morally free communion (*communio sentiendi liberalis*). Inclination-friends, on the other hand, are motivated by one another's extrinsic capacities and attributes, such as one another's empirical abilities, looks, and usefulness, and they view one another as instruments of their own personal gratifications. They show an utter neglect towards one another's moral being, free will, and autonomy. Their associations are marred by empirical necessities and practical restrictions (*communio sentiendi illiberalis, servilis*). As such, they lack in moral purity and depth.

Thus we see Kant propounding a two-tier view of friendship, both representing two separate extremes and standing in perpetual opposition to one another. Moral friendship manifests his ideal of moral freedom and necessitates universal and impartial principles in friendship. It makes it obligatory upon the friends to be loving, benevolent and sympathetic towards one another. In a strong moral sense, it requires them to exhibit similar dispositions towards all human beings. Accordingly, in moral friendship impartiality takes over from personal concerns, and universality prevails over personal love and affection. On the other hand, inclination-based friendship preserves the personal aspects of friendship. It allows mutual love, affection, interests and pursuits to flourish in the benevolent company of the friends. But it is all still, Kant believes, devoid of moral qualities. That is to say, for Kant, personal love and practical love contradict each other and inclinational benevolence is at odds with moral respect. Therefore, they cannot be

brought together in a friendship. Likewise, inclinational affection, trust, and sympathy collide with their moral counterparts and cannot coexist with them. One must choose between the inclinational and moral qualities of friendship:

Hence friendship cannot be a union aimed at mutual advantage but must rather be a purely moral one, and the help that each may count on from the other in case of need must not be regarded as the end and determining ground of friendship – for in that case one would lose the other’s respect (*MMDV* 470:31-35).

Kant appears to force a choice here. If one agrees with Kant’s exposition of the issue, moral friendship would seem to have an edge over inclination-based friendships. But that is beside the point. The fundamental questions that we confront here are: Is Kant’s characterization of the above situation correct? Are moral qualities of a friendship incompatible with its inclinational qualities, the way Kant thinks them to be? Supposing that they are, is it not possible to bridge them by making some moral adjustments in friendship? If not, why not? I will now discuss these questions, and show that Kant’s understanding of the moral and inclinational qualities of friendship is factually incorrect and morally barren.

To understand Kant’s distinction between the moral and inclinational aspects of friendship, we must turn to his principle of duty. According to Kant, there are two specific ways in which friends may perform their moral duties (*Foundations* 397:11-23). They may possess a natural propensity to do so (*Foundations* 398:1-7). That is, they may be by nature invariably benevolent and sympathetic towards one another, and may take all pains to secure one another’s happiness and satisfactions. Kant does not view the foregoing as doing one’s duty. That occurs only if friends rationally choose to constrain themselves to do their duties (*MMDV* 469:14-25). For Kant, duty entails an internal

opposition from the moral agents, namely, the friends. Morality requires friends to subdue their internal oppositions to duty, to curb their natural propensities and adhere to their moral obligations. So, as earlier argued, the moral and inclinational aspects of friendship are morally contrary to one another, and they can never be reconciled.¹¹⁴

The most incongruous outcome of Kant's view of duty is that it makes it impossible for friends to be moral unless they are internally torn (*Foundations* 398:23-27, 399:1-2). Duty first requires friends to get hold of their natural inclinations and psychological propensities, and then formulate their moral ends in direct opposition to them (*Foundations* 425:15-32). This is not to suggest that Kant is proposing a witch hunt of inclinations; rather he recognizes their natural antecedence in friendship. In the sensible world, he argues, the physical being of an individual is prior to his moral being. Accordingly, as a moral person I must love and respect my friend for his universal qualities, such as free will and moral autonomy, and *thoroughly resist and overcome* my inclinational propensity to love and respect him for his empirical qualities, such as his affectionate and pleasing behavior, honorable and dignified conduct. As a result, duty necessitates an internal conflict on moral grounds. But this is absurd.¹¹⁵

Furthermore, duty requires friends to abstract from their personal ties, interests, and pursuits, and base their friendship on impartial moral rules. They must not allow their feelings and emotions, their liking and taste, to have any role in their friendship. I must

¹¹⁴ Anthony Cunningham questions the efficacy of Kant's view. He writes: "In some cases, practical love and impartial respect may chafe or clash, and if so, we cannot appreciate the appropriate contours and commands of either, unless we appreciate the independent ethical claims of both love and respect....But the Kantian aspiration to identify one unified essence to our moral values has the unfortunate result of turning a blind eye to the diverse, irreducible sources of moral values in a human life (Cunningham. *Kantian Ethics and Intimate Attachments. American Philosophical Quarterly*, 36:4 (Oct. 1999), p. 292-3.

¹¹⁵ H. J. Paton writes: "It might be suggested that [Kant] is now considering friendship in abstraction from emotional side, but this is unsatisfactory" (Paton in *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p 142).

not, on moral grounds, bestow any profit or privilege upon my friends for being my friends. My love, affection, and good will towards my friends must not be based upon our mutual associations, shared history and reciprocated affections. They must be based upon my friends' intrinsic human qualities; moral law commands me to value my friends for their universal moral attributes and not for personal reasons. Accordingly, for Kant, moral law and not personal affections provides the rationale of friendly associations.

Blum observes:

Friendship itself does at least appear morally condemned on this view, for it appears to be an integral part of what friendship is that we do often act for the sake of our friend's good simply because he is our friend, and without thinking that such action is or needs to be vindicated from an impartial point of view.¹¹⁶

Kant is not bothered by the fact that friendship necessarily has a personal context. He is equally unconcerned with the fact that our friendship has an enriching past, a fulfilling present and a hopeful future. The fact that I have gone through thick and thin with one specific friend, and so value him more than others, is morally unpalatable to Kant. It is a threat to impartiality. Hence, it must be expunged from friendship.

As a result, Kant proposes a one-sided and paradoxical view of friendship. His view is one-sided because it promotes the rational attributes of friendship at the expense of its emotional qualities. It requires me to sanitize my emotions, personal affection and love towards my friends to preserve the moral value of our associations. As a moral person, I must conduct my friendship on an impartial principle of duty, and disregard my personal involvement in my friend's life. And Kant's view is paradoxical because when it

¹¹⁶ Lawrence, A. Blum. *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 45.

approves the personal aspects of friendship, as in the case of inclination-based friendships, it denies moral worth to such friendships. Only when it disapproves the personal aspects of friendship, does it accord moral worth to friendship. In short, when friendship contains personal elements, it lacks morality, and when it contains morality, it lacks personal elements. In either case, friendship suffers.

V. Critical Assessment of Kant's Theory

V.1 The distinction between natural and moral ends

Kant's first objection against the moral connotation of natural ends is that they entail a material will, and not a formal will (*CPR* 186:13-33, 187:1-22). A material will is shaped by empirical factors, and it has an invariable reference to the natural order of things. Its objects are derived from an individual's experiences, and not from pure rational intuition. Hence, they are contingent by nature. A formal will, on the other hand, is neither conditioned by such experiences nor is prone to such contingencies. It is determined by an individual's pure practical reason, and its objects are acquired through a rational understanding of moral law, and not through empirical experiences. Accordingly, it transcends empirical contingencies and natural restrictions, and manifests morality in its pure a priori form. Barbara Herman elucidates: "Kantian ethics is moral theory based on intentions or volition. The objects of moral assessment are not events or states of affairs, but willings (or willed actions). Things that happen are not morally good or bad, right or wrong: only willings are."¹¹⁷

We can respond to Herman (and Kant) by saying that Kant *assumes* a dichotomy between the material and formal will. Kant first posits an opposition in an individual's

¹¹⁷ Barbara Herman. *The Practice of Moral Judgment*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 94.

will and then intensifies it into a conflict (*CPR* 121:1-16). Later he uses this conflict to divide the will into two parts, moral and material (*CPR* 128:1-7), and finally, he arbitrarily attributes moral quality to one, and not to the other (*CPR* 160:1-11, 161:1-23). All this occurs in the process of a moral purification; so, it acquires a moral strength. And it becomes impossible, in the Kantian moral scheme, to act according to one's rational concepts and empirical conditions at the same time. But the authenticity of this division is questionable.

Kant's distinction is not based upon a concrete fact. Rather, it is an outcome of his epistemological-moral postulate, namely, a duty-driven moral consciousness (*CPR* 206:16-29). Like any other postulate, its main weakness lies in the fact that it seeks to translate a concept into a moral reality. However, it is highly doubtful if that can be done in the case of friendship. For friendship is a concrete relationship between two human beings, sharing their joys and sorrows together and standing by one another in times of need and necessity. My willingness to help and support my friend is not merely an output of an abstract moral rule (or, a rational will as Kant calls it). Rather, it is deeply embedded in our past experiences and associations. I value the empirical qualities of my friends and they are a part of my motivation to help him. They strengthen my resolve and enhance my endurance in difficult times. They encourage me to help and support my friend without worrying about my own hardships. For Kant, all these facets of friendship fall into the realm of material will devoid of all moral signification. But it is precisely in cases like this that the dichotomy of material and formal will is completely exposed. Formal will is too abstract to apply to the practical aspects of an individual's life and

relations and too empty to provide them a meaningful content. Hence, a material will is required.

Next, it can be argued that it is possible to retain the distinction between a material and formal will without subordinating one to the other. That is, both the material will and formal will can co-operate with one another in the pursuit of the best possible moral results. Aristotle adopts this approach. He argues that the formal and material will are basically two sides of the same cognitive episode. Both intellectual and practical wisdom, he argues, must harmonize to achieve the ideal moral outcomes (*NE* 1103a14-23). For him, a moral friendship necessitates a deeper moral commitment to the emotional and moral well-being of the friends. He makes it obligatory for the friends to assist one another in their personal and moral development. For Aristotle, both natural and moral ends support each other and strengthen each other's pursuit. Given this counter-argument, it is not at all obvious why Kant must see them as mutually exclusive.

For Kant, moral maxims must be universalizable, forming categorical imperatives (*Foundations* 421:1-8). They must be equally valid for each and every human being. In contrast to moral maxims, inclinational maxims are of a hypothetical kind. They are conditioned by individuals' empirical circumstances and psychological propensities. Hence, they have a subjective reference point. They reflect individuals' interests and orientations, and are grounded in their psychological mindset. For instance, the love and affection of inclination-friends underlie their psychological commitment to one another's well-being. The things are not inspired by a love of moral law or a sense of moral duty. As a result, they have a hypothetical connotation. They are often vulnerable to fluctuation and change, and they lack the universal validity of a moral maxim.

The most prominent outcome of the universalizability criterion is that it shifts the basis of friendly relations from particularity to universality. It commands me to love and respect my friend for his moral attributes and does not differentiate between friends and non-friends. Moreover, it has a more cosmopolitan reach.¹¹⁸ It allows me to connect, on moral grounds, with any human being who has similar universal principles. By doing so, it overcomes the barrier of time and space and puts human relations, including friendship, on a rational and universal ground. But these advantages are deceptive; they are accompanied with serious defects. Universality takes away the personal quality of a friendship. It does not allow me to value my friend for his particular and contingent qualities. It finds such qualities morally deficient. But this is arbitrary. There can be meaningful, meritorious and morally worthy contingent qualities; and that is so in the case of a friendship. When friends show sympathy and benevolence towards one another specifically on the grounds of their personal love and affection, Kant finds it morally problematic, and rejects it as morally worthless. But this rejection is unwarranted and demeaning to a friendship. It fails to understand the emotional complexities of friendly relations.

As a further matter, the universality of a maxim may conflict with other maxims. Since Kant's universalizability criterion gives us the form of a moral maxim, not its specific content, it is possible that two moral maxims, having the same form, may conflict with one another. The universalizability criterion has neither a safeguard against such conflicts nor a solution to them. To illustrate this, consider a practical example. A seriously ill friend asks me to visit his family and later requests a truthful account of my

¹¹⁸ H.J. Paton remarks: "[Friendship] is an ideal of what [Kant] calls 'humanity' both in action and in feeling" (Paton in *Friendship a Philosophical Reader*, p. 136).

visit. Suppose that if I tell him the truth he would suffer a serious, life-threatening setback. I have an option to lie and save his life or to speak the truth and expose his vulnerability. The universalizability principle requires me to tell the truth; the opposite cannot be universalized. As a result, my friend's life becomes a hostage to my moral principles and convictions. Kant has no satisfactory answer to the above dilemma. His rigid distinction between a formal and material will does not allow him to make any moral adjustments. Kant can never approve lying in friendship, no matter how severe the consequences of truth telling are. The rigidity of his universality principle does not allow him to make any exceptions. He does not permit friends to deal with exceptional situations exceptionally. My good will for my friend and my unconditional commitment to his well-being are not sufficient reasons for my temporary moral digression – lying in an extreme moral situation – and they do not remove the moral pressure for telling the truth. Kant demands truth telling – universal laws – in friendship even when the contrary seems to be a morally reasonable and acceptable choice.

Taking Kant's two arguments together, he is saying that a rational will, along with certain universal principles, exclusively constitutes the moral sphere of friendship. And since an individual's inclinations and natural ends are deficient on both of the above counts, they cannot have moral value. However, his view is shortsighted. It fails to recognize the practical aspects of friendly relations and deprecates personal ties; and in doing so, it robs friendship of its basic meaning, value, and connotation. In fact, however, friendship involves an emotional and moral communion between the friends. It entails an appreciation of one another's individuality, ends and projects. A view that does not fully support these aspects of friendship is bound to be defective. Kant's does not.

V.2 Duty as a motive

For Kant, a true moral motivation in friendship necessarily excludes all possible empirical satisfactions (*MMDV* 469:14-25, Collins 27:427:9-16). This separation of personal aspects from friendship and its moral considerations has some serious consequences. It takes away the personal value, meaning, and signification of friendship. It does not allow me to love and respect my friend for his specific individual qualities, such as his friendly nature, caring attitude and unflinching commitment to our friendship. Moreover, it forbids me from reciprocating my friend's feelings and emotions towards me, and also towards our friendship; that is, it requires us to completely sanitize our feelings and suspend emotions while interacting with one another. But this is damaging to our friendship. It is emotionally crippling in experience. Michael Stocker gives an example:

You are very bored and restless and at loose ends when Smith comes in once again. You are now convinced more than ever that he is a fine fellow and a real friend – taking so much time to cheer you up, traveling all the way across the town, and so on. You are so effusive with your praise and thanks that he protests that he always tries to do what he thinks is his duty, what he thinks will be the best. You at first think he is engaging in a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving moral burden. But the more you speak, the more clear it becomes that he was telling the literal truth: that it is not essentially because of you that he came to see you, not because you are friends, but because he thought it is his duty, perhaps as a fellow Christian or a Communist or whatever, or simply because he knows no one more in need of cheering up and no one easier to cheer up.¹¹⁹

The first friend is discomforted by the other's Kantian understanding of friendship. If the story is plausible, and I think it is, it indicates that something is terribly wrong with duty friendship. It puts exclusive emphasis on "duty, righteousness and

¹¹⁹ Michael Stocker. The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories. *Journal of Philosophy*, 73, 1976, p. 462.

obligation” (Stocker, p. 458) in friendship. It construes friendly duties in terms of moral constraints and self-imposed rational imperatives. But it fails to appreciate the role of personal love, affection, care and concern in friendship. Yet, these are, as the above example shows, essential constituents of a friendship. Ordinarily we expect our friends to be loving and kind, sincere and committed, but certainly not indifferent and insensitive to our feelings and emotions. Smith (in Stocker’s example) is an odd exception. He takes moral law seriously, follows its commands and remains certifiably a Kantian. Needless to say, he prefers impartial duty over friendly love and compassion. The very demand of such impartiality, Stocker argues, is detrimental to a friendship. A friendship, regardless of its moral foundation, is a personal relationship between two individuals. It requires a personal reciprocation of feelings and emotions, sentiments and views. A friendship devoid of these personal elements may coincide with the commands of duty, but it would fail completely in daily life situations. The point is not that Smith does not reciprocate his friend’s sentiments, but that he cannot reciprocate them even if he wants to do so. His moral injunctions forbid such reciprocation. Duty positively stops him from reciprocating his friend’s sentiment. It forces him to get rid of his inclinations that value such reciprocation, and replaces them by an abstract and impartial moral imperative.

Scholars have defended Kant against Stocker’s critique on two main grounds. First, Stocker may be reading Kant too severely. Marcia Baron, for example, argues that Stocker’s example amplifies Smith’s concerns for his duty and his reservations against inclinations.¹²⁰ That is, Stocker’s example puts Smith in a bad light: Stocker makes it appear as if Smith is completely withdrawn and uninterested in seeing his friend, and only his moral obligations force him to visit his friend. Hence, he seems to visit his friend

¹²⁰ Marcia Baron. *Kantian Ethics Almost Without Apology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995, p. 121.

“grudgingly or resentfully” (Baron, p. 121). But this is a questionable characterization of duty friendship, she argues. Duty friendship entails a rational pursuit of one’s moral obligations, but no grudge or resentment. However, there is nothing in Stocker’s example to imply that Smith acts the way Baron portrays – grudgingly and resentfully. Neither is this implied in Kant’s own moral thought. Kant categorically states that duty entails a rational awareness of one’s moral obligations, and a will to follow them in practice. In other words, Smith knows well that it is his duty to visit his friend and to cheer him up. He does not, and he cannot, harbor any negative feelings without undermining his own morality. Moreover, even if he happens to encounter some negative feeling, he can clearly fall back upon the duty-principle for a moral redemption. Duty will not allow such feelings to occur in the first place. But if they do occur somehow, it will not let them develop. That is to say, Smith’s honest commitment to his duty cuts his negativism to the core. Hence, Baron’s reading of Stocker’s example is off the point.

Stocker’s objection goes deeper than Baron’s reply. Stocker is not questioning whether Smith has performed his duty appropriately or not. Clearly he has. He shows a peerless commitment to his duty, and Stocker does not dispute that. What Smith lacks is a positive feeling of satisfaction and joy that his friend experiences, and wants him to share. His friend is convinced that Smith cares for him deeply, otherwise, why would he take all the pains to visit him again. But the irony is that Smith neither cares for the feelings and emotions of his friend, nor for the satisfactions that his visit generates (at least in a morally motivating sense). In other words, he is purely motivated by duty. Stocker finds this motivation worrisome and problematic.

Smith's motivation is counter-productive to the end that it seeks to serve. Once Smith's friend realizes that the true motivation behind Smith's visit is not to see him or to alleviate his pain, but to fulfill a moral duty, his friend is going to feel a letdown. He is happy because he thinks Smith cares for him and is concerned about his well-being, and keeps visiting him to keep him in good spirits. But Smith has a different motivation. He wants to be true to his moral obligations. He is truly committed to the pursuit of pure practical reason, moral law and categorical imperatives. None of these allow any personal love and affection for his friend; on the contrary, they necessitate an impartial conduct. Accordingly, Smith's friend, on moral grounds, cannot be more valuable to him than a stranger in a similar situation. This is a revealing discovery for the friend. His new-found friend is lost in the whirlpool of duty.

In addition, the Kantian conception obstructs the maturation of friendship. Smith's friend is touched by his visit. He is welcoming and grateful, believing that Smith truly cares for him, values his sentiments and enjoys his company. By reciprocating his feelings and emotions, Smith can establish a strong and meaningful relationship with him. In other words, a renewal of friendly commitments and a sharing of sincere emotions at a difficult time will hardly go unnoticed; it will strengthen Smith's friendship and lead to an irreversible solidarity with his friend. Yet Smith remains untouched and withdrawn during the whole process; he does not reciprocate his friend's feelings and emotions. Duty does not allow such reciprocations. They are inclinational elements, hence, a threat to duty. Stocker is critical of this juxtaposition of friendly affection and duty. It forces Smith to choose one over the other, when their coexistence seems a

genuine option. Smith remains loyal to his duty, his friendship goes unattended. This is a serious defect in Kant's duty friendship.

The second ground for defending Kant is that inclinations that we want to endorse in friendship do not always lead to the right actions. In Stocker's example, Smith's friend wants him to act on the grounds of personal love and care, and not merely on the grounds of his moral obligations. In other words, he wants Smith's desires and feelings to be an intrinsic part of his moral motivations and vice versa. However, Smith is concerned that his desires and feelings may, at least sometimes, obstruct or tamper with his moral motivation. Accordingly, the goodness of his desires and feelings may not always be enough to withstand empirical pressures, Smith worries. And if so, they cannot safely secure the moral motivation in friendship, he reasons. Baron captures Smith's worries, she writes:

Those who accept [Stocker's] assumption err, I believe, in supposing that motives of friendship, fellow being, and so on, ideally should always serve the function of promoting what we morally ought to do. They do not notice that sometimes there is a gap between the goodness of a desire and the rightness and wrongness of the act to which it inclines us.¹²¹

Baron, on behalf of Smith, is asking for an assurance. Stocker must establish that the inclinations as a moral guide will not fall short in practice, and that they will always secure Smith's morality. But no such assurance can be given, at least within the Kantian moral framework (inclinations entail some psychological variables, hence, are always contingent in some sense). Consequently, she approves Smith's adherence to duty, and his refusal to entertain inclinational motivations in friendship. Baron's interpretation has force if we accept her moral paradigm. That is, the understanding of duty in terms of a

¹²¹ Marcia Baron. *Kantian Ethics Almost Without Apology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995, p. 121.

universal moral imperative applicable to all human beings under all circumstances with equal moral force and effect. But if we do not accept Baron's understanding of duty in terms of the above moral absolutism, as Aristotle would not, her objection loses force. She requires a rational adherence to duty as a precondition of a moral motivation in the friendship. But the issue here is not if the requirement can be met (outside the Kantian moral framework), rather, if such a requirement is fair and acceptable in friendship. Clearly, it is not. It defines inclinations in contingent terms and later concludes, on the same grounds, that they cannot constitute a proper moral motivation in friendship. But this is questionable. Aristotle has correctly shown that inclinations by themselves may not possess sufficient moral strength to constitute moral motivations in friendship, yet under the guidance of virtue they are capable of acquiring a moral quality and attaining moral strength. In contrast to Aristotle, Kant and Baron first separate inclinations from virtue, and then assess their moral merit independently of their possible moral prospects. As a result, inclinations look morally inadequate, weak, and dispensable.

However, there is another deeper reason for rejecting Baron's interpretation. One of the central aspects of friendship, we have seen in the previous chapter, is that it secures the moral flourishing of the friends. Friendship makes them share their views and perspectives, exchange their understandings of right and wrong, good and bad, and helps them adopt the correct course in their lives. But Baron's interpretation and Kant's theory of moral motivations effectively shut the door for any such cooperation. Smith cannot share his friend's joy and he is equally incapable (again, on moral grounds) of sharing his friend's sorrows. Smith's concern for his friend is rational and his love practical, but they do not do justice to his friend's feelings and emotions, or, for that matter, to Smith's own

emotional aspects. Moreover, at a moral level, duty requires both Smith and his friend to formulate their moral laws independently from one another, so they cannot cooperate in moral spheres either. Hence, their friendship has no common content except a rational commitment to one another's moral autonomy. Even this commitment is primarily negative. So, Smith's friendship has no positive content. Both Baron and Kant overlook this.

My exposition of Kant's theory of friendship in this chapter shows that it breeds a deep division between the natural and the moral aspects of human interactions. It separates the natural ends of friendship from its moral ends, and sets them up against each other, and turns friendship into a constant struggle. Friends must choose either a natural or moral end. They cannot pursue both. In other words, personal love, affection, and happiness must be contrasted with one's rational awareness of moral law. Only such a contrast coupled with inner conflict can create a proper moral situation. One must necessarily sacrifice one's happiness to act in moral ways. But this is absurd. We will see in the next chapter that Mill strongly reacts against Kantian moral theory. He argues that a moral theory that condemns human inclinations, namely, an individual's happiness and satisfaction, is bound to be seriously defective in practice. Irrespective of Mill's theoretical problems, he clearly confirms the one-sidedness of Kant's thought, and provides additional reasons to reject it.

Mill's Concept of Friendship

I. Utility as a Foundation of Friendship

Mill reacts strongly against Kant's separation of the natural ends from the moral ends of friendship. He argues that this separation of ends makes moral ends too abstract and natural ends too mundane. It fails to recognize that the two ends are intrinsically connected in friendship, that a moral friendship necessitates a gratification of both these ends, and that it cannot exclude one end for the sake of the other (*Utilitarianism* 2:2:1-14). Mill contends that Kant's view is based on a narrow understanding of human nature, mistaken human psychology, and a distorted account of human will. Kant divides an individual's will into two halves – material and formal, and assigns a moral primacy to the one at the expense of the other. According to Mill, this classification and characterization of will is utterly unsatisfactory (*U* 4:11:12-35). Mill further criticizes Kant for his universalizability principle in friendship. Against Kant, he holds that it is quite possible to universalize contradictory maxims in friendship, and that Kant does not explain satisfactorily why and how we choose one maxim over the other. Accordingly, he concludes that Kant fails “almost grotesquely” (*U* 1:4:29-30) to delineate the natural ends from the moral ends, and that his theory of the separation of ends in friendship is ill-founded and arbitrary.

Instead, Mill aims at a good harmony of natural and moral ends in friendship.¹²² For him, an effective and meaningful gratification of both these ends is an essential constituent of a friendship. The satisfaction of natural ends secures a proper manifestation of one's desires and wants. It brings emotional and sensuous fulfillments to the friends, and facilitates a life of pleasure and contentment rather than that of want and deprivation. On the other hand, the gratification of moral ends is crucial to the moral well-being of the friends; it cultivates their moral capacities, and imparts a sense of moral communion among them. Accordingly, he contends that a moral friendship must provide both these gratifications.

Mill establishes this harmony through his Principle of Utility (*U* 2:2:1-14). He argues that utility consists in the maximization of pleasure and reduction of pain. Human beings, he insists, by nature desire pleasure and resist pain, and pleasure is morally good and pain is morally bad. Accordingly, utility approves of those actions and activities in friendship that are conducive to the maximization of pleasure and reduction of pain. He writes: "This [maximum utility], being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality" (*U* 2:10:9-10). Thus, unlike Kant, Mill places one's moral obligations on a natural foundation – the attainment of happiness. He believes that the moral pursuits in friendship must lead to the natural gratifications of the friends; otherwise, they would lose their moral meaning and purpose.

Mill's argument for moral pursuits and maximum utility can be broken down into two parts. On the one hand, he argues that the maximization of utility brings maximum personal gratification to the friends. That is, it provides them with an opportunity to

¹²² Note that Mill does not significantly develop a theory of friendship, per se. However, a rich theory of friendship can be derived from the social core of his ethics.

realize the pleasures that they desire, and to pursue the interests that inform their individualities and that are central to their lives. Friends love and respect one another, and care for one another's emotional and mental satisfactions. I want my friend to be happy and well, and similarly, my friend wants me to attain the gratifications that I desire. Together, we multiply each other's satisfactions, and promote each other's well-being. In addition, friends help one another in developing moral qualities. This includes facilitating one another's emotional and intellectual development; friends help one another in critical ways in deciding which pleasures are good and deserve their pursuit, and which are bad and must be resisted. In these ways, for Mill, utility enhances one's personal satisfactions in friendship.

On the other hand, Mill believes that the pursuit of utility is morally valuable, not only to the personal gratification of the friends, but also to their overall social surroundings. Utility in its ideal form, Mill argues, enhances the pleasure of each and every human being, and of all sentient beings (*U* 2:10:9-15). This is because my own interests and pursuits, according to Mill, are intimately connected with that of my fellow beings (*U* 2:19:25-47). The pleasure and pain that my fellow beings experience, the happiness and unhappiness that they encounter in their lives, have an important bearing upon my own feelings and emotions, happiness and unhappiness (*U* 2:10:9-15, 5:23:1-13). That is to say, they are not as distant and far off from me as they initially appear to be. Hence, it is my moral obligation to care for the interests and satisfactions of my fellow beings.

Furthermore, utility necessitates a positive cultivation of effective moral qualities. These qualities include a sense of fellowship and sympathy with one's friends, relatives,

and other human beings. One must be affectionate and loving towards the others, and must possess a genuine desire to contribute to their good; and one must not be indulgent and selfish (*U 2:13:15-36*). Accordingly, one must devote one's time and resources to the promotion of the maximum utility of the maximum number. Moreover, while contributing to the good of others, one must make sure that the inherent dignity of each person is respected, and that their personal spheres are not encroached upon. Mill is conscious of the fact that one's desire to maximize overall utility, or to contribute to others' good, may very well lead to undue interference in others' lives. Hence, he makes it obligatory upon the friends to value the moral autonomy of all human persons (*U 2:6:25-30*).

Moral autonomy requires me to respect the human dignity of each and every individual (*U 2:6:14-30*). It obliges me to accord equal moral merit and consideration to the pursuit of overall utility, without making any differentiation on the basis of personal love and affection, and mental and emotional closeness. If this is so, then it would logically follow from Mill's concept of moral autonomy that I must treat my friends and non-friends in a like manner and must not prioritize the interests of my friends over non-friends. Mill explicitly requires me to value equally the moral autonomy of all human beings and thereby implicitly excludes all personal love and attachments from moral considerations in friendship (*U 2:18:4-6, 2:19:16-21*). As a result, I must not prioritize the interests of my friends over those of others.

Mill's view that the pursuit of utility entails impartial conduct has deep consequences for a conception friendship. Impartiality undermines the value of personal affections in friendship; it does not allow one's personal feelings and emotions to have

any say in the moral determination and pursuit of utility (*U* 5:36:18-22). Whenever I face a conflict between my friend's happiness and good, and that of the maximum utility of the maximum number of people, impartiality always obliges me to choose the latter; no matter how much I care for my friend, and how much I value his well-being, on impartial grounds, I must subordinate his good to the overall social good. That is to say, my aims, goals, desires and attachments in friendship are measurable in terms of utility, and their moral value resides not in the sentiments and emotions that accompany them, but in their utility enhancement. Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams write: "The difficulty does not arise from a person's utility being independent of his attachments, ties, aims, plans, agency, etc., and indeed it typically will not be independent of these things. The issue concerns not merely *whether* these things are important but also *how* important they are and *why* so."¹²³

Next, impartiality is detrimental to the friendship itself. By viewing friendship as an instrument of utility aggregation, it compromises the intrinsic moral worth of a friendship, and threatens the ordinary conception of friendship, which views it as an inherently meaningful and satisfying relationship (*U* 5:36:18-22). Ordinarily, we construe friendship in terms of mutual affection and love, care and concern, but certainly not in terms of utility maximization. For example, I may be friends with someone who does not possess excellent intellectual and moral capacities, and I may still find my friendship important and gratifying; however, from an impartial utilitarian perspective, my friendship will be seriously deficient in moral value. But this is a mischaracterization of my friendship; it puts exclusive weight on the moral productivity of a friendship, and

¹²³ Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, Ed. *Utilitarianism and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 5.

ignores its personally satisfying aspects, such as the genuine affections and unconditional love of the friends.

Finally, it can be argued that impartiality is inconsistent with the very idea of friendship. Carol Gilligan argues that impartiality jeopardizes the key elements of a friendship; that is, it abstracts from friendship its particular ingredients, such as its context, culture, history and communionship. Each friendship, Gilligan holds, entails a set of complex emotional and mental factors, such that they are not amenable to utility measurement. Accordingly, for Gilligan, the moral value of friendship resides in a meaningful understanding of its constituent elements, the emotional states of the friends, and not in its utility accumulation.

As I discuss Mill's concept of friendship I will bring out the full implications of his views on the subject. I will show that Mill upholds a conception of friendship on utilitarian premises that necessitate an impartial conduct in moral relations. But impartiality, I shall argue, is inconsistent with the very idea of friendship. It undermines personal love and attachments in friendship and seeks to measure their worth by abstract moral standards. In addition to this, I shall also show that though Mill objects to Kant's theory of friendship on the grounds of its artificial universality and abstractness, his own theory suffers from similar defects.

II. Utility Friendship

In Mill's moral thought, we find an intrinsic connection between his conception of friendship and the Principle of Utility. On the one hand, he argues that friendship is essential for the maximization of utility, in several ways. First, it is a pleasant and beneficial relationship; friends like one another, enjoy one another's company and do

meaningful activities together. This enhances their pleasures, facilitates their satisfactions, and contributes to their overall happiness. Second, it is also critical to the cultivation of the social and moral qualities of the friends. That is, it inculcates a sense of association and fellowship among the friends, and strengthens their desire to contribute to the happiness and well-being of other civic members. On the other hand, Mill also believes that the Principle of Utility provides the sole moral criterion for the ethical evaluation of a friendship. Below, I will discuss the nature and relationship of friendship and utility in Mill's moral thought, and draw out its consequences for Mill's concept of friendship. Mill remarks:

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure (*U* 2:2:1-5).

In this passage, Mill is making two fundamental claims. In the first place, according to Mill, we have a natural desire for pleasure and the absence of pain. This is because pleasure leads to our happiness and pain leads to our unhappiness. Mill believes that pleasure is intrinsically good and pain intrinsically bad, and morality requires a consistent promotion of pleasure and reduction of pain. Friendship is no exception to this moral prescription. In the second place, Mill is not referring to one's own pleasure and pain alone; all of us desire pleasure for ourselves, and all of us want to avoid pain; so, there is nothing profound in the pursuit of one's pleasure and resistance to one's pain. Mill is making a more substantial claim. He is saying that, on moral grounds, one must accord equal merit to one's own pleasures and that of others; one must act impartially in

the pursuit of pleasure. Therefore, friends must not prioritize one another's pleasure over that of non-friends.

Mill's point that human beings have a natural desire for happiness is quite familiar to us. It can be verified on an experiential level. Ordinarily, people like pleasurable things, and are inclined towards them, and dislike painful things and have a resistance towards such things. Moreover, we can also find supportive arguments to a similar effect in the writings of other eminent philosophers; Aristotle, for instance, argues that human beings have a natural desire for happiness and that this desire is intrinsically good.¹²⁴ In the recent past, we see Jeremy Bentham reinforcing the view that human beings have a natural propensity for happiness.¹²⁵ That is to say, Mill's first point is well supported by our ordinary experiences, and also by the philosophical literature on the subject; hence, it is well founded.

Mill's second point builds upon the findings of his first point. He now argues that the happiness that is desirable is not merely one's own happiness, but the happiness of the whole society. In other words, he is saying that while desiring one's happiness one must not be inhibited by one's personal interests, liking and love; instead, one must advance the maximum happiness of all individuals. This leads to several questions: why should one pursue the happiness of others? Can one do that? And if one can, then why should

¹²⁴ Aristotle remarks: "For virtue of character is concerned with pleasures and pains: it is because of pleasure that we do bad actions, and pain that we abstain from noble ones. It is for this reason that we need to have been brought up in a particular way from our early days...so we might find enjoyment or pain in the right things; for the right education is just this" (*NE* 1104b9-13). It must be noted here that Aristotle's exposition of happiness is substantially different from Mill's; that is, though Aristotle agrees with Mill that happiness is desirable, he disagrees with Mill's utilitarian interpretation of happiness (*NE* 1097b1-34, 1098a1-33).

¹²⁵ He writes: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm" (Jeremy Bentham. *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*. New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1963, p. 1).

one sacrifice one's happiness for the happiness of others? A satisfactory answer to these questions requires Mill to provide substantive reasons to establish the moral desirability of the maximum utility. He remarks:

No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good: that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons (*U* 4:3:8-13).

Mill is making two arguments. First, he argues that the only proof that can establish that people desire happiness is that people *actually* desire it. Second, he contends that the general happiness is greater than the particular happiness; that is, the aggregate utility of all individuals of a society is greater than the utility of a particular individual(s). These two arguments, taken together, constitute the crux of Mill's proof for the moral desirability of the maximum utility. On the basis of these arguments, Mill concludes that happiness is *desirable*, and that the general happiness is *even more desirable*. Both these arguments are hotly contested in Millian scholarship. It is highly questionable, if one can legitimately derive a moral fact from a psychological state; the fact that we desire happiness does not necessarily make it desirable.¹²⁶ We desire plenty of other things as well, but they will not be considered as desirable unless one reduces desirability to desire itself, as Mill does, for instance. Likewise, Mill's second argument that the aggregate utility of all persons represents the greater happiness of the greater

¹²⁶ G. E. Moore writes: "Well, the fallacy of this step [Mill's transition from 'desire' to 'desirability' of happiness] is so obvious, that it is quite wonderful how Mill failed to see it. The fact is that 'desirable' does not mean 'able to be desired' as 'visible' means 'able to be seen'. The desirable means simply what *ought* to be desired or *deserves* to be desired; just as the detestable means not what can be but what ought to be detested and the damnable what deserves to be damned. Mill has, then, smuggled in, under cover of the word 'desirable,' the very notion about which he ought to be quite clear" ((G.E. Moore. *Principia Ethica*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1903, p. 69).

number entails a suspicious premise. Mill presumes that the interests, orientations and affections – in sum, happiness – of different people can be captured in terms of a single moral aggregate. However, it is not clear at all how this can be done without seriously compromising the intrinsic qualities of an individual's personhood.

Let us assume, for the sake of the argument, that Mill is correct in saying that the aggregate utility of all persons, taken together, is more desirable than the utility of a particular individual, or a group of individuals. Still from this, it does not follow that all persons will *actually desire* the aggregate or greater utility. In other words, all that Mill's proof establishes is simply this: that the greater utility is more desirable than the lesser utility; but it does not establish that people will actually desire the greater utility.¹²⁷ Nor does Mill show that different people share a common natural propensity to pursue the greater good – the aggregate utility of all persons. As a result of these shortcomings, Mill's theory of utility stands in an acute need of a principle that can support it, a principle that can support the pursuit of greater utility and turn it into a feasible moral goal.

Friendship provides that principle. It is critical to the maximization of happiness, in a variety of ways. First, it consists of emotionally pleasurable and gratifying experiences. Friends love and respect one another, and possess care and concern for one another's well-being. They value one another's company and share a close emotional bond with one another. This emotional proximity, Mill believes, leads to many

¹²⁷ Roger Crisp writes: "It is easy to see why so many interpreters over the years have been deeply concerned about this part of Mill's argument. The gap between egoistic hedonism (it is rational for you to pursue your own greatest happiness) and universalistic hedonism (the utilitarian view that you should pursue the greatest happiness of overall) is vast, and Mill appears to be trying to leap in one bound. He was certainly aware of the distinction of the two views, but it has to be admitted that he did not seem to recognize its importance" (Roger Crisp. *Mill on Utilitarianism*. London: Routledge, 1997, p. 77).

meaningful and fulfilling activities in friendship. For instance, friends help and support one another in achieving their aims and objectives. Moreover, with the passage of time their cooperation grows, and it takes a strong form of mutual good will, trust and sympathy among them; they start counting on one another, and stand ready to support one another in the times of emotional need and necessity. All this brings tremendous happiness to them and strengthens their friendship: “Just as there are component parts of happiness, according to Mill, there are component parts of friendship, such as trust, shared interest, communion, and reciprocal good will.”¹²⁸

Second, friends also help one another in selecting proper pleasures and resisting improper ones. Mill recognizes that there are different kinds of pleasures,¹²⁹ and sometimes it is not easy for an individual to decide which one of them is most appropriate to desire. One may have conflicting opinions regarding the pleasures that would bring maximum gratification and serve maximum utility. Moreover, a good decision requires thorough knowledge of available pleasures; specifically, one must be acquainted with both qualitative and quantitative pleasures, and must have a reasonable ability to categorize them. Mill writes: “On a question which is the best worth having of two pleasures...the judgment of those who are qualified by knowledge of both, or, if they differ, that of the majority among them, must be admitted as final” (*U* 2:8:2-6). Accordingly, Mill argues that friends assist one another in sorting out good pleasures from bad pleasures, and qualitative pleasures from quantitative pleasures. For instance, normally, an educated friend is considered to be an asset. He is intellectually stimulating and emotionally encouraging; that is, whenever I am in doubt regarding the

¹²⁸ James O. Grunebaum. *Friendship: Liberty, Equality, and Utility*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 133.

¹²⁹ For a detailed discussion, see the next section.

conduciveness of certain pleasures to my overall well-being, or find myself uncertain regarding their utility value, I can turn to him for clarity and advice. Furthermore, since my friend knows my interests and pursuits and is well acquainted with my nature and temperament, he can always help me in finding the best possible alternative for me and guide me in securing the most pleasant outcome.

Third, friendship directly promotes utility and strengthens its moral foundation. Mill argues that friendship, as a moral relationship, requires a rational appreciation of one another's good, and a desire to contribute to one another's happiness. I know what brings pleasure to my friend and makes him happy, and what causes him inconvenience and makes him unhappy. My love and affection for him motivate me consistently to enhance his happiness, and they inspire me to engage in the activities and endeavors that my friend likes and wants to participate in; moreover, it brings me pleasure to see my friend attain the satisfactions that he desires and obtain the goods that he wants. Similarly, my friend reciprocates my emotions and intent, and shows an invariable propensity to contribute to my happiness and to enhance my satisfactions. As such, our friendship becomes an instrument of maximum gratification for both of us. We enjoy each other's contributions to our lives, and show our gratefulness to each other's love, kindness and sincerity.

This coherence of love, affection and interest in friendship, Mill suggests, is not restricted to friendship itself. The positive feelings that friends exhibit towards one another and the rational commitment that they show towards one another's happiness are indicative of the fact that it is possible to care for the happiness of others, and that one need not be absorbed in one's own happiness alone (*U 2:10:1-15*). It also shows that one

can pursue the good of others even at the expense of one's own good; for we see friends sacrificing their pleasure and happiness for the satisfactions of one another. This element of sacrifice in friendship is crucial to utilitarian morality, and it validates Mill's original claim that one can (and must) sacrifice one's personal gratifications for a larger moral purpose – either for the good of a friend, or, by the same token, the greatest good of the greatest number: “The utilitarian morality does recognize in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others” (*U* 2:17:3-4).

It must be noted here that the sacrifices that one makes in friendship are not an irrational outburst of one's benevolence towards others. Indeed, it is quite possible to sacrifice one's interests and satisfactions for others in a thoughtless manner. Mill does not approve of such sacrifices in friendship, and considers them a waste (*U* 2:17:2-10). For him, a sacrifice is meaningful and moral only if it serves the overall social good. In other words, while contributing to my friend's good and renouncing my own pleasures in the process, I am under a moral obligation to secure maximum utility. By implication, if I can generate the maximum happiness by pursuing my own pleasures, and securing my own interests, I must do so. To state this another way, moral sacrifices in friendship signify a deeper commitment to the utilitarian moral principle – a consistent maximization of happiness – and are not motivated by a spontaneous spurt of benevolence, by an unthinking mind.

Mill argues that my desire to augment my friend's happiness and my resolve to secure his happiness, even if it comes at the cost of my own happiness and satisfactions, is based upon our past associations, shared experiences, and common moral obligations in friendship. I have a good understanding of my friend's qualities and interests, values

and orientations; and I know him at a personal level. I truly believe that my friend is committed to my betterment and progress, and will always make honest efforts to secure my satisfactions and well-being, and will never hesitate to make some sacrifices for my good. This trust is the quintessence of our friendship. It is grounded in our sympathetic and loving communion with one another. It has a personal history, and it entails a thorough knowledge of one another's nature and character. Mill also believes, like Aristotle, that an individual's character is an enduring thing; it takes time to evolve and does not change in a short span of time. Accordingly, he argues that noble character is critical to friendship, and instrumental in the realization of utility: "Utilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character, even if each individual were only benefited by the nobleness of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from the benefit" (*U2:9:9-12*).

Thus friendship supports Mill's theory of utility in critical ways. Friends pursue their happiness together, and contribute to one another's realization of maximum utility. They share a common feeling of mutual benevolence and sympathy, and believe in mutual fellowship with one another. This mutual communion fosters their relationship, and puts their common pursuit of utility on a solid moral ground.

However, it remains to be seen whether Mill's system of utility truly supports friendship or not. This question arises primarily because of Mill's insistence on the impartial nature of utility; and the answer to the question seems negative. We have seen that Mill's Principle of Utility requires friends to maximize utility; and it does not allow them to make any distinction between friends and non-friends in their pursuit of happiness. So, it follows from Mill's position that I must always act for the advancement

of overall social happiness, and I must sacrifice my own happiness and that of my friends for the sake of the happiness of a stranger if the stranger's happiness turns out to have a greater utility value than ours. But this is deeply problematic.

On the one hand, it assumes that the utility of different individuals (or, all constituents members of a given society) can be abstracted to form a concrete utility whole. In other words, first, it presumes that the happiness of all people can be put together, and then it rules that the aggregate happiness must be the sole motivating force behind an individual's moral conduct. However, it is questionable if this can be done in friendship. A friendship is a distinct personal relationship and it is not amenable to the theoretical abstraction that Mill proposes. I love and respect my friend, and care for his well-being for who he is as a person, and not for his utilitarian value, as Mill would make us believe. Similarly, I prefer friends over non-friends because I am intimately acquainted with my friends, and not because I am partisan (recall that Aristotle argues that preferential treatment in friendship does not entail a bias towards non-friends, rather, it involves mutual love and affection and a common commitment to virtue). Furthermore, Mill's impartiality requirement runs counter to his 'desirability argument,' just as my desire for happiness makes happiness desirable, likewise, it can be argued that my desire for personal love and affection in friendship make them desirable too. If so, then Mill's call for moral impartiality will be incoherent. Hence, impartiality is neither possible nor desirable in friendship.

On the other hand, impartiality undermines an individual's personal goals and projects in friendship. It requires him to transcend his personal aims and objectives, attachments and affections, and submit to the greatest utility of greatest number;

however, one may not easily dispense with one's personal aim and objectives in friendship. Scholars have defended the presence of such aims and objectives in friendship; Bernard Williams, for instance, considers them essential constituents of an individual's "ground projects". He writes:

A man who has such a ground project will be required by utilitarianism to give up what it requires in a given case just if that conflicts with what he is required to do as impersonal utility maximizer when all the casually relevant considerations are in. That is a quite absurd requirement.¹³⁰

Williams is saying that certain goods are so fundamental to an individual's life that they cannot be substituted by other goods, no matter how attractive the alternative goods may be. These goods are crucial to an individual's life and define his projects; therefore, they cannot be replaced without seriously dislocating the individual himself. Friendship is one such good, Williams believes. Friends love and respect one another and contribute to one another's well-being and satisfactions; that is, together they partake in mutually desirable, pleasant and beneficial activities, and in due course, their relationship acquires a distinctive place in their lives. They start viewing one another as an essential constituent of their lives and projects. As a result, they share a unique relationship, whose value can neither be captured nor measured within the utilitarian moral framework.

In defense of Mill, it can be said that the proper meaning and significance of Williams' "ground projects" resides in their happiness-value. That is, they are valuable, primarily, because they add to an individual's happiness. For example, the love and affection that my friend bestows upon me make me happy; I enjoy his company and miss his absence. Accordingly, the true merit of an individual's "ground projects" falls in the domain of utility. But this reply is reductive in nature, and it also evades Williams'

¹³⁰ Bernard Williams. *Moral Luck*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 14.

fundamental objection against Mill. It construes the moral worth of ground projects with reference to their happiness value, but this is precisely what Williams questions. As a matter of fact, utilitarianism as a whole (including Mill's version) looks at the world through the prism of utility,¹³¹ and anything that falls beyond this prism is either left out as morally insignificant, or, is reduced to utility, somehow. In either case, its inadequacies are obvious. In the next section, I will show further that Mill structures his theory of utility around happiness, but his concept of happiness itself suffers from some serious defects. Therefore, it fails to serve its stated purpose.

III. Friendship and Happiness

For Mill, happiness is the sole end of a friendship. The moral value of a friendship, he argues, must be measured in terms of its contribution to the happiness of the friends. If a friendship leads to mutual pleasures and enjoyments of the friends, it must be continued and strengthened, and if it causes disappointment and pain to the friends, it must be dissolved. Accordingly, friends must ensure that their relationship remains pleasant and cordial, adds to their satisfaction and contentment, and contributes to their overall utility. In this section, I will examine Mill's concept of happiness and bring out its implications to his theory of friendship.

According to Mill, "Happiness is not an abstract idea, but a concrete whole" (*U* 4:6:34-35). This implies three things. First, happiness is intrinsically associated with an individual's experiences; pleasure makes one happy and its deprivation makes one unhappy. Moreover, for Mill, pleasure is a positive sensation of excitement, satisfaction

¹³¹ G.E. Moore writes: "Utilitarianism, however, as commonly held, must be understood to maintain that either mere consciousness of pleasure, or consciousness of pleasure together with the minimum adjunct which may be meant by the existence of such consciousness in at least one *person*, is the *sole good*" (Moore. *Principia Ethica*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1903, p. 110).

and joy, and pain is an absence of such excitement, presence of dissatisfaction and sorrow. Accordingly, he requires friends to cultivate their experiential capacities properly, so that they can fully enjoy the available pleasures, and protect themselves against the possible pains. This development entails an appropriate appreciation of the pleasant activities, and objects, and resistance to painful activities and objects. Hence, a proper cultivation of the experiential capacities of the friend necessitates a fine blend of their affective and intellectual qualities.

Next, happiness has several aspects, each equally important and meaningful. According to Mill, just as there are several feelings and emotions that make an individual happy, there are several aspects to his happiness as well. An individual's happiness consists of all those desires, wants, activities and projects that result in pleasurable experiences, and help him in reducing or eliminating pain. For example, if my friend truly likes music, music will make him happy, and if he likes taking long walks, his happiness consists of outdoor movements. Moreover, if he enjoys them both, his happiness will require a proper gratification of both. In other words, there are many ways to attain happiness, and each way adds an element to it; that is, happiness entails a plurality of goods, and is not restricted to one specific good. As such, it is incompatible with all forms of abstraction.

Finally, for Mill, happiness does not entail an uninterrupted flow of intense pleasures. No matter how much friends desire pleasure and how much committed they remain to its pursuit, the pleasure that they obtain in friendship cannot always be intense. Mill admits that intense pleasures bring maximum gratification to the friends, but he points out that such pleasures cannot be sustained for a long time. That is to say, they

require intervals and breaks. The short supply of these pleasures, however, does not diminish the importance of friendship. Friends can still cooperate in the pursuit of other pleasures, which are less intense but equally meaningful and desirable. They can always help one another in making one another's life easy and convenient, and in reducing one another's pain and deprivation. Mill remarks:

The happiness which they [early utilitarians, for instance, Bentham] meant was not a life of rapture; but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over passive, and having as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing (*U* 2:12:17-23).

This puts us in the position to discuss the most critical characteristic of Mill's concept of happiness. Though Mill agrees with early utilitarians that there are different degrees of pleasure, some intense and forceful, and others mild and weak, he disagrees with them, particularly, Bentham, regarding the content and classification of pleasure. Bentham firmly believed that all pleasures are of the same kind, and that their moral value can be objectively measured. That is, one can group together all available pleasures, and assess their moral merit on a utilitarian scale. Accordingly, on Bentham's view, friends must pursue only those pleasures that are in agreement with a felicific calculus.

For Mill, this is not so; all pleasures are not of the same kind (*U* 2:4:26-30). Mill argues that some pleasures are about our intellectual and mental satisfactions, and others are about the gratification of our sensuous nature. These are two different kinds of pleasures, and cannot be grouped together. The pursuit of qualitative pleasures requires an intellectually cultivated mind and is fully consistent with the maximum utility,

whereas the pursuit of quantitative pleasures has no such requirement, and is less favorable to the greater good. So, the two pleasures differ at a fundamental level. Mill remarks: "It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognise the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasure should be supposed to depend on quantity alone" (*U* 2:4:26-30).

Mill's classification of pleasure in terms of quality and quantity has far-reaching consequences for utilitarian moral theory. On the one hand, it questions Bentham's view that all pleasures are of the same kind. It points out the inadequacies of his view, and suggests remedial steps to correct them. By doing so, it provides a meaningful and morally vibrant foundation to utilitarian morality. On the other hand, it has an enriching effect upon Mill's theory of friendship. It shows that friends are capable of refined and sophisticated pleasures, and that a good friendship must facilitate such pleasures. Below, I will draw out the implication of Mill's view in greater detail. First, I will examine its impact upon his theory of friendship, and then I will focus on its implications for his overall intellectual position. I will ask, specifically, if the quality-quantity distinction of pleasures can serve as a satisfactory safeguard against hedonism.

For Mill, some pleasures are qualitatively superior to others. Qualitatively superior pleasures form a distinctive class of their own, and they are desired for their own utility value. They can neither be reduced to quantitative pleasures, nor can they be explained in terms of a felicific calculus; the pursuit of qualitative pleasures requires developed cognitive powers and refined sensibilities, and necessitates an educated and

cultured mind. Moreover, the realization of qualitative pleasures requires hard work, discipline and sacrifice, and these pleasures are not available to indulgent people. Once obtained, these generate great satisfactions, enrich the person, and surpass quantitative pleasures on all counts. Mill writes: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied" (*U 2:6:40-42*). Accordingly, Mill recommends the pursuit of qualitative pleasures in friendship.

Second, some pleasures are more central to my happiness than others. For instance, I am driven more towards the intellectual and social activities, aesthetic enjoyments, friendly associations and common utility. Likewise, I find more satisfaction in abstract thinking and other forms of mental exercise. Mill believes that the interests that I possess are defining characteristics of a human person, and he counsels that even while seeking my ordinary and mundane gratifications, such as food, health and entertainment, I must keep my intellectual and social interests at the front of my pursuits. They symbolize the deeper satisfactions and contentment that I am capable of achieving as a human person; hence, I must always preserve them: "Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification" (*U 2:4:10-13*).

Third, it is quite possible that I may not be aware or conscious of certain pleasures, even though they may be essential to my happiness. Though we all naturally desire happiness, we may not know what happiness consists of or how to attain it. As a result, we often land up pursuing pleasures that do not serve our interests and orientations effectively and that are less conducive to our social utility. To rectify this situation and to secure maximum pleasure, Mill argues that we must cultivate our pleasures at a conscious

level. That is, we must deliberate regarding the quality of pleasures, assess their moral merit and determine their social significance; specifically, we must sort out all the pros and cons of a pleasure. This includes a proper assessment of all the advantages that a pleasure accrues, and a correct estimation of all possible losses that it involves. This has two specific outcomes for friendship.

On the one hand, Mill discourages friends from indulging in gross pursuits and gratifications. He shows, specifically, that though such pleasures and pursuits appeal to our senses, attract our attention and cause temptation among us, they are not conducive to overall utility; hence, friends must watch out against them. For instance, it may be immensely gratifying to obtain certain material goods, such as money, sex and fame, but if they are acquired at the expense of mutual affection and trust, they will hurt the friends and disrupt their friendship. In addition to this, Mill also provides another important reason to resist gross gratifications in friendship; it is unbecoming of a human person, he argues, to indulge in such gratifications. As human persons, friends are capable of elevated pleasures and refined moral pursuits, and gross gratifications jeopardize their realization. More strongly, gross gratifications entail an abdication of one's moral responsibilities; hence, friends must abstain from them.

On the other hand, Mill makes it almost obligatory upon the friends to develop their positive intellectual and social qualities, personal affections and communal satisfactions. This is intimately associated with his strong intellectual conviction that only a properly educated and intellectually nourished individual is capable of intense qualitative pleasures, such as rational deliberation, noble feelings and social fellowship. For instance, a good and intellectually stimulating conversation is a hallmark of a good

friendship. It provides friends with a unique opportunity to exchange their thoughts and ideas, views and perspectives on diverse personal and social issues. Moreover, it strengthens their mutual good will and trust, fosters their friendship and leads to a broader social cohesion.

In the light of the above discussion and Mill's strong defense of qualitative pleasures, we have to make our determination regarding the characterization of his theory of happiness. Is Mill a hedonist or not? A satisfactory answer to this question requires two things: first, it must clearly define hedonism and spell out its implications, and second, it must be consistent with Mill's overall intellectual position; in other words, it must not be selective. "Hedonism claims that pleasure is the good (that pleasantness is the one and only good-making property) and that pain is the bad (that painfulness is the one and only bad-making property)."¹³² Here, a "good-making property" is something that adds value to human experiences, renders them meaningful and desirable, and harmonizes them with the overall utility. On the contrary, a "bad-making property" is something that lacks such value, makes experiences painful and undesirable and undermines maximum utility. If this outline of hedonism is correct and acceptable, and I think it is, Mill presents a problematic case. On the one hand, he seems to approximate hedonism, but on the other hand, he appears to move beyond it – his theory of pleasure is much more profound than ordinary hedonism.

Mill's approximation of hedonism has two aspects. In the first place, Mill, like a hedonist, does not differentiate between 'pleasure' and 'happiness'. He uses them interchangeably, so much so, that all the pleasant experiences of an individual are

¹³² David Owen Brink. Mill's Deliberative Utilitarianism. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 21, 1192, p. 67-103.

equated with his happiness; more strongly, pleasure and happiness are the same things. This is a potent hedonism.¹³³ One's pleasure is conflated with one's happiness, and in the final analysis both are reduced to sense experiences. Mill writes: "By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure" (*U* 2:2:5-6). In the second place, even though Mill presents an animated defense of qualitative pleasures, he never abandons quantitative pleasures. That is, for Mill, utility has two shades, qualitative and quantitative. Clearly, quantitative pleasures are less expedient to utility than qualitative pleasures; but they are expedient to utility, nonetheless. In other words, like Bentham, Mill retains the moral merit of quantitative pleasures; he simply readjusts their utility value. As a result, he finds them less desirable, and less efficient in utility aggregation; but this does not render quantitative pleasures meaningless. By contrast, they continue to be an effective force in an individual's moral determinations. Hence, Wendy Donner appears to be partially correct in describing Mill's position as a qualitative hedonism: "In propounding qualitative hedonism, Mill moves beyond Benthamite quantitative hedonism in a decisive and notable way" (Wendy Donner in *Cambridge Companion to Mill*, p. 261). But this conclusion has its limitations.

Qualitative hedonism, no matter how refined and pure, does not capture some central ingredients of Mill's moral thought. These include Mill's staunch commitment to social fellowship, sympathy towards other fellow beings, and his unflinching trust in human dignity. Moreover, these elements are not amenable to qualitative hedonism. The defining characteristic of qualitative hedonism is that some pleasures are superior to

¹³³ G. E. Moore writes: "Hedonists, then, hold that all other things but pleasure, whether conduct or virtue or knowledge, whether life or nature or beauty, are only good as a means to pleasure or for the sake of pleasure, never for their own sake or as ends in themselves" (Moore. *Principia Ethica*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1903, p. 65).

others, and that the superior pleasures are more central to an individual's life than inferior pleasures. But qualitative hedonism, like quantitative hedonism, invariably appeals to an individual's sense experiences. That is, the superiority of the qualitative pleasures is established on experiential grounds (Mill approves this). But then he realizes that personal experiences can neither satisfactorily explain social utility nor secure its manifestation; hence, an additional safeguard is required. Accordingly, Mill moves beyond qualitative hedonism and recognizes deeply the value of goodness of character, nobility, and dignity (almost) in their own right. This restricts the acceptability of Donner's characterization of Mill's position.¹³⁴

David Brink provides an alternative interpretation. He argues that Mill's conception of happiness involves a fuller actualization of one's human capabilities, that Mill champions a "deliberative conception of happiness,"¹³⁵ hence, he cannot be categorized a hedonist, either qualitative or quantitative. Brink's interpretation, I think, is closer to the facts. We often find Mill advocating an all around development of the mental and affective faculties of the friends. For him, such a development is essential for the enjoyment of all the pleasures that life has to offer: "In a world in which there is so much to interest, so much to enjoy, and so much also to correct and improve, every one who has this moderate amount of moral and intellectual requisites is capable of an existence which may be called enviable" (*U* 2:14:10-13).

¹³⁴ Roger Crisp writes: "Mill uses the term *pleasures* and *enjoyments* interchangeably. To call him a 'hedonist' might therefore be said to be stretching things a little, since enjoyable experiences are not quite the same as pleasurable experiences. One can enjoy certain experiences, such as struggling painfully over the final ridge to reach the peak of a mountain, which are not well described as pleasurable. So we might call Mill an *enjoyment theorist*, rather than a hedonist" (Crisp. *Mill on Utilitarianism*. London: Routledge, p. 27-28).

¹³⁵ Brink David Owen. Mill's Deliberative Utilitarianism. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 21, 1192, p. 67-103.

In sum, Mill provides an enriched conception of happiness in friendship. It provides friends with a distinctive opportunity to contribute to one another's happiness, to maximize their own happiness, and to contribute to overall utility. And yet it is not without drawbacks. In the next section, I will show that its main inadequacy resides not in what it prescribes (as a moral end) to the friends, but in what it omits from such prescription. Specifically, I will show that Mill's consequentialist understanding of virtue is a serious impediment to his conception of happiness.

IV. Friendship and Virtue

Since happiness is the sole end of friendship for Mill, he construes virtue in terms of happiness. That is, he understands virtue as the promotion of pleasure and reduction of pain; virtue is desirable in friendship, not because it is intrinsically good, but because it enhances the happiness of the friends. To explain this further, I will discuss Mill's conception of virtue in greater detail. I will show that Mill, unlike Aristotle and Kant, does not believe in the inherent moral worth of virtue; rather, he sees it as a *tool* to the realization of happiness.

For Mill, virtue is a resolute habit to follow one's moral duties; it entails a constant disposition to pursue the maximum utility of the maximum number of people. He writes: "The multiplication of happiness is, according to utilitarian ethics, the object of virtue" (*U* 2:19:31-32). That is, as a virtuous person, I am required to act in such a way that my actions always lead to the advancement of overall social good – the greatest good of the greatest number. In other words, I must be truthful, honest, and compassionate towards my fellow beings, and must possess a sense of concern for their happiness and well-being; specifically, I must not compromise the interests and happiness of my fellow

beings under any circumstances. Furthermore, I must forego my own happiness and pleasure for their betterment and satisfaction, and must develop a natural propensity to contribute to their good and show an unflinching resolve to promote it. In sum, the promotion of overall happiness should be my only concern.

Mill believes that my total commitment to overall utility is good for my own happiness. That is, while promoting others' good and contributing to their well-being, I advance my own happiness and satisfactions. For instance, when I support my friend in times of need and necessity and help him get through difficult times, I feel gratified; it brings me pleasure to see my friend happy and well. Such activities and emotions, Mill believes, are crucial to my own development. First, they cultivate my character. An individual's character is often tested in difficult times; specifically, by standing beside my friend in the hour of his need, I demonstrate a good moral character and resolve. Moreover, it provides me with an opportunity to know my own strengths and weaknesses; I get to know the moments when I am firm and determined, and times when I feel weak and vulnerable. Second, it strengthens my friendship and puts it on a solid moral ground. My friend appreciates my efforts to promote his cause, and shares my sentiments for doing so; in addition to this, both of us get exposed to one another's nature and character, and come to know one another's principles and priorities. That is to say, we come to a common realization that our relationship is not based upon temporary gratification or convenience; rather, it entails a deep appreciation of one another's good and individuality. This realization is crucial to our friendship; it saves our friendship from undue stress, when one of us fails to meet his obligations towards the other; we make up

for one another's weaknesses, and renew our commitment to one another's life and projects.

Mill's above understanding of virtue appears to bear some resemblance to Aristotle's conception of virtue – as a critical element of an individual's personal and moral development. But this resemblance is superficial. Though Mill assigns similar functions to virtue as Aristotle does, Mill's understanding and justification of virtue is drastically different from Aristotle's. Unlike Aristotle, Mill does not view virtue as an intrinsic moral good. An intrinsic moral good can be described as an unqualified good that is good in itself; it contains its own moral meaning and value and is desired for its own sake, and its moral merit and worth does not depend upon other goods, such as pleasure or profit. Mill disagrees strongly with this conception of virtue. For him, virtue is not an intrinsic moral good, but an extrinsic good – its meaning and value are subservient to the promotion of happiness. That is to say, virtue is desirable not because it is valuable in itself, but because it serves a moral purpose – it enhances the happiness of the friends, and promotes social utility. Mill writes:

Those who desire virtue for its own sake, desire it either because the consciousness of it is a pleasure, or because the consciousness of being without it is a pain, or for both reasons united; as in truth the pleasure and pain seldom exist separately, but almost always together, the person feeling pleasure in the degree of virtue attained, and pain in not having attained more. If one of these gave him no pleasure, and the other no pain, he would not love or desire virtue, or would desire it only for the other benefits which it might produce to himself or to persons whom he cared for (*U* 4:8:5-13).

Here, Mill is making two points regarding the desirability of virtue. First, virtue is not *naturally* desirable in itself. That is, my habitual adherence to my moral duties is not intrinsically pleasurable; on the contrary, its pleasantness lies in my feelings, sensations

and experiences. When I do virtuous acts, such as helping a friend, or contributing to the maximum utility, my acts are accompanied by certain positive feelings that bring me satisfactions, and make me feel gratified about my acts. Sometimes my good actions lead to good results right away, as in the case of offering water to a thirsty person, and at other times they take time to ripen and to achieve their purpose, for instance, when caring for the good of a friend. But the value of my virtuous actions always depends upon the results that they produce. If the outcomes are good and desirable, my virtuous actions achieve their purpose and make me happy, but if the outcomes do not satisfy my original motivations and do not make me happy, my virtuous actions would be a waste. Hence, virtue in itself has no moral merit.

Second, virtue is valuable, exclusively, because it *serves* my happiness; that is, the moral justification of my pursuit of virtue resides solely in its conduciveness to my pleasures, and its reduction of my pain, or in producing some other tangible results, such as welfare of my friends and fellow beings. More strongly, virtue has an instrumental purpose; it is designed to serve human happiness. Without this purpose, virtue will have no moral force or authority. It would not be desirable.

Mill further argues that though virtue is not intrinsically good per se, it is capable of becoming so and it must be accepted that way in a utilitarian context. He remarks: “[Utilitarianism] maintains that not only virtue is to be desired, but that it is to be desired for disinterestedly, for itself” (*U* 4:5:2-3). There is no contradiction in Mill’s position here. He first argues that virtue is an instrumental good, and then concedes on practical grounds that it is so central to our lives that it can be desired for its own sake. In other words, while desiring virtue, I always desire happiness; however, I may not always be

conscious of it. In order to be happy, I need to be virtuous. I need to develop those qualities, characteristics and character traits that are conducive to my happiness, and that of my friends and other fellow beings. If my surroundings are marred by distortion and pain, and my fellow beings and friends suffer, my own happiness suffers in that very process. I must watch over their welfare and contribute to their happiness; that is, I must desire my happiness in a decent and dignified manner, and must not turn a blind eye to my fellow beings' needs and necessities; virtue provides me with this lesson, hence, it is crucial to my happiness, and deserves my unconditional pursuit. T. H. Irwin brings out these elements of Mill's thought in the following passage:

In Utilitarianism Mill recognises that a virtuous person chooses virtue for its own sake as a part of happiness. Though (in his view) we originally prefer virtuous actions for its resulting pleasure, the relation between virtue and happiness is not always purely external and causal; the development of the will and habit produces an attitude that cannot be understood if we take the relation between them to be purely external.¹³⁶ (Irwin in *Cambridge Companion to Mill*, p. 450-451).

The relationship between virtue and happiness that Irwin is referring to is systematically developed by Mill through a set of complex arguments. In the first place, he argues that an individual's will is an offshoot of his desire (*U* 4:11:12-16). In other words, our rational deliberation regarding the nature of virtue, and our conscious choice to realize it in our life and conduct, is a hidden form a desire. We want to be happy and all of our (cultivated) desires have an invariable reference to the pursuit of pleasure, and reduction of pain. But with time, desire takes the form of habit, and habit paves the way to a more consciously adopted will. In other words, though an individual's will and his rationality are distinct faculties than his desires, the first reflects cognitive capacity and

¹³⁶ T. H. Irwin. Mill and the Classical World in the *Cambridge Companion to Mill*, ed. John Skorupski. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 450-51.

the second, natural sensibility; yet, the first coheres with the second at a base level. That is to say, desire determines the will. Accordingly, Mill believes that our will to engage in virtuous conduct emanates from our desire to be happy. Hence, Irwin is correct in his observation: both virtue and happiness are intrinsically related in Mill's thought.

In the second place, Mill argues that we constantly observe that virtuous actions lead to pleasure and un-virtuous (specifically, vicious) one to pain. This observation, in due course, generates an intrinsic association between virtue and happiness, and vice and pain; so much so that we intuitively start associating virtue with pleasure and vice with pain. In other words, the idea of virtue gets mingled with the idea of happiness, and vice with pain. Moreover, Mill argues that a strong identification between virtue and happiness is crucial to the pursuit of happiness; it makes virtue an integral part of happiness, and "In being desired for its own sake it is...desired as part of happiness" (*U* 4:6:28-33).

Finally, Mill reinforces the close relationship between virtue and happiness with the help of certain sanctions. These sanctions are the rewards and punishments that are often associated with the performance of an action; for instance, good behavior and virtuous conduct in friendship are appreciated and welcomed by the friends, and bad behavior and un-virtuous conduct are deprecated and chastised by them. Mill categorizes these sanctions under two heads, and argues that they serve as incentives to virtue and safeguards against vice.

On the one hand, there are external sanctions. Mill identifies several sources of external sanctions (social rules and regulations, hope of profit or fear of loss), friendship being one of them. However, it is not difficult to see that friendship constitutes the most

effective form of external sanction. Friends often have an effect upon one another; they restrict one another from doing wrong things, and encourage one another to do the right thing. Mill considers this as an asset in friendship: "...the hope of favour and the fear of displeasure from our fellow creatures" (*U* 3:3:4-5), he argues, constitute the rationale of external sanctions. More strongly, since friends care for one another, and respect one another's views and perspectives, they would not want to displease one another.

On the other hand, internal sanctions symbolize an individual's internal make up, such as his psychological bent of mind, feelings of pleasure and pain, and genuine desires to contribute to maximum utility (*U* 3:4:4-24). Unlike other external sanctions, such as social rules and regulations, friendship has a powerful effect on the cultivation of internal sanctions. Since friends share a common bond, value one another's interests and truly desire to enhance one another's good, they are more open and receptive to one another's counsels than any other source. They inculcate a sense of right and wrong among one another, and help one another in differentiating between desirable and undesirable objects and pleasures. In this way they help one another cultivate refined feelings of social affections, kindness and sympathy: "The ultimate sanction, therefore, of all morality (external motives apart) being a subjective feeling in our own minds" (*U* 3:5:1-2). Accordingly, a good friendship has an inductive effect upon the friends; it motivates them to excel in virtue and provides the surest safeguards against vice.

Mill's overall point, I take it, is that one can be educated and cultured to desire virtue. Originally, I only desire virtue for its beneficial effects, and happiness value; and at this point, virtue may not have a sublime effect on my life. But in due course, through learning and exposure, I get to desire virtue for its own sake. Friendship plays an

effective role in this process; it smoothens the transition from an instrumental quest for virtue to its intrinsic pursuit, and by doing so, it shifts virtue from the periphery of my desires to the core of my being.

V. Friendship and Self

Mill argues that one can harmonize one's personal pursuit of happiness with one's desire for the maximum utility of maximum people. In other words, it is possible to pursue both these desires simultaneously and effectively, without sacrificing one for the sake of the other. This pursuit, he argues, requires a proper understanding of oneself, of one's interests and orientations, and it necessitates an equally meaningful understanding of others, of their desires and wants, virtues and defects, fears and worries. That is to say, for Mill, one's own pursuit of happiness has an invariable reference to others. He believes that an individual's interests, happiness and moral perfections are intimately associated with his friends and fellow beings who constitute his immediate social milieu and are essential to his life and projects. His theory of self-development reinforces this belief on rational and moral grounds. It shows that friends are an integral part of one another's hopes and dreams, activities and endeavors, and have a direct bearing upon one another's understanding of oneself.

In his discussion of marital friendship, Mill writes:

When each of two persons, instead of being a nothing, is a something; when they are attached to one another, and are not too much unlike to begin with; the constant partaking of the same things, assisted by their sympathy, draws out the latent capacities of each other for being interested in the things which were at first interesting only to the other...by a real enriching of the two natures, each acquiring the tastes and capacities of the other in addition to its own (*Collected Works XXI: 334*¹³⁷).

¹³⁷ J.S Mill. *Collected Works, Vol. XXI*, ed. John M. Robson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, .

This passage indicates that my association with my friend adds a new dimension to my life. When my friend becomes a “something” to me, he becomes an essential part of my life, and a critical constituent of my experiences. For me, he is no longer merely an individual in the mass of humanity, but a loving and affectionate companion. I love and respect him, value his company, desire his presence and miss his absence. He becomes an intrinsic part of who I am as a person, what I desire, and what I want to attain in my life; his friendship informs my consciousness and impacts my moral being. For instance, I want to be happy and successful, but my happiness and success have little meaning without my friend’s presence and participation in my life. Accordingly, while seeking my satisfactions and desiring my good, I am always conscious of my friend’s desires and wants, aims and objectives; I never ever compromise them. On the contrary, I assign them maximum importance, and place them ahead of my own gratifications. He shares my sentiments and shows similar commitment towards my satisfactions. In this way, our association becomes inherently meaningful, good and productive. It enhances our happiness, multiplies our satisfactions and develops our virtuous qualities. It also helps us transcend our personal interests and wants, and provides us with the required mental and emotional strengths to care for one another’s good and well-being, even when it is difficult to do so.

There are three specific ways in which the aforesaid contributions take place in friendship. First, my friend leads me to new interests. This means that he exposes me to pleasurable experiences, and guides my way in their appropriate appreciation. For instance, I may not be fond of physical exercises, sightseeing and traveling, but my friend may have these interests. After seeing him pursue them, and knowing about the

satisfaction that they bring, I may develop an interest in them. In other words, my friend opens the doors to new interests and opportunities for me, and helps me attain the satisfactions that I would have missed otherwise. Second, my friend can assist me in developing my intellectual capabilities. For instance, I may have a natural gift for mathematics, but I may never notice it. My friend can help me in identifying my intellectual abilities, and assist me in cultivating them. Third, my association with my friend teaches me about the virtues of partnership and cooperation; I get to know that other people care for me and value my good. As a result, I come to develop a positive view of others; I start viewing them as partners in my moral development and perfection, and not as a bunch of crude competitors trying to get ahead in life.

Accordingly, for Mill there are three areas of an individual's development in friendship; these are affective, intellectual and moral. Affective development enlarges one's feelings and refines one's sentiments. It facilitates a proper understanding of one's feelings and emotions, and imparts a desire to pursue pleasurable feelings, and a tendency to resist painful feelings. Mill argues that affective development is an essential prerequisite of all satisfactions and enjoyments that an individual is capable of and life has to offer. Without this development, friends can never fully understand (and comprehend) either their own feelings and emotions or that of others. Mill also believes that affective development is a necessary condition of the intellectual and moral development in friendship. Accordingly, for Mill, affective development provides the base structure for all other developments.

We must note in this context that Mill's view that friends must adequately develop the feelings, emotions, senses and sensibilities to properly appreciate their

intellectual and moral potential is in sharp contrast to Kant's theory that these elements corrupt morality. Unlike Kant, Mill recognizes that friends, as human beings, have a sensitive nature and that its proper nourishing is critical to their overall well-being. He argues that Kant is wrong in censoring personal feelings and emotions in friendship.

Next, for Mill, intellectual development is necessary for determining what is truly desirable and undesirable. This entails a capacity to assess one's experiences and observations, and an ability to compare them with one another. In his *On Liberty*, Mill identifies two distinct elements that are crucial to an individual's intellectual evolution. These are freedom of thought and expression. In other words, in order to fully raise one's intellectual capacities and to secure their optimum growth, one must freely think one's ideas through and must get the social support and protection required for their unhindered manifestation. This has two specific advantages in friendship. First, it provides friends with a distinctive opportunity to think and reason, to test their ideas and views, and to determine their rational viability and even defects: "Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and perception, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think" (*On Liberty*, p. 28).¹³⁸ Accordingly, for Mill, a rational deliberation is an essential constituent of a friendship. Second, Mill argues that if an idea or thought is intellectually rigorous and correct, it will benefit the friends and enrich their experiences, and if it is not, they will reject it on merit. Furthermore, he argues that the rejection of an idea or thought must not be construed as a disconcerting event in friendship. By contrast, it is meaningful in a specific sense; it shows that friends have the required rational abilities and are open to free and frank discussions. This is an asset and it serves friendship immensely.

¹³⁸ J. S. Mill. *On Liberty*. New York: Dover Publications, 2002.

Finally, moral development consists in the cultivation of noble qualities and virtuous habits. That is, with moral development I come to understand the proper entailments of my feelings and emotions, psychological and moral propensities. At a subjective level, it puts me in direct contact with the nobler side of my personhood. I develop an acquaintance and familiarity with my intrinsically good feelings, thoughts and ideas. I begin to appreciate them, and assign them a prominent place in my daily activities. For instance, I get to know that the cultivation of moral feelings is a good thing; it will make me happy and contribute to the happiness of my friends. As a result of this awareness I start associating these feelings with intrinsically good and productive activities. Wendy Donner remarks: "Moral feelings, [Mill] tells us, are produced by the operation of laws of association; we take pleasure in certain things because these have acquired associated pleasurable ideas through development."¹³⁹

At a more objective level, I develop an inter-subjective association with my friends and fellow beings. I connect with them at a deep and intimate level. I start valuing their human qualities, and assign importance to their human dignity; I treat them as morally free, equal and autonomous agents who have similar social concerns as I do. Mill argues that this sense of inter-subjectivity has a motivating effect upon the friends; they develop a sense of fraternity with one another, and stand ready to advance one another's good. He writes:

Not only does all strengthening of social ties, and all healthy growth of a society, give to each individual a stronger personal interest in practically consulting the welfare of others; it also leads him to identify his *feelings* more and more with their good, or at least with an ever greater degree of practical consideration for it. He comes, as through instinctively, to be conscious of himself as a being who *of course* pays regard to others. The good of others

¹³⁹ Wendy Donner. *The Liberal Self: John Stuart Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 113).

becomes to him a thing naturally and necessarily to be attended to, like any of the physical conditions of our existence (*U* 3:10:32-40).

Mill is saying that a positive interest in the good of others is the epitome of moral development in friendship. It has a meaningful impact upon friends and is instrumental in changing their overall social spectrum. It remedies their emotional drawbacks and weaknesses, and cures their selfishness; that is, it replaces their preoccupation with their own good by a more refined and dignified interest in the lives of one another. Moreover, it persuades them to take pleasure in the happiness of other social members, and calls upon them to commit themselves to the promotion of overall social happiness and maximum utility. With time and practice, this interest in the welfare of others becomes a defining characteristic of their lives, and in due course, it gets filtered into their consciousness. Now, the good of others comes to them naturally and effortlessly, without ado and with much pleasure. Fred Berger remarks: "Mill held that it is part of human nature that we sympathize with others – take pleasure in their pleasure and pain at the thought of their pain."¹⁴⁰

From this account of self-development in general and moral development in particular, it is obvious that Mill construes them in a very rich and comprehensive sense. In other words, he puts forward a theory that is intellectually stimulating and emotionally gratifying to friends. He argues that a proper self-development in friendship must facilitate an all-round development of the friends; that is, it must provide maximum satisfactions in all the spheres of their lives. Moreover, he believes this is attainable in

¹⁴⁰ Fred Berger. *Happiness, Justice and Freedom: The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 19.

friendship; and for its realization, he calls upon the friends to develop all of their generic faculties to their maximum potential.

However, we must still ask how this view of self-development relates to Mill's Principle of Utility. We have seen earlier that utility necessitates an impartial pursuit of the maximum happiness of the maximum people. It obliges me to treat my friends and non-friends equally in the moral domain. Mill is conscious of the fact that it is not easy to secure this impartiality in friendship, but he believes that it can be achieved with a cultivated character and refined moral sense. He argues that once friends realize the fine sides of their beings, and develop a firm moral character, they would not act in personal and partial ways. Rather, they will treat everyone's happiness alike, and will necessarily prioritize the maximum happiness and social welfare over their personal and partial gratifications. This impartiality is a quintessence of a utilitarian morality, and it cannot be compromised: "As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator" (*U* 2:18:4-6).

Mill's call for impartiality in friendship is seriously defective; it overstates the value of the common good at the expense of personal feelings, emotions, and relationships, and it fails to recognize that the pursuit of the common good or maximum happiness requires a genuine concern for one another, and robust personal and social associations – neither impartiality nor distance. Moreover, once we segregate the common good from the personal good, and transpose a moral difference between them – such that common good or aggregate happiness is superior to personal good or happiness, it becomes impossible to draw an intrinsic connection between them; as a result, we are left with a moral void – a gap between personal and common good. Mill commits this

mistake; he construes common good in terms of maximum utility – an artificial moral aggregate, and friendship pays the price.

VI. Critical Assessment of Mill's Theory

VI.1 Utility as a moral criterion of friendship

For Mill, utility constitutes the sole moral criterion in friendship. That is, the moral value of a friendship is proportionate to the amount of utility it generates. If one friendship brings me more happiness than another friendship, then I must prefer it over the other friendship. My moral preference of one friendship over the other must be solely determined by their utility value, and not by the intrinsic nature of love, affection and virtue that they entail.

However, this excessive trust in utility is questionable. Mill tries to evaluate the moral worth of personal relations and goods in terms of impartial utility, but it not clear at all if this can be done without seriously deforming their actual meaning and signification. To state this another way, friendship and virtue, as Aristotle has shown us, are morally valuable in themselves, and their value cannot be measured in utilitarian terms. Mill endeavors to do that, and in that very process he alters them beyond recognition.

In the first place, Mill's view that utility provides the sole moral criterion in friendship entails a superficial theory of moral motivation and personal relations. Mill writes: "He who saves a fellow creature from drowning does what is morally right, whether his motive be duty, or the hope of being paid for his trouble; he who betrays the friend that trusts him, is guilty of a crime, even if his object is to serve another friend to whom he is under greater obligations" (*U* 2:19:16-21). But this is counter-intuitive,

especially in the case of friendship. Normally, we find it distasteful when a friend is driven by the motives of crude profit and reward while doing good acts. That is, the actions that we perform out of friendship, and their consequent moral worth are intimately associated with the motive of the agent. I want my friends to be upright and virtuous, loving and kind, well intentioned and affectionate towards me. I want them to have these dispositions, not because they find me useful and beneficial, but because they are my friends. In other words, I desire their genuine affections and true companionship. Mill is surely wrong in assuming that consequences can characterize the motives in a friendship.

In the second place, Mill's view that morality requires an impartial pursuit of utility is at odds with the very idea of friendship. Our ordinary idea of friendship involves personal qualities, including love and affection that make friendship a valuable relation and an enriching experience. For instance, Sen and Williams argue that one's "attachments, ties, aims, plans, agency, etc" are critical constituents of a relationship, and cannot be relegated to an impartial utility. They write: "Utilitarianism regards them as worthless in themselves and valuable only to the extent of their effects on utility. They are not more important than what happens to be caught in the impersonal metric of utility."¹⁴¹

Their objection is that utilitarianism fails to understand the complexities of a personal relationship, such as friendship. That is, personal relationships entail several emotional and mental aspects, each meaningful and significant in itself, and still adding to the overall moral worth of that relationship. However, utilitarianism claims that the

¹⁴¹ Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, Ed. *Utilitarianism and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 5-6.

moral worth of a relation, or its constituents, resides exclusively in their utility signification; in other words, they are morally meaningful and important only if they add up to the maximum utility, and not, if they conflict with it. But this is unacceptable, they argue.

So we can conclude that utility does not provide an appropriate moral criterion in friendship; it devalues the personal elements that a friendship stands for, and renders friendly associations completely abstract. When my friend becomes “something” to me by the virtue of being my friend, he wants to be loved and respected for his intrinsic persona and personhood, least he expects is that I would turn him into a utility variable. As a true friend I must value his expectations and honor his sentiments, and both these require a clear and firm rejection of the utilitarian moral criterion.

VI.2 The utilitarian principle in friendship: a feminist critique

Carol Gilligan highlights the inadequacies of Mill theory of friendship in her book *In a Different Voice*.¹⁴² Gilligan argues that friendship entails a web of emotions and has an invariable personal context; hence, it is not amenable to utility. Accordingly, she rejects Mill’s view that the moral value of a friendship can be measured in terms of utility.

Gilligan’s main objection is that traditional philosophers, such as Kant and Mill, seek to explain the moral value of a friendship with reference to certain universal moral principles. These principles are psychological in the case of Mill, and metaphysical in the case of Kant. But irrespective of the epistemological differences, both Kant and Mill believe that the moral value of a friendship resides in its conforming to certain universal

¹⁴² Carol Gilligan. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Woman’s Development*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982.

principles. This belief, Gilligan argues, is detrimental to friendship. According to Gilligan friendship is a personal relationship, it involves concrete individuals and complex human emotions, and as such, it is not open to the universal abstractions that Kant and Mill propose.¹⁴³

Gilligan argues that the moral evaluation of a friendship must occur in a personal and emotional context. It must consider the practical and experiential factors that surround a friendship, and are critical to its meaning and import. In other words, while evaluating the nature of a particular friendship, one must take into account the nature and character of the friends, their emotional and mental states, and still more importantly their daily life situations and experiences. In ordinary terms, I must not place high expectations upon a friendship if my friend is going through difficult times and is emotionally and mentally vulnerable. On the contrary, I must lend emotional and moral support to my friend, and help him get through troubled times (Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, p. 59). Since no universal principle can fully appreciate these aspects of friendship, a more personal and situational principle is required, she argues.

Gilligan is critical of Mill's broad psychological and moral claims. She argues that Mill begins with a specific conception of human nature – that all human beings desire happiness – and subordinates his theory of friendship to his conception of human nature. Mill's view that utility alone can account for all moral activities and considerations in friendship is abstract and distorting. Each friendship, she contends, is unique in its constitution and has its own specific moral value, such that no other moral

¹⁴³ Will Kymlicka writes: "Care theorists [Gilligan], unlike justice theorists [Kant and Mill] do not try to resolve these issues [personal issues] by developing a comprehensive system of abstract rules that runs roughshod over the particularity of persons and their relationships (Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 414).

obligations can dilute it, or preside over its personal affections. Accordingly, friendly obligations cannot be subordinated to an abstract universal moral principle.

Consider a practical example to illustrate the above point. A judge is approached by a friend. The friend tells the judge that he is not guilty of any wrongdoing and that his prosecution is based upon fabricated evidence. Assume here that the friend is telling the truth and that the judge is convinced of the moral integrity of his friend. After due consideration of the issue, the judge decides to stick to the letter of the law. He takes note of the presented evidence, and pronounces his judgment accordingly. From a universal and impartial perspective the judge must not face any mental or emotional conflict; he does what the law commands, and what maximum utility requires. But from a more sensitive standpoint, from the standpoint of friendship he faces a tremendous moral tension. The fact that he follows the law does not abnegate his internal dilemma, nor does it smoothen his emotional pain. But impartiality does not allow such feelings, and it does not approve such dilemmas. It provides a set of rules and makes their pursuit mandatory in friendship, but it fails to recognize that the practical instances of friendship are much more complex and that they do not admit abstract rules.

Gilligan is critical of the above negligence. She argues that utilitarianism does not attend to personal feelings and emotions in friendship. It fails equally to account for the particularity of each friendship. It views friendship from a universal and impartial perspective, a perspective that is inherently hostile to the emotional communion of the friends. But friendship does necessitate such communion. Accordingly, she calls for a paradigm shift in friendship. Instead of focusing on universal principles, a proper theory of friendship, she argues, must focus on the elements of affection and care in friendship.

Care for others, in general, and for the friend, in particular, she argues, constitutes the core of a friendship (Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, p. 59-60). Friends possess a caring attitude towards one another, and also towards others in general; and this attitude is grounded in their intrinsic belief that care is good and morally desirable. Hence, care, not utility, can provide a satisfactory moral foundation to friendship, she maintains.

Gilligan clearly shows the inadequacies of Mill's thought in particular, and utilitarianism in general. She rightly points out that the impartial moral criterion of utility that Mill proposes does not serve friendship well. But this must not be allowed to overshadow the weaknesses in her own moral thought. She conceives of friendship in exclusively emotional and psychological terms; that is, the care that defines her friendship invariably has a subjective pull. It reflects the emotional states of the friends, but it lacks objectivity.¹⁴⁴ It is not clear how one can extend personal care to those who are not directly known, and who are not part of our immediate surroundings. Yet friends must have such general concerns if they are to truly care for their fellow beings. Gilligan's theory of friendship lacks an objective moral principle, such as virtue, that can create a balance between one's personal affections or love in friendship and the larger normative commitments that friendship necessitates. In the next chapter, I will show that Aristotle's theory of friendship address these inadequacies, and rectifies them. Accordingly, it provides a more satisfactory alternative model of friendship.

¹⁴⁴ Will Kymlicka remarks: "The more our claims are dependent on context-sensitive calculations of everyone's particular desires, the more vulnerable our personal projects are to the shifting desires of others, and so the less we will be able to make long-term commitments. Meaningful autonomy requires predictability, and predictability requires some insulation from context-sensitivity" (Kymlicka, p. 416).

Friendship: Bridging the Gap

between Self and Other

I. Situating Friendship

Now that we have explored the nature of friendship according to Aristotle, Kant, and Mill, we can try to account for their strengths and weaknesses. This includes accounting for the serious problems that we find in the theories of Kant and Mill. While Aristotle prioritizes friendship in his moral and political thought, both Kant and Mill try to accommodate friendship in their overall ethical scheme. In other words, Kant and Mill are attentive to other questions, even at the expense of friendship; they ask, specifically, how one can interact with *all others*, and not merely one's friends. More explicitly, otherness is a broad category, which includes both friends and non-friends; and, Kant and Mill first address otherness on the whole, and then explain friendship accordingly. By contrast, Aristotle views personal relationships as a prior condition for relating with others as such.

Accordingly, we can ask whether friendship may have a positive bearing upon our relationship with others. In other words, whether it can facilitate a meaningful relationship with other human beings, both friends and non-friends. I think it can. Moreover, all the three philosophers that I have discussed agree on this. They argue, in particular, that the principles that determine the constitution of a friendship are not restricted to the friendship itself; that is, they have a wider bearing upon the personal and

social interactions of the friends, such that they require friends to act in moral ways towards all human beings, and not simply towards one another. That is to say, Aristotle, Kant and Mill jointly hold that the moral value of friendship does not reside in the selected application of its moral principles; rather, it consists in a universal application of these principles.

However, they disagree regarding the nature and content of the principles that inform a friendship. That is to say, though Aristotle, Kant and Mill share a common theme that the moral value and significance of a friendship resides in conformation to certain moral principles, they construe these principles differently. This difference is substantive. It has a critical impact upon their understanding of friendship, and also upon the relevance of friendship to our lives.

Kant understands friendship in terms of moral law and duty (*MMDV* 469:21-25). He makes a sharp distinction between the natural and moral ends of a friendship (*Foundations* 397:15-22, 411:11-12). Natural ends of a friendship, he argues, deal with the personal satisfaction and inclinational propensities of the friends, but they lack a moral value (*MMDV* 470:28-37). Moral ends, on the other hand, consist of the principles of duty and are consistent with the moral law (*MMDV* 469:14-25). They necessitate a rational moral conduct in friendship; specifically, they require friends to treat one another and all other human beings as a moral end, and not as a means (*Foundations* 434:1-24). This includes valuing one another and all other human beings, friends and strangers alike, for their intrinsic humanity and not for their empirical attributes. In ordinary words, Kant is saying that I must not prioritize the interests and objectives of my friends over non-

friends; that is, both friends and non-friends possess the same moral qualities and they deserve equal love and respect (*CPR* 208:1-25).

Next, Mill constructs his theory of friendship on his Principle of Utility (*U* 2:2:1-14). He argues that true moral conduct in friendship requires a complete and wholehearted pursuit of the maximum utility of the maximum number of people. Friendly interactions, he contends, must lead to the personal and moral fulfillment of all human beings, and not merely that of the friends. Accordingly, he argues that friends must act in ways that are consistent with the maximization of pleasure and reduction of pain. It follows from Mill's view that my friend's happiness and gratification has no moral priority over that of a non-friend (*U* 2:17:21-23). Thus Mill, like Kant, places friends and non-friends on an equal moral footing.

That is to say, despite their internal difference, both Kant and Mill share a common theme. They both argue that the moral value of a friendship resides in its impartial and even detached moral perspectives; that is, in a moral friendship, an individual must not discriminate between his friends and non-friends. Kant staunchly argues in favor of a universal and unhindered application of the maxims of duty to all human associations, and Mill champions a total commitment to the Principle of Utility. They both agree that morality commands friends to overcome their personal love and affection and treat all human beings, friends as well as non-friends, alike.

Aristotle, on the other hand, is critical of the view that the moral value of a friendship hinges upon impartiality. He argues that our friends constitute our immediate personal and social context, and are critical to our moral deliberations (*NE* 1155a5-16). Hence, they deserve an affectionate and loving treatment, and not an impartial and cold

moral consideration. This is not to undermine the view that all human beings are intrinsically valuable and that they all deserve our unconditional respect, but to recognize an empirical and personal fact that our friends are emotionally and morally closer to us. They are a part of who we are as human persons and our moral considerations must not turn a blind eye to the personal aspects of our friendship. Accordingly, Aristotle argues that a moral friendship necessitates a loving and intimate moral communion with the friends (*NE*1156b7-10), that is, it neither involves impartiality nor emotional indifference.

In his own moral theory, Aristotle understands friendship in terms of a good life (*Politics* 1280a31-32). He argues that a good life requires a complete satisfaction of an individual's desires and wants, aims and objectives, goals and projects; specifically, it necessitates an overall fulfillment of an individual's moral and material potentialities. On the one hand, an individual's pursuit of a good life hinges upon the attainment of happiness and virtue. That is, an individual must meet a thorough satisfaction of all the elements that constitute his happiness. These elements include, in the first place, an individual's material prosperity, such as possession of wealth, food, shelter and good health (*NE* 1099b1-24). In the second place, they comprise good social stature, good friendships, and a fulfilling personal and social life (*NE* 1169b14-22). On the other hand, an individual's happiness is contingent, to a large extent, upon his virtuous qualities. That is, virtue is an essential component of an individual's happiness (*NE* 1098a5-19). And virtue, as Aristotle understands it, is a representation of an individual's deliberative capacities and practical conduct. That is to say, an individual, in order to be happy, must

strike a good balance between his thought and conduct, intellectual deliberations and practical conduct.

Accordingly, Aristotle argues that a good friendship must facilitate a good life (*Politics* 1280a31-32, 1280b30-39). That is, it must help friends in cultivating good moral qualities and developing moral conduct. This includes two things. First, it makes it morally incumbent upon the friends to love and respect one another for their intrinsic human capacities and true moral worth. In other words, I must be virtuous towards my friends and value them for their own sake, and not for any contingent reason. Second, a good life requires a meaningful association with other fellow-citizens, who constitute my immediate social and moral space (*NE* 1159b25-30). This includes a general sense of concern towards all members of my social association, namely, *polis*. More strongly, Aristotle argues that an individual's own well-being is intimately associated with the well-being of the other civic members; and, an individual cannot enjoy a good life if his fellow citizens are subject to suffering, need and deprivation. Accordingly, Aristotle contends that it is an individual's moral obligation to wish other community members well, and to promote their good in an honest, dignified and virtuous way. In sum, the happiness and well-being of my fellow citizens is a necessary constituent of my own good life.

The above Aristotelian conception of a good life, and by implication friendship, has been subjected to much criticism in modern times. It is argued that Aristotle's claim that a good life requires a coherence between an individual's personal and social conduct conflates the importance of social interactions and personal relationships at the expense of an individual's free choice and moral autonomy. More clearly, it is said that Aristotle's

view that an individual must harmonize his personal interests, aims and goals with a broader social concern for the well-being of the other civic members is either prescriptive or paternalistic; in either case, it undermines an individual's freedom of choice to construct his own concept of a good life rather than inheriting it from some external source. Furthermore, it is argued that it may be terribly difficult, given the volume of serious differences that underlie modern societies, particularly the liberal democracies, to realize the Aristotelian conception of a good life in our times. Will Kymlicka writes:

But any attempt to privilege a single conception of the good life is bound to fail in modern societies. Given the deep and enduring differences amongst citizens in their view of the good life, we cannot expect a consensus on the intrinsic value of political activities [an active sense of concern towards others] as compared to the activities in the social and personal sphere.¹⁴⁵

Accordingly, my task in this chapter is threefold. First, I will bring out the mature entailments of the moral theories of Kant and Mill, particularly, with reference to friendship. Both Kant and Mill, I will show, engage in moral abstractions, and they both fail to provide a satisfactory concept of friendship. Alternatively, I will argue that Aristotle provides us with a more enriched and fulfilling account of friendship. Second, I will discuss Kymlicka's critique of the Aristotelian theory of a good life and civic friendship. I will show that Kymlicka is mistaken in pitching the liberal idea of a free choice against the Aristotelian view of a good life. I will argue that Aristotle's theory of a good life (virtuous life) is fully compatible with the central tenets of liberalism.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 298-299.

¹⁴⁶ There is a wide disagreement of opinion regarding the precise meaning and connotation of 'liberalism'. According to Harold J. Laski, liberalism connotes a "habit of mind" (Laski. *A Grammar of Politics*. London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1925, p. xxiv). Next, L. T. Hobhouse construes liberalism as a social and political movement. He writes: "[Liberalism conceives of] the ideal society as a whole which lives and flourishes by the harmonious growth of its parts, each of which in developing on its own lines and in accordance with its own nature tends on the whole to further the development of others. There are many

Finally, all along I will argue that neither Kant nor Mill, but Aristotle provides us with a meaningful concept of self-other relationship.

II. The Kantian Dilemma in Friendship

Recall that Kant makes a sharp distinction between one's moral perfection and happiness. For him, moral perfection consists in the cultivation of virtuous qualities, such as a rational love of moral law and an unconditional pursuit of duty. One's happiness, on the other hand, entails a gratification of one's personal desires, and inclinational propensities. Moreover, he argues that these two ends are completely distinct and separate; hence, they can neither be mingled nor conjoined with one another (*Foundations* 411:4-26). Accordingly, for Kant, there are four ends to one's friendship. These are: one's own perfection, one's own happiness, one's friend's perfection and one's friend's happiness.

Ordinarily, one expects the satisfaction of all the above ends in friendship. I want my friend to be happy and well, morally upright and virtuous. Similarly, I desire my own happiness and want to realize my moral perfections. That is to say, I want my friendship to facilitate my all-round development. However, for Kant this is not so; specifically, I cannot pursue all the four ends in friendship. Friendship is a duty (*MMDV* 469:24), and

possibilities, and the course that will in the end make for social harmony is only one of among them, while the possibilities of disharmony and conflict are many. The progress of society like that of the individual depends, then, ultimately on choice. The heart of Liberalism is the understanding that progress is not a matter of mechanical contrivance, but of the liberation of living spiritual energy" (Hobhouse. *Liberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911, p. 72-73). Laski's interpretation is indeed very vague, and Hobhouse' very encompassing (almost mystical), in sum, both unacceptable. Will Kymlicka provides a more tenable interpretation of 'liberalism'. He writes: "LIBERALISM, as a political philosophy, is often viewed as being primarily concerned with the relationship between the individual and the state, and with limiting state intrusions on the liberties of citizens. But, implicitly or explicitly, liberalism also contains a broader account of the relationship between the individual and society – and, in particular, of the individual's membership in a community and a culture" (Kymlicka. *Liberalism, Community and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p.1). In this dissertation, I will use Kymlicka's interpretation as the standard characterization of liberalism.

duty excludes certain ends (*MMDV* 379:10-11). Hence, I must pursue only those ends that are consistent with my moral obligations in friendship, and stay away from the ends that are inconsistent with my moral duties.

As to which ends are consistent with my moral duties, and which are not, Kant gives an explicit answer. He says that my moral ends in friendship include my own moral perfection and my friend's happiness, and they exclude my happiness and my friend's moral perfection. That is to say, as a moral friend, I must not desire any personal satisfaction in friendship, nor must I desire to contribute to the moral well-being of my friend (*MMDV* 386:1-13). Kant contends that personal desires spoil the moral value of a friendship, and render friendly associations morally meaningless; so, they must be resisted.¹⁴⁷ However, it remains to be seen why Kant is so critical of the above ends in friendship, and what effects their exclusion has on his theory of friendship.

First, we may ask why one's own happiness cannot be a moral consideration in friendship, especially since normally I like my friends, enjoy their company and want to spend with time with them whenever I can; that is, my friendship makes me happy. Accordingly, while choosing friends I am conscious of their qualities and orientations; for instance, I am fond of cheerful and jolly people, so I prefer friends who are expressive, outgoing and pleasant. For Kant, this motivation for friendship is morally problematic; it assigns moral merit to the extrinsic qualities of the friends, such as their contributions to my happiness and satisfactions, at the expense of their moral qualities. Kant has two arguments to this effect.

¹⁴⁷ Kant remarks: "Thus everything empirical is not only wholly unworthy to be an ingredient in the principle of morality but even highly prejudicial to the purity of moral practices themselves" (*Foundations* 426:7-9).

In the first place he writes: “It is a misfortune that the concept of happiness is so indefinite that, although each person wishes to attain it, he can never definitely and self consistently state what it is he really wishes and wills” (*Foundations* 418:1-4). Kant is saying that one’s happiness cannot constitute a moral end because one can never rationally determine what happiness consists of. Different things make different people happy, and it is impossible to reach a universal understanding on happiness; that is, we cannot satisfactorily construct a rational concept of happiness that holds in the case of each and every individual (*CPR* 133:3-27). Moreover, even in one’s own case, the constituents of one’s happiness differ from time to time, and it is difficult to figure out what makes one truly happy. For instance, sometimes I like to act in a benevolent and compassionate way, and actively engage in the welfare of my friends, and at other times I desire solitude, peace and quiet. Hence, happiness lacks a determinate content.

But duty necessitates such content.¹⁴⁸ According to Kant, the maxims of duty spring from the pure practical reason of the friends, and have a universal validity; specifically, though human beings differ in their emotional and mental characteristics and attributes, they all possess a common rational capacity to formulate their moral maxims. Moreover, since this capacity is given a priori – it is a matter of pure intuition rather than factual verification – the maxims that it leads to are a priori as well; that is, the maxims of duty are prior to personal experiences¹⁴⁹ and they hold, with equal moral strength, in the case of all human beings. And, since one’s happiness cannot be articulated in terms of a

¹⁴⁸ Paul Guyer brings out this element of Kant’s thought. He writes: “Indeed, we express our identity as rational beings only when we free our conduct from determination by merely natural factors such as inclinations and desires and instead determine our own conduct in accordance with universal laws furnished by our reason” (Guyer. *Kant on Freedom, Law, and Happiness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 312).

¹⁴⁹ Kant writes: “The moral law is given as a fact of pure reason of which we are a priori conscious, and which is apodictically certain, though it may be granted that in experience no example of its exact fulfillment can be found” (*CPR* 163:5-8).

universal rational maxim, it cannot serve as a moral end. Therefore, it cannot be a duty (CPR 134:1-25).

In the second place, Kant argues that duty is a negative constraint, and happiness a positive inclination. That is, they represent opposite ends, and entail conflicting principles; so, they cannot be reconciled. Kant writes:

For *his own happiness* is an end that everyman has (by virtue of the impulse of nature), but this end can never without self-contradiction be regarded as a duty. What everyone already wants unavoidably, of his accord, does not come under the concept of *duty*, which is a *constraint* to an end adopted reluctantly. Hence it is self-contradictory to say that he is *under obligation* to promote his own happiness with all his powers (MMDV 386:1-7).

There are two aspects to Kant's above argument. On the one hand, he argues that one is naturally inclined towards happiness and constantly moved by its pursuit. That is to say, life itself provides an impetus for happiness; one is spontaneously drawn towards pleasant and joyous activities and experiences, and is disinclined towards their opposites (*Foundations* 418:1-27). At this point in his thought, Kant appears to be in partial agreement with Aristotle that human beings have a natural preference for happiness, and that this is all too obvious to require an intellectual debate. On the other hand, he argues that a moral end is a constraint or restriction upon one's natural propensities, and since happiness entails such a propensity, it cannot be a moral end.¹⁵⁰ In other words, Aristotle is wrong when he says that all human activities and endeavors are directed towards the pursuit of happiness.

¹⁵⁰ He writes: "To be kind where one can is a duty, and there are, moreover many persons so sympathetically constituted that without any motive of vanity or selfishness *they find an inner satisfaction* in spreading joy, and rejoice in the contentment of others which they have made possible. But I say that, however dutiful and amicable it may be, that kind of action has no true moral worth" (italics mine. *Foundations* 398:7-13).

For Kant, the ends of duty are “set up against inclinations” (*MMDV* 381:2-3). That is to say, unlike inclinational ends, the ends of duty do not contain any material principle; they necessitate a free will and law-giving reason. Inclinational ends, according to Kant, are a product of our mental and emotional dispositions and are always in agreement with our psychological nature. But the ends of duty are categorically given and rationally imposed; hence, they are not open to psychological intervention. Thus, the two ends are incompatible at a fundamental level, and an individual can pursue only one of them, not both. And, if I want to protect the moral value of my friendship, I must terminate the pursuit of my happiness.

Next, Kant argues that I cannot adopt my friend’s moral perfection as an end in friendship. He writes: “For the perfection of another man, as a person, consists just in this: that he himself is able to set his end in accordance with his own concepts of duty; and it is self-contradictory to require that I do (make it my duty to do) something only the other person can do” (*MMDV* 386:9-13). That is to say, for Kant, the realization of moral perfection in friendship hinges solely upon one’s ability to construct one’s own moral laws and principles of duty. Accordingly, friends must respect one another’s moral autonomy. In practice, this means that I must love and respect my friend for who he is as a moral person – an end in himself (*Foundations* 430:4-8), and while doing so I must make sure that I do not interfere in his personal and moral space. For instance, what my friend wants to achieve in his moral domain, how he wants to act in a given moral situation, which rules of ethical conduct he intends to follow and which ones he wants to avoid must not arouse my interest. More strongly, Kant argues that the determination and pursuit of a moral maxim is agent-specific; only a moral agent can determine its

theoretical content and practical manifestations, no one else (*CPR* 204:2-27). So, I must not desire any involvement in the moral spheres of my friend – any such involvement would violate his moral autonomy and will have a detrimental effect on his moral well-being.

In sum, Kant argues that my own happiness and my friend's moral perfection cannot be part of my duties in friendship. They are incompatible with my moral obligations, and if pursued, they would undermine my morality. Below, I will discuss the implications of Kant's above arguments. I will argue particularly that the ends that Kant wants to expunge from friendship are central to it, and that they cannot be dispensed away without deforming the friendship itself. I will show further that the problem is not with the ends that Kant criticizes, but with the theoretical assumptions that lead to his critique.

In the first place, Kant must explain the asymmetry between my happiness and that of my friend. He must clarify why it is consistent with my duty to promote my friend's happiness, and inconsistent to promote my own happiness. Clearly, my friend's happiness is no more determinate than my own happiness. Michael Slote writes:

Even if we were to grant Kant that our happiness is too indeterminate to give rise to categorical imperatives, Kant would have difficulty in reconciling that assumption with his stated commitment to categorical imperatives concerning the happiness or well-being of others. It is completely unclear how the argument from indeterminacy can fail to hold in the latter case.¹⁵¹

In order to enhance my friend's happiness, I must know what will make him happy. That is, I must have a good understanding of my friend's interests, likings and tastes; I must know what are the things that he likes and wants to attain, and what are

¹⁵¹ Michael Slote. *From Morality to Virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 29.

things that he dislikes and wants to stay away from. But this knowledge is possible only when I am allowed to communicate with him at an intimate level, such that he tells me about his hopes and dreams, fears and worries without any inhibition or distrust. In other words, I must have a heart-to-heart communion with him; however, Kant does not allow such communion (*MMDV* 472:16-21). He worries that it will eventually infringe upon my friend's private sphere and undermine his moral autonomy.

As a result, I have a very limited knowledge of what constitutes my friend's happiness. I cannot ask him what truly makes him happy, and he cannot tell me either; I am afraid that my enquiries may infringe upon his private sphere, and he cannot state his wish without compromising his own morality (*CPR* 206:16-26, 207:17-24). In other words, while promoting my friend's happiness I must rely upon my observations of him, his interests, etc., and I must use my gut instincts to figure out his good. But this result is paradoxical. On the one hand, duty puts me under a moral obligation to promote my friend's happiness, and on the other hand, it disallows me a complete knowledge of what his happiness consists of. How can I effectively promote a good (my friend's happiness) without fully knowing its constituents?

Kant tries to resolve the above situation by suggesting that the highest good – a good will – does not require an empirical awareness of the constitutive elements of my friend's happiness; rather, it consists in my rational commitment to my friend's welfare (*Foundations* 437:1-19). I can confer the highest good upon my friend without trading upon the material components of his happiness. That is, my contribution to my friend's happiness is not contingent upon my practical knowledge of its constituent parts, but upon my rational ability to adopt his happiness as my own moral end, such that this end

conditions my moral consciousness and becomes an integral part of my moral being (CPR 199:1-21). If so, then it would follow that I can have a benevolent and loving attitude towards my friend, care for his happiness and well-being, and none of these would require an empirical familiarity with my friend's interests and orientations. Likewise, Kant concludes that it is possible to place my friend's happiness on a moral ground, conceive it in moral terms, and promote it in accordance with my moral obligations.

However, it can be argued that the above solution fails to resolve the problem. Happiness as we ordinarily understand it contains empirical elements, such as feelings, emotions, personal and social satisfactions etc. Moreover, these elements are essential constituents of happiness, that is, they cannot be separated or expunged from the conception of happiness; in fact, Kant recognizes the role of these elements in happiness and calls happiness an "indeterminate" idea – a concept that lacks certitude (*Foundations* 418:2). So his view that my good will alone can account for the good of my friend appears to be a shift from his stated position. Kant is trying to explain happiness not in terms of its practical ingredients, but in terms of an abstract moral good – a good will. It is questionable if this can be done; happiness, as Mill correctly points out, is not an "abstract idea but a concrete whole" (*U* 4:6:34). In other words, it entails empirical gratifications. I must do positive activities to contribute to my friend's happiness, and more importantly I must know what makes my friend happy. Unable to provide this knowledge, Kant simply changes the mode of my contribution to my friend's happiness from empirical gratifications to moral contentment – from concrete activities to goodwill. But this does not address the question; it simply averts a meaningful answer.

Moreover, even if we accept Kant's explanation that my goodwill can account for my friend's happiness, it does not follow that this explanation will hold in the case of Kant's second argument against happiness – which disallows me from desiring my own happiness in friendship. Note that Kant makes it obligatory upon my friend to promote my happiness; yet, his second argument requires me *not to cooperate* with my friend in the promotion of my happiness – any such cooperation will be against my own moral obligations (*MMDV* 386:1-7). More strongly, I must resist the ends that my friend is trying to promote; it is immaterial here which form (material or formal) his contribution takes. In other words, once my friend starts addressing my happiness, I cannot and must not be a party to him. By contrast, I must guard myself against my inclinational propensities that appreciate my friend's efforts and welcome them in my life. But this is absurd; it forces me, on moral grounds, to defeat the moral ends of my friend, namely, my own satisfactions and happiness.

Next, Kant's argument that friends cannot contribute to one another's moral perfection seriously undermines the most fundamental characteristic of a friendship. He argues that the moral perfection of an individual necessitates a free will and moral autonomy; hence, friends cannot assist one another in moral spheres. Accordingly, Kant disallows friends to engage one another in the realm of morals, but this stunts the possibility of their common moral development in friendship.

On the one hand, Kant shuts the door for any purposeful association in friendship. I cannot help my friend in the cultivation of his moral qualities, such as a resolute pursuit of virtue and an unconditional commitment to moral law. Likewise, my friend cannot help me in those spheres either. As a result, our association touches upon our interests

and pursuits in a very superficial way. We both want each other to be happy and well, and care for each other's moral development and progress, but we do not do anything substantial in practice to help each other realize his goals and ends. Consequently, our relationship gets relegated to a mere level of rational consciousness; that is, we possess a good will, rational benevolence and sympathy, but we lack a concrete and objective realization of these formal qualities.

On the other hand, on Kant's view, the formal qualities and affections (a good will or sympathy) that I share with my friend, and the love and respect that I have for him do not accord him any moral primacy over my similar affections towards other human beings, a stranger, for instance. In other words, the emotions that I share with my friend, the familiarity that I have with him, and the activities that we do together are immaterial to my moral considerations. In moral spheres, Kant obliges me to treat my friend at par with a non-friend. I must assign equal moral importance to my friend as well as a non-friend; that is, my friend is like any other human being (note that, for Kant, all human beings possess the same moral properties, and they are all morally equal) and there is nothing that can *effectively differentiate* him from other human beings, such that I can morally accord him a preference over others. But this outcome negates the value of personal affections in friendship.

As a matter of fact, I differentiate between friends and non-friends, believing that I have legitimate reasons to do so.¹⁵² I know my friends and share an intimate bond with them; that is, my concern for their well-being is both personal and moral, and it cannot be put at par with my universal concerns for the rest of humanity. For instance, though as a

¹⁵² Aristotle writes: "The demands of justice also naturally increase with the friendship" (NE 1160a6-7), and "When people are friends, they have no need of justice, while when they are just, they need friendship as well; and the highest form of justice seems to be a matter of friendship" (NE 1160a6-9).

moral person I am committed to giving equal treatment to all human persons that I come across in my life, this commitment seems especially urgent and imperative in the case of my friends. Moreover, my friends' presence in my life often tests my moral principles at a basic level. Sometimes they make me happy and at other times unhappy and sad, and when I treat them with dignity and respect under testing circumstances, I exhibit good moral qualities and my conduct vindicates moral law; clearly, it is difficult to adhere to one's moral principles under difficult circumstances.

Kant disapproves of the above reasoning (*CPR* 221:25-31). For him, the moral law is an ethical absolute. It derives its authority from an individual's pure practical reason, and illustrates, in practice, the sacrosanct principles of duty. It is valued for its own sake, and it contains its sole ethical justification. That is to say, its manifestation is not contingent upon my friendly associations. On the contrary, it is universally binding upon all such associations. Hence, friends must follow its commands. Accordingly, they must neither differentiate between friends and non-friends, nor assign any moral value to their personal affections, love and attachments (*CPR* 215:8-24).

All these arguments, taken together, lead to two broad themes in Kant's theory of friendship, both equally problematic and flawed. In the first place, friends must be impartial towards one another, and they must not show a moral preference towards one another. That is, if I am confronted with a situation in which two persons are involved, my friend and a non-friend, and they both urgently require my assistance, I must treat them equally and impartially without favor or bias, and I must not prefer my friend over a non-friend. In other words, my choice must be exclusively determined by the motive of duty, and not by my inclinational propensities; while making my choice, I must not pay

any attention to the relationship that I share with my friend and to our mutual commitment to one another's well-being and good. Any such attention, Kant argues, corrupts duty at a motivational level (*CPR* 256:6-20). Hence, on moral grounds, I must accord equal moral consideration to both individuals, respect their well-being alike, and take an impartial decision based on my duty, and not my emotional states. Anthony Cunningham comments upon the evenhandedness of Kant's view. He writes: "In practice, I suspect that most Kantians are loving sons, daughters, siblings, friends, lovers, and parents. But if so, they are so in *spite* of their ethical theory and not *because* of it."¹⁵³

In the second place, according to Kant, each individual must construct his own moral good. That is, my friend must rationally determine the aims and goals that he wants to attain in life, and the means that he wants to adopt in their attainment. I must make similar determinations for myself. In other words, we cannot collaborate in morality. I can help him neither in constituting his moral principles nor in their pursuit, moral law condemns such help. The net result is that I have no knowledge of my friend's moral good, and despite my best intentions I can do nothing to advance its realization. I am truly incapable of rendering any help to my friend. Michael Sandel writes:

However much I might hope for the good of the friend and stand ready to advance it, only the friend himself can know what that good is. This restricted access to the good of others follows from the limited scope for self-reflection, which betrays in turn the thinness of the deontological self to begin with.¹⁵⁴

Sandel draws out the implications of Kant's view that I cannot contribute to my friend's moral perfection. On the one hand, Kant's view entails that friends can have no

¹⁵³ Anthony Cunningham. Kantian Ethics and Intimate Attachments. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 36:4 (October 1999), p. 291.

¹⁵⁴ Michael J. Sandel. *Liberalism and Limits of Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 180.

access to one another's good. That is, though I know that my friend wants to attain certain moral goods, and that these goods are critical to his moral development, I cannot know what these goods are and what this development involves. In other words, I can neither understand nor comprehend *his moral good*. But this is moral agnosticism;¹⁵⁵ it deprecates the possibility of moral-knowledge in friendship, and curtails moral cooperation among the friends; hence, it must be rejected in friendship.

On the other hand, for Kant, my friend, as a moral agent, possesses certain noumenal qualities. That is, he is capable of formulating his moral laws, and intuiting his moral good, and neither of these is open to empirical perception and knowledge. So, I can neither see the core constituents of his being nor know them. However, this is a one-sided view of a moral person. It ignores the empirical attributes of my friend in favor of his ontological properties; specifically, it overlooks the role of my friend's nature and character, his feelings and emotions in the constitution of his moral self. This neglect, Sandel argues, makes the Kantian self very thin. It is thin in the sense that it lacks a proper moral content; it is devoid of a history, character, and other empirical attributes that we often associate with a moral person, and is inherently incapable of associating with others in a meaningful way. In short, Kant makes the self abstruse and inaccessible.

If this is so, then Kantian friendship is also very thin. The duties of friendship are primarily negative constraints. They set the limits of friendly associations, rather than

¹⁵⁵ This is deeply entrenched in Kantian moral thought and has its source in Kantian epistemology. Thomas E. Hill Jr. writes: "In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant attempts to prove that all empirically discernable events are governed by causal laws, and yet he says that we can 'think' of another sort of causation in which causes are themselves uncaused. Causes of this alternative kind, he tells us, are possible but cannot be known or even 'comprehended'. Kant defends the compatibility of belief in such causes with the (allegedly) proven fact that all empirical events have causes by denying that uncaused causes are spatiotemporal events" (Hill, Jr. *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant's Moral Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992, p.83). Here, the alternative causes deal with moral purity, that is, they are the moral-causal determinants of an individual's moral being, his free will and autonomy (Hill, p. 83-88).

enhancing its frontiers; specifically, friends can neither pursue their happiness, nor contribute to one another's moral perfection. As a result, duty obstructs all genuine engagements in friendship; it does not allow me to relate to my friend in a meaningful and productive way. Moreover, since duty does so on moral grounds, it cannot be corrected either. Hence, we must look for an alternative theory of friendship, a theory that recognizes the moral value of my happiness, approves of my moral cooperation with my friend, and facilitates our personal and social gratifications.

III. Mill's Response to Kant's Dilemma

Mill criticizes Kant for the ends that Kant excludes in friendship. Against Kant, he argues that one can pursue one's happiness in friendship, and one can also contribute to the moral well-being of one's friend. More strongly, Mill believes that a friendship, as a moral relationship, must bring happiness to the friend; otherwise, it will lose its moral value (*U* 2:2:1-15). Accordingly, for Mill, the moral value of a friendship is equal to its happiness value.

By endorsing the pursuit of happiness in friendship, Mill partly addresses the anomalies that we find in Kant's theory. That is, unlike Kant, Mill assigns a prominent place to the emotional and mental fulfillments of the friends. By doing so, he makes friendship personally and morally gratifying at the same time. He allows friends to share one another's happiness, relieve one another's pain and suffering and contribute to one another's moral development in a meaningful and effective way. All these advantages accrue from Mill's fundamental claim that happiness is morally desirable and good (*U* 2:2:1-15, 4:6:34-35), and that friends must commit themselves to its pursuit.

However, Mill does not stop there. He goes on to make two more claims. First, that the maximum happiness of the maximum number of people is more desirable than the happiness of a given individual or a group of individuals. Accordingly, friends must not focus merely on their personal pursuit of happiness; rather, they must pursue the greatest happiness of the greatest number (*U* 2:2:1-14). That is to say, they must be impartial in their pursuit of happiness. Second, Mill also claims that happiness is the only morally desirable end, and that all other ends are subservient to happiness. More strongly, all activities, interests, emotions and pursuits in friendship are a disguised manifestation of happiness; they are desired because they make friends happy. This means utility is the *only* moral criterion in friendship (*U* 4:3:8-15).

It can be argued that these additional claims undo the progress that Mill makes with his initial statement. That is, they precipitate the same abstractions that Mill resists in Kant's thought, and wants to cure through the Principle of Utility. A. J. Lindsay argues: "Pleasure...is an object of desire, which can be regarded in complete abstraction from the objects which produce it and from which those who feel it."¹⁵⁶ Lindsay is saying two things. First, Mill loses sight of the objects and situations that are involved in a moral consideration; specifically, he treats all objects as instruments of pleasure and nothing more. He assumes that we desire various objects for their conduciveness to our pleasure, and that they do not have any value apart from their utility value. This devalues the merit of the desired objects. Second, Mill also abstracts from the moral agent who feels pleasure. He believes that utility is ultimately concerned with the production of maximum happiness and that it is immaterial who feels the pleasure and who avoids pain. As long

¹⁵⁶ A. D. Lindsay. Introduction to *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*. London: Everyman's Library, 1968, p. xi.

as maximum utility is generated, everything is okay. Accordingly, the maximization of utility takes over the identity of the friends.

Friendship shows that these aspects of Mill's principle are highly questionable. We desire friendship for a variety of reasons, and not for a solitary reason – happiness, as Mill contends. I value my friends for who they are as human persons; this includes an appreciation of their nature, character, and values. Moreover, I am friends with several individuals, and find each friendship fulfilling in its own way, such that each friendship embodies certain goods, qualities and merits that are not found in other friendships. For instance, one friendship brings me tremendous emotional gratification, and the other friendship brings me intellectual contentment; both friendships are critical to my overall well-being, and I will not exchange one for the other. Hence, Mill is mistaken in believing that the pursuit of the happiness is the only consideration in a moral friendship.

Furthermore, if we accept utility as the sole criterion of morality, this would have severe effects upon friendship. Utility is impartial (*U 2:18:21-23*). Its exclusive concern resides in the optimal production of happiness. That is to say, my personal affections, attachments and sentiments towards my friends are morally acceptable only if they are compatible with my overall utility-maximization. Accordingly, if my personal emotions clash with my impartial obligations, utility commands me to transform them in such a way that they cohere with my overall moral obligations (*U 2:18:20-34*). In other words, I must either make them consistent with the maximum good, or abandon them altogether to secure such a good. However, this is incompatible with the basic attributes of a friendship.

To understand the full implications of Mill's utilitarianism for friendship, consider as a practical example that I am friends with Peter and Paul – both equally fine fellows and equally affectionate towards me. Also suppose that due to some reason they develop certain irreconcilable differences and that their differences acquire serious overtones, so much so that their differences start threatening their friendship. They cannot get along even for a moment and stop communicating with one another. As a common friend, I try to restore their confidence in one another and facilitate a patch up between them, but to no avail. As a result, I realize that I can be friends with either Peter or Tom, but not both. So, I must choose which friendship to keep, and which one to let go. On the one hand, I see that my friendship with Peter has a greater utility value. And on the other hand, I feel that Tom is going through some serious problems, and that he would be terribly disappointed if I terminate my friendship with him. I face a difficult choice; if I choose Peter, Tom would suffer, and if I choose Tom, my moral obligations would go unattended. From a utilitarian perspective, the right choice is obvious – I must choose Peter over Tom; for me, it is not.

As a result, once we adopt Mill's utilitarian moral criterion in friendship it becomes almost imperative for each and every moral agent to relinquish the lesser utility in favour of the greater utility (*U* 2:2:1-14). It logically follows from Mill's utilitarian moral premises that I must discard my friendship with Tom: after all, it is not as productive as my friendship with Peter, and I am under a perennial moral obligation to enhance the maximum utility of the maximum number of people. This is not to suggest that Tom's pain and suffering are not a part of utilitarian moral considerations. The opposite is the case; utilitarianism is indeed very sensitive to Tom's pain and suffering.

However, this sensitivity is grounded in an abstract ethical assumption – that the overall moral aggregate, or maximum utility, has a moral primacy over the satisfactions of a particular individual(s). Accordingly, it approves my friendship with Peter at the expense of Tom.

But this is a preposterous outcome in a friendship. It causes pain and hurt to Tom, when they can be certainly avoided. It fails to respect Tom's feelings and emotions, and exposes him to vulnerable situations. Given Tom's situation, it is obvious that he will go through emotional difficulties; and he may fail to reconstruct his life, goals, and projects. In other words, his life may turn into a struggle; he may lose his trust in friendship and friends, and wonder about my commitments to his welfare. Utilitarianism is not bothered (*U* 2:18:4-6, 2:19:16-21). It condemns Tom to take care of his situation; strangely enough, it overlooks the fact that he desires the same satisfactions that constitute the starting point of utilitarian moral thought – that human beings desire absence of pain (*U* 2:2:1-14). Furthermore, utility does injustice to my own feelings and emotions; it releases me from Tom's friendship when he requires me most. As a friend I find it morally obligatory to help Tom get through difficult times, and no reason, including utilitarian ones, can assuage the abdication of my moral responsibility towards him. It is dishonorable to desert anyone, and it is despicable to desert a friend; utilitarianism refuses to recognize this (*U* 2:19:17-21).

To be precise in our critique of Mill, we can draw out two central implications of his utilitarianism for a conception of friendship. First, Mill makes friendships replaceable. That is, he believes that all friendships share the same common characteristic – production of happiness and reduction of pain – and that they all have the same moral

end, namely, maximum utility. In other words, for Mill, all friendships have an overlapping content and character, and there is no distinctive element (apart from utility) that can differentiate one friendship from another (*U* 2:10:1-14). Accordingly, my friendships with Tom and Peter converge at a fundamental level; both friendships are utility aggregation tools, and both friends are utility agents. If so, then I can easily switch friendships. Today I can be friends with Peter, tomorrow with Tom, without much moral hassle. More strongly, I must terminate one friendship for the other, if the alternative friendship is more conducive to my utility maximization.¹⁵⁷

Second, for Mill, utility alone defines the meaning and value of a moral agent.¹⁵⁸ As a moral agent I only desire pleasure and absence from pain, and the thought of pleasure and pain alone constitutes my moral motivations in friendship. I will not be inclined towards virtue and nobility, good conduct and fairness if these inclinations do not lead to the realization of pleasure. By implication, I will not be disposed towards the well-being of a friend, will not keep my promises, and will not help a fellow being in desperate need, if these dispositions do not maximize my utility. If Mill's characterization of my nature and character is correct, then I am surely a slave of pleasure. I am truly incapable of looking beyond pleasure; in fact, there is nothing to look beyond; my moral spectrum is completely conditioned by pleasure, and pleasure alone counts in my moral considerations. Hence, anything that falls beyond the orbit of pleasure is morally doomed

¹⁵⁷ Will Kymlicka points out some of the inadequacies of such a utilitarian moral agent. He writes: "We all have commitments – to family, political causes, work – which form the focal point of our lives and give some identity to our existence. But if I am to act as a U-agent [utilitarian moral agent], then in each of my decisions, my commitments must be simply added in with all the projects of other people, and be sacrificed when I can produce more utility by promoting someone else's projects. That may sound admirably unselfish. But it is in fact absurd. For it is impossible to genuinely be committed to something and yet be willing to sacrifice that commitment whenever something else happens to maximize utility" (Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 25).

¹⁵⁸ Mill writes: "As between his [moral agent's] own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator" (*U* 2:18:21-23).

forever; but this is a myopic understanding of a moral agent; it reduces intrinsic moral goods, such as virtue and compassion, to a pleasure heap (*U* 4:3:8-15).

To restate these points, Mill's conception of friendship, as I have explained, suffers from two basic weaknesses. In the first place, it abstracts pleasure from the objects that facilitate pleasure. That is, it does not value the intrinsic worth of the pleasurable objects. These objects include virtue, intelligence, moral feeling, friendly ties, and other social goods and activities. In the second place, it abstracts friends from the core of their being; that is, I must transcend my nature, character and propensities, and conform to a higher principle of utility. But this excessive trust in an impartial utility curtails my moral being, and jeopardizes my moral uniqueness. Sandel remarks: "This fails to respect our plurality and distinctiveness."¹⁵⁹ Taken together, these two points alter a friendship beyond recognition.

We can use these findings to evaluate Mill's most fundamental objection against Kant's theory of friendship – that Kant's concept of duty suffers from abstractions and fails to account for our happiness in moral spheres. However, now it appears that Mill himself is engrossed in abstractions. Kant's abstractions occur due to his exclusive emphasis on pure practical reason, while Mill's abstractions take place due to his sole emphasis on maximum utility. In fact, Mill's abstractions are more serious and sweeping than Kant's. Let me explain.

Recall that for Kant there are two aspects to an individual: inclinational and rational. The inclinational aspect deals with an individual's desires, pursuits and goals, and the rational aspect consists of his pure practical reason. Kant believes that these two aspects are completely separate from one another, such that they can never cohere

¹⁵⁹ Michael J. Sandel. *Democracy's Discontent*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 9-10.

together; more strongly, in their pure form, they contradict one another. Furthermore, Kant argues that the rational aspect, not the inclinational aspect, provides the constitutive conditions of a moral friendship. Accordingly, on Kant's view, though the moral self is devoid of ordinary experiences and lacks empirical qualities, it has a rich ontological content. In particular, there are certain moral qualities (moral autonomy, for instance) that constitute the core of the Kantian self, and these qualities, Kant firmly believes, can neither be tampered with, nor taken away. In other words, an individual's moral sphere is not open to negotiation and change.

Mill rejects Kant's reason-inclination dichotomy. He argues that inclinations are a necessary constituent of our moral being, and hence they cannot be expunged from our moral life; that is, human beings truly desire happiness, and our moral parameters must reflect this desire. For Mill, both reason and inclination intrinsically cohere in a moral self; inclinations determine our nature and thought and set our goals and objectives, and reason plays a critical role in the materialization of inclinational aims and objectives. In the final analysis, Mill merges inclination and reason into one, and assigns a crucial role to inclinations in our moral determinations, such as the pursuit of happiness. Accordingly, he argues that utility *exclusively* informs our moral considerations, and *fully* captures our moral beings. Bernard Williams remarks: "If Kantianism abstracts in moral thought from the identity of persons, Utilitarianism strikingly abstracts from their separateness."¹⁶⁰

Williams is saying that Mill goes even further into abstraction than Kant. That is, unlike Kant, who believes that there are certain sacred elements to one's individuality, and that they must not be infringed upon, Mill does not seem to believe in any such

¹⁶⁰ Bernard Williams. *Moral Luck*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 3.

sacredness. He assigns a paramount role to utility in an individual's life and conduct; utility takes over all aspects of an individual's moral interactions. It exclusively defines me as a person and solely constitutes my moral being. As a result, I am reduced to a mere utility agent, and I have no intrinsic worth. Similarly, my goals and projects, emotions and affections are valueless by themselves, their meaning and value resides in their utility function; if they generate maximum utility, they meet moral acceptance, otherwise, not. This has a demeaning effect upon my individuality.

On the one hand, utility devalues my moral dignity (*U 2:19:17-21*). By refusing to respect my intrinsic moral worth, it compromises my inherent moral qualities; I seek certain gratifications, and am conscious of my overall social commitment to utility, but beyond this I have no concerns whatsoever. I can neither value myself, nor my friends for our inherent humanness (*U 4:3:7-15*). Accordingly, utility obliges me to do anything (and everything) that serves its purpose; this is an unequivocal form of utilitarian consequentialism. It is capable of justifying the worst possible things in a friendship. It can legitimize lying, deception, and betrayal in friendship (*U 2:19:17-21*), if they can enhance utility; but it hurts my moral esteem and integrity: "It [Utilitarianism] fails to respect each person as an end in himself or herself."¹⁶¹

On the other hand, in Mill's system, all of my aims, interests and desires can be exchanged in accordance with their utility value. Likewise, my friend and I can be measured and exchanged in terms of our utility output. Note that though Mill recognizes that certain goods are more important than others and some individuals more productive than others, but unlike Kant, he does not believe that these goods are desired for their *intrinsic worth*, and that each individual has an unconditional moral worth, such that he

¹⁶¹ Michael J. Sandel. *Democracy's Discontent*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996, p.10.

must be respected as *an end in himself*. On the contrary, for Mill, utility is the sole determinant of the moral value of an individual, and it can account for his entire moral personality; hence, Williams is right when he says that there is no limit to moral “trade-offs” (Williams, *Moral Luck*, p. 4) in utilitarianism.

In addition to these, Mill’s utilitarian abstractions surpass Kant in another way. Mill views an individual’s moral will as a manifestation of his desires, such that it always aggregates his desires for pleasure, and is necessarily susceptible to utility evaluations. Accordingly, it is determined by utilitarian considerations, not by the individual himself. More precisely, when my desires and wants conflict with utilitarian objectives, my moral will forces me to opt for the utilitarian objective; in other words, unlike Kant, Mill does not allow any genuine freedom of will. “In Kant’s thought...all genuine moral considerations rest, ultimately and at a deep level, in the agent’s will.”¹⁶² For Mill, my moral will is not determined by me, but by my utility augmentation.

To understand the full implications of Mill’s above view, consider a revised form of our earlier example. Suppose that Tom and Peter are not only my friends, but also my work colleagues. Their differences aggravate further, so much so that they start affecting their work. My boss notices their tension and unfriendly attitude towards one another, and seeks my input to resolve the situation. However, nothing works. As a result, he calls me again and tells me that he finds the situation unacceptable and that either Tom or Peter must be fired. Furthermore, he wants me to choose who should be fired, and tells me that I if do not exercise my choice, he will fire both of them. This is a coercive situation for me. My love and affection are equally strong for both Tom and Peter, and I

¹⁶² Bernard Williams. *Ethics and Limits of Philosophy*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 7.

do not want to fire either of them. In terms of our friendship, any choice would be arbitrary and hurtful. Hence, in this situation I cannot make a decision with a clear conscience.

However, according to the Principle of Utility, I must make a choice between Peter and Tom. Not choosing either will lead to a greater loss – both of them will be fired. But this takes away my freedom of choice – voluntary actions, which, I think, is a critical requirement of my moral choice. That is to say, utilitarianism forces me to make a choice, even when I am disinclined to make it; this curtails my moral freedom, and restricts my moral choice (*U 2:19:31-47*). The difficulty here is not that I am faced with an exceptional situation, which can potentially unsettle any moral theory, but with the utilitarian moral standard that compels me to make a choice in favor of the greater utility. Under conventional moral paradigms, for instance, I can refuse to make the above choice without precipitating a moral reprobation (Kant would approve such a withholding of judgment¹⁶³). Or, I can act in a more straightforward way and decide the issue by a toss; this has the advantage of placing my friends on equal footing, and saving me from an unwarranted moral choice. Utilitarianism is not receptive to these options, or to any other such option; it requires me, specifically, to exercise my choice in accordance with the demands of maximum utility. As a result, I am caught not by my complicated situation, but more surreptitiously by the moral theory that I follow and that Mill propounds.

Mill believes that the difficulties that I face can be resolved by character growth. He writes: “Genuine private affections, and a sincere interest in the public good, are

¹⁶³ He writes: “Reason must regard as the author of its principles, independently of foreign influences; consequently, as practical reason or as the will of a rational being, it must regard itself as free. That is to say, the will of a rational being can be a will of its own only under the idea of freedom, and therefore in a practical point of view such a will must be ascribed to all rational beings” (*Foundations* 448:15-21).

possible, though in unequal degrees, to every rightly brought up human being" (*U* 2:14:8-10). That is to say, with a cultivated moral character I can develop a fuller understanding of my situations and circumstances; I come to realize that the dilemma that I confront in my life and relations arises primarily because of a selective application (or, a defective application) of utility in my moral conduct. In other words, a strong moral character can impart a sense of greater good to my moral deliberations, and instill utility considerations in my thought process, such that I rationally and conscientiously decide to act in accordance with the Principle of Utility. Accordingly, if I expand my moral horizons and think about the well-being of all people (all sentient beings and not just my friends and myself), then I can avoid the above difficulties.

But this is a misrepresentation of my situation. It is not that I lack an appreciation of maximum utility – the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but that I am committed to my immediate social environment, namely, my friends, and I feel a strong moral fidelity towards their good. I do not want to relinquish my love and affection for them; utility wants me to choose an abstract greater good at the expense of my friends, and for me this is unacceptable. I want to grow as a person and desire a cultivated moral sense, but not at the expense of my friends. I want them to be partners in my character growth, and desire to assist their progress; last thing I want is to transpose them against my moral principles, such that their interests, happiness and satisfactions conflict with my moral commitments. Utility does not facilitate any such satisfactions; it pushes me in the opposite moral direction, where my moral commitments clash with my friendly obligations. Mill fails to see this. That is to say, though he is critical of Kant's

abstractions in friendship, his own theory does no better; it forces me to sacrifice my personal love and affection for my friends for an arbitrary universal principle.

What we need is a view of human interactions that values the uniqueness of personal love, feelings and emotions in friendship and does not measure them up against abstract and artificial moral principles. We need a view that recognizes and respects the moral concreteness of human beings, including my friends and myself, and enhances their intrinsic moral capacities and worth. We require a view that has an unconditional regard for human dignity and a full-fledged commitment to personal relations, such that their meaning and value are not contingent upon abstract moral norms. In the next section we will see that Aristotle takes us in this direction. He proposes a theory of friendship that respects the personal affections and friendly bonds, and provides friends with an opportunity to realize their full moral potential without indulging in abstractions.

IV. An Aristotelian Response to Kant and Mill

IV.1 Rebuttal to Kant and Mill

We have seen that both Kant and Mill fail to account for friendship in their ethical systems. Aristotle's theory illuminates more precisely what their errors are, and how they can be avoided. That is, we can turn to Aristotle for a better solution of Kant's and Mill's difficulties.

Kant constructs his theory of friendship on two fundamental ethical postulates.¹⁶⁴ On the one hand, he argues that there are two kinds of ends that a friendship may pursue. These are natural ends and moral ends. Furthermore, he argues that these two ends are

¹⁶⁴ Kant's ethical postulates are intrinsically connected with his epistemological commitments, so much so that his ethical postulates become almost synonymous with epistemological commitments (*CPR* 126:1-34, *Foundations* 421:1-19, *MMDV* 379:1-35); I treat them in a like manner.

inherently incompatible, that is, they can never be harmonized with one another. On his view, a friendship necessarily involves a conflict between these two ends, and the moral value of a friendship resides in its total commitment to the moral ends, and a total suppression of the natural ends.¹⁶⁵ That is to say, I can neither pursue my happiness in friendship nor can I contribute to the perfection of my friends. On the other hand, Kant also believes in the dichotomous nature of an individual's will (*CPR* 126:1-30). Accordingly, he argues that a friendship can either be structured on a good will or a contingent will, not both. A good will is determined by an individual's pure practical reason and moral law, and invariably follows the commands of duty. A contingent will is pathologically determined; it reflects an individual's inclinational interests and pathological propensities. A good will, not a contingent will, he argues, constitutes a moral friendship. As a result of these epistemological commitments, Kant's theory of friendship entails a moral schism both in terms of its ends and foundations.

Against Kant, Aristotle argues that the natural and moral ends of friendship are intrinsically connected and that they cannot be separated either in thought or in practice. Human beings by nature, he argues, desire happiness, and this desire has a *telos* (*NE* 1102a1-18). That is to say, the pursuit of happiness in friendship is morally valuable (*Politics* 1280b30-39). Likewise, Aristotle also questions the Kantian distinction between the material and formal will; he contends that both the material and formal will cohere in an individual's moral faculty, at a deeper level (*NE* 1167a4-21). Accordingly, he argues that both material and formal will must be properly appropriated in a moral friendship, such that they both meet their gratifications and neither gets neglected. In sum, for

¹⁶⁵ Kant writes: "And now suppose him [moral agent] to tear himself, unsolicited by inclination, out of this dead insensibility and to perform this action [moral action] only from duty and without any inclination – then the first time his action has genuine moral worth" (*Foundations* 398:23-27).

Aristotle, the pursuit of one's moral obligations, namely the attainment of moral goodness and virtue, is fully compatible with one's natural obligations – personal happiness and satisfactions. Stephen Engstrom remarks:

Whereas Kant seems to insist that duty and virtue are at odds with our natural end, Aristotle maintains a firm grip on the appealing idea of a complete practical life centered around virtuous actions and unified under the conception of our natural end of happiness.¹⁶⁶

That is to say, Aristotle resists the Kantian view that posits a difference between the natural and the moral ends of a friendship, and obstructs their common pursuits. He argues that both natural and moral ends are essential to a friendship, and both deserve their proper realization. Accordingly, on his view, both ends come together in a friendship, they both exist in tandem and support one another in a strong and effective sense. Moral ends impart virtue to the natural ends and natural ends add dynamism to the moral ends. To put it in ordinary words, my love and affection towards my friends neither mitigates my moral obligations towards them, nor clashes with my overall rational commitment to their moral welfare. On the contrary, love and affection instill a virtuous content to our friendship. James O. Grunebaum remarks: "Emotions may be infused with significant rational components. As bases for friendship, reason and inclination may form a continuum by degrees rather than dichotomy of opposites."¹⁶⁷

Unlike Kant, Mill recognizes the moral significance of happiness. However, his understanding of happiness is hopelessly abstract; that is, though he believes that human beings have a natural inclination towards pleasure and an inbuilt resistance towards pain,

¹⁶⁶ Engstrom, S. *Happiness and the Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant. Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

¹⁶⁷ James O. Grunebaum. *Friendship: Liberty, Equality, and Utility.* New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 46.

he fails to show what pleasure actually consists of, or more precisely, how it differs from pleasurable objects. More strongly, he confuses the experience of pleasure with pleasurable objects themselves. G. E. Moore writes: “A pleasure is, in fact, merely a misleading term which conceals the fact that what we are dealing with is not pleasure but something else, which may indeed necessarily produce pleasure, but is nevertheless quite distinct from it.”¹⁶⁸ Mill fails to see this distinction (*U* 4:8:1-13), but for Aristotle this omission is unacceptable.

Aristotle argues, against Mill, that the experience of a pleasure is distinct from its object. There are several things that bring us pleasure and make us happy, but they cannot be identified with the pleasure that they generate. That is to say, we desire different objects, do multiple activities, and engage in a variety of associations, and each of these objects, activities and associations have a specific meaning and value of their own, such that they are irreducible to our experiential awareness of pleasure that accompany them. In friendship, this means that the value of a friendship is independent of the happiness that it accrues. Hence, Mill is wrong in assuming that happiness alone determines the moral value of a friendship.

Furthermore, Aristotle questions Mill’s claim that pleasure alone determines the content of a friendship. Recall that Mill argues that all goods, including moral goods such as virtue, are desired for their happiness value (*U* 2:2:1-14). More strongly, virtue in itself is not desirable per se, what makes it desirable is its instrumental value; specifically, virtue invariably leads to pleasure, vice to pain, so virtue is inherently desirable and vice inherently undesirable (*U* 4:8:1-13). Accordingly, Mill claims that virtue is not an intrinsic good, but that it is a durable extrinsic good – an extrinsic good capable of

¹⁶⁸ G.E Moore. *Principia Ethica*. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1903, p. 81.

becoming an intrinsic good over a period of time, through the association of ideas. Aristotle questions the moral efficacy of Mill's view. He argues that virtue is an intrinsic moral good, essential for the pursuit of happiness but not subservient to it: "Virtue, then, is a state of rational choice, consisting in a mean relative to us and determined by reason – the reason, that is, by reference to which the practically wise person would determine it" (*NE* 1107a1-4).

Hence, for Aristotle, virtue implies two things. On the one hand, it entails a rational capacity to differentiate between the right and wrong, noble and ignoble, good and bad, and on the other hand, it also signifies a practical will to do the morally right actions and to eschew the morally wrong actions.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, he requires friends to love and respect one another for one another's sake, and to act in noble ways towards one another. This includes being generous, magnanimous, truthful, honest and courageous in association with one another. That is to say, unlike Mill, Aristotle believes that virtue is critical to a friendship – it provides a moral coherence to friendly interactions, and is valued for its own sake.

Despite their theoretical differences, both Kant and Mill share a common theme regarding the moral value of a friendship. They argue that a friendship must conform to certain universal moral rules – moral law and duty in the case of Kant, and happiness and utility in the case of Mill. Accordingly, both Kant and Mill require friends to love and

¹⁶⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre brings out this aspect of Aristotle's moral thought and contrasts it with its prevalent modern counterpart. He writes: "According to Aristotle then excellence of character and intelligence cannot be separated. Here Aristotle expresses a view characteristically at odds with that dominant in the modern world. The modern view is expressed at one level in such banalities as 'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be cleaver' and at another in such profundities as Kant's distinction between the good will, the possession of which alone is both necessary and sufficient for moral worth, and what he took to be a quite distinct natural gift, that of knowing how to apply these general rules to particular cases, a gift the lack of which is called stupidity. So for Kant one can be both good and stupid; but for Aristotle stupidity of a certain kind precludes goodness" (MacIntyre. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, p. 154-55).

respect one another for their universal attributes, and not for their personal and emotional attachments.¹⁷⁰ That is to say, both duty and utility are impartial moral principles, and as such they both are incompatible with the personal love and affection in friendship. In friendship this means that, on moral grounds, one must accord equal moral value and consideration to both friends and non-friends. More explicitly, if two individuals, a friend and a non-friend, urgently seek my assistance, other things being equal,¹⁷¹ I must not accord a moral priority to my friend over a non-friend. In the realm of morality, both my friend and non-friend have equal moral claims, and I am under an equal obligation towards both of them.

Impartiality is detrimental to a friendship, Aristotle contends. On the one hand, it devalues the meaning and significance of personal love and affection, care and concern that friends possess for one another. It puts my friend at par with a non-friend, and obliges me morally to treat them in like manner. It overlooks the fact that there is an obvious asymmetry between my relationship with my friend and a non-friend. I love and respect my friend for who he is as a person, I know his likes and dislikes, and I am familiar with the needs and necessities of my friend; that is, my association with my friend has a history, culture and context. I am equally aware of my friend's sentiments, emotions, love and kindness, and share a virtuous bond with him. None of these inform my relationship with a non-friend. Hence, the very call for impartiality in friendship is

¹⁷⁰ Diane Jeske writes: "Neither Kantianism nor utilitarianism, then, seems able to give friendship the moral significance which common sense accords to it: whereas Kantianism regards it as in conflict with morality for the utilitarian, duties of friendship are moral afterthoughts with only instrumental significance" (Jeske. *Friendship, Virtue, and Impartiality. Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1997, p. 52).

¹⁷¹ "Impartiality per se is the requirement that like cases be treated alike" (Barbara Herman. *The Practice of Moral Judgment*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 185).

misplaced and flawed. It demeans the personal value of a friendship, and diminishes its impact in moral spheres.

Further, impartiality breeds abstraction. Though impartiality signifies a moral equality of all human beings and accords equal moral value to all of them, it fails to appreciate their *concrete individualities*. Recall that Mill makes friends replaceable, whereas Kant fails to respect their inclinational propensities. In other words, both Kant and Mill show a systematic neglect for the concrete aspects of friendly associations. They both suspend the role of personal feelings and emotions in friendship, and promote its universal and impartial understanding. More strongly, for Aristotle, both Kant and Mill abstract from the empirical content of a friendship and undermine its practical value.

Aristotle's critique of impartiality raises certain fundamental questions regarding social interactions in friendship. It is argued that Aristotle's strong defense of personal ties and preferential treatment in friendship runs counter to the idea of equal treatment of non-friends in the social and moral domains.¹⁷² More clearly, by asking us to prioritize the interests and pursuits of our friends over non-friends, Aristotle seemingly puts non-friends in a position of moral disadvantage. If so, then Aristotle's view of preferential treatment in friendship would be unappealing and arbitrary. That is, our genuine love and respect towards our friends cannot, and must not, trade on partisanship.

The view that Aristotle's critique of impartiality undermines the equal treatment of non-friends is questionable. In the first place, it confuses moral conduct with moral

¹⁷² An in-depth discussion of this view can be found in the writings of Julia Annas (Plato, Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism. *Mind*, 86, 1977, p. 523-54) and Martha C. Nussbaum (*Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

indifference.¹⁷³ Impartiality, as Kant and Mill understand it, is a detached viewpoint, an impersonal medium of personal and social conduct. Accordingly, both Kant and Mill necessitate a universal moral conduct in friendship, *such that an individual's personal love and affection do not figure in his moral considerations*. In his own writings, Aristotle criticizes this view of impartiality in friendship but he never compromises fairness; on the contrary, he maintains that friends must be fair and just towards one another,¹⁷⁴ and also towards other civic members (NE 1159b25-28). Accordingly, he argues that friendship strengthens justice and does not undermine it. In the second place, for Aristotle, friendship is a virtue. Virtues exist in harmony with one another, and it is impossible to be a virtuous friend (in the ideal sense of the term) and unjust at the same time. Friendship necessitates the presence of other virtues such as generosity, truthfulness, and courage. It implies a genuine love and good will towards one's friends, and a fair treatment of all others.

To summarize, both Kant and Mill set up the personal elements of friendship against its moral elements. They both prioritize moral qualities of a friendship at the expense of its personal qualities. Against them, Aristotle argues that it is possible to harmonize the personal and moral elements of a friendship. Accordingly, he shows that friendship must bring a complete satisfaction to the friends, that is, it must facilitate both natural and moral ends, and it must do so without indulging in abstraction. In the next section, we will see in further detail how Aristotle establishes the union of ends in

¹⁷³That is, in an ideal moral situation an individual must either get rid of his feelings and emotions (Kantian requirement) or overcome them in the favor of greater utility (Mill demands this). In either case, impartiality puts personal love and affection to rest.

¹⁷⁴He writes: "And when people are friends, they have no need of justice, while when they are just, they need friendship as well; and the highest form of justice seems to be a matter of friendship" (NE 1155a25-27).

friendship, and how he constructs a personally gratifying and morally fulfilling concept of friendship.

IV.2 Aristotle's alternative ground for friendship

Aristotle develops his theory of friendship in terms of two key themes. These are happiness and virtue. He argues that happiness is the highest personal good, and virtue is the highest moral good. Furthermore, he contends that both happiness and virtue are intrinsically connected, such that they can neither be separated in concept nor in reality.¹⁷⁵ In other words, they entail each other. Accordingly, for Aristotle, a truly happy individual is a virtuous individual, and by implication a virtuous individual is truly happy. Below I will draw out the implications of Aristotle's view of happiness and virtue; I will argue that they are essential ingredients of a friendship and necessary for a "good life" (*Politics* 1280a31-32). Hence, a friendship must facilitate them.

According to T. H. Irwin¹⁷⁶ Aristotle's understanding of happiness has three main components. These are the concept, the criteria and the content of happiness. First, Aristotle argues that happiness is "living well and acting well" (*NE* 1098b17-22, 1169b28-35). In the Aristotelian context, living well means spending one's life in association with one's family, friends and other civic members. That is to say, other human beings are necessary constituents of my happiness, and I must associate with them in a fruitful manner. Accordingly, I must possess a good will towards them and must be willing to contribute to their good in a constructive way. On the other hand, 'acting well' necessitates virtuous conduct. That is, I must exhibit virtue in my association and conduct; specifically, I must be friendly, generous, temperate and just towards my friends

¹⁷⁵ He writes: "By human virtue, we mean that of the soul, not that of the body; and happiness we speak of as an activity of the soul" (*NE* 1102a18-19).

¹⁷⁶ T. H. Irwin in *Aristotle, Kant, and Stoics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 72.

and fellow beings. Taken together, living and acting well constitute the gist of Aristotle's concept of happiness; they illustrate that a happy life is not a matter of a solitary existence or idle living (*NE* 1157b18-24); it requires a positive and meaningful engagement with others.¹⁷⁷

Next, Aristotle provides two criteria for happiness. First, he argues that happiness is a complete good. He writes: "Happiness in particular is believed to be complete without qualification, since we always choose it for itself and never for the sake of something else" (*NE* 1097b1-2). Recall that Aristotle draws a distinction between two kinds of goods: qualified good and unqualified good.¹⁷⁸ A qualified good is a conditional good that is desired for its instrumental value, for instance, money. Money is desirable because it is useful in securing other goods, such as pleasurable objects, personal luxury and comfort. Money in itself is worthless; its value resides in its buying power. A good without qualification, on the other hand, is a good that is desired for its own intrinsic merit and worth (Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*, p. 337). It is desired not for an instrumental purpose, but because its possession itself is morally valuable and personally pleasant. Since happiness is desired for its inherently satisfying worth, Aristotle reasons that it is an unqualified good. Accordingly, he contends that friends must help one another in securing one another's happiness.

¹⁷⁷ Aristotle remarks: "We are applying the term 'self-sufficient' not to a person on his own, living a solitary life, but to a person living alongside his parents, children, wife, and friends and fellow citizens generally, since a human being is by nature a social being" (*NE* 1097b9-12) and "What really matters for happiness are activities in accordance with virtue, and for the contrary of happiness the contrary kind of activities" (*NE* 1100b8-10).

¹⁷⁸ J.M. Cooper writes: "On Aristotle's theory of the good, there is a distinction to be drawn between what is good absolutely and without qualification (good "by nature" he sometimes calls it) and what is good for a particular person or a class of persons. A thing is absolutely good if it is good for human beings as such, taken in abstraction from special and contingent peculiarities of particular persons: these peculiarities may provide additional interests, needs, and wants, and on the basis of them one can speak of additional, possibly divergent, things as good for this or that particular person" (Cooper, *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 336).

Second, happiness is self-sufficient (*NE* 1097b21-22). A self-sufficient good is a good that is not contingent upon other goods; that is, it provides its own meaning and justification. Once it is attained, it brings us total satisfaction. Furthermore, Aristotle argues that once we attain happiness, then all other goods look pale; and if we lack happiness, then the possession of all other goods is more or less useless. For instance, consider someone who is rich and has all the material goods that a life can offer, but is continually stressed and troubled. The possession of wealth and other material goods loses its charm when one is continually mentally contorted and emotionally worried. Unlike such goods, happiness is both emotionally enriching and mentally gratifying (*NE* 1099a12-25).

Accordingly, Aristotle argues that happiness secures and reflects a life of satisfaction and contentment, and it is a moral obligation of the friends to seek its realization in their lives. Engstrom writes: "By taking happiness as his starting point, Aristotle ensures that the ethical doctrine that he articulates is grounded in a conception that gives unity to practical life and whose content has some claim to be our natural end."¹⁷⁹

Finally, we must ask what constitutes the content of happiness in Aristotle's theory. In other words, what does happiness necessitate? Aristotle argues that happiness has two facets. On the one hand, it requires external goods: "Happiness obviously needs the presence of external goods as well, since it is impossible, or at least no easy matter, to perform noble actions without resources" (*NE* 1099b1-2). These goods include wealth, honor, and health; in sum, anything that is conducive to good living and noble actions,

¹⁷⁹ Engstrom, S. *Happiness and the Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant. Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 102.

and can be either acquired through an external source, or admits some form of externality. Furthermore, Aristotle argues that external goods can be categorized under two heads: important goods, and relatively less important goods. Money for instance is an important external good, but it is not as important as health and personal relationships. Accordingly, Aristotle holds that among external goods, friendship occupies an eminent position, that is, it is the highest external good (*NE* 1169b10-11). And as such, it is necessary for an individual's happiness.

On the other hand, happiness necessarily entails virtue. For Aristotle, it is imperative to be virtuous in order to be truly happy. MacIntyre writes: "The virtues are precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eudaimonia* and the lack of which will frustrate his movement towards that *telos*."¹⁸⁰ That is to say, virtues are essential for a morally meaningful and productive life. They teach us what is morally good and desirable, and what is morally bad and undesirable; furthermore, they provide us with the ability to pursue the former and the strength to resist the latter. Accordingly, Aristotle classifies virtues under two kinds: intellectual and practical virtues.

Intellectual virtues deal with the development of an individual's cognitive capacities. That is, they expand an individual's mental horizon, expand his deliberative powers, and secure a reasoned judgment in the practical spheres of life. In the context of a friendship, intellectual virtues have a special meaning and connotation. First, Aristotle argues that a proper cultivation of intellectual virtues is critical to self-knowledge. That is, since my friend and I have similar intellectual commitments, believe in similar moral values, and share a common rational deliberative field, we get to know each other in an

¹⁸⁰ Alasdair MacIntyre. *After Virtue*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p. 148.

intimate way. This intimacy, Aristotle contends, leads to self-knowledge (*Magna Moralia* II XV:5:4-8). That is, just by looking at my friend, I get to know my own qualities, strengths and weaknesses (*NE* 1156b6-28).

Second, at a more practical level, intellectual virtues refine an individual's rational capacities. That is, friends share their ideas and thoughts, and engage in frequent conversations and dialogues. This intellectual proximity has a defining impact on a friendship. Specifically, friendship facilitates a union of different intellectual streams, and a very free and frank exchange of views and perspectives. For instance, my friend may have a good knowledge of a subject that I don't know, and he may educate me regarding it. Likewise, I can assist him in learning about some subject that I am well acquainted with. Accordingly, for Aristotle, intellectual cooperation in friendship leads to the intellectual advancement of the friends, and gives manifestation to their latent potentialities. David O. Brink remarks:

He [Aristotle] focuses on sharing of thought and discussion, especially about how best to live, as well as cooperative interaction. Sharing thought and discussion with one another diversifies my experiences by providing me with additional perspective on the world. By enlarging my perspective, it gives me a more objective picture of the world, its possibilities and my place in it.¹⁸¹

Moreover, the above sharing of thoughts and ideas signifies (at a moral level) the presence of the practical virtues in a friendship. That is, my friend and I engage each other in various intellectual, practical, social and moral activities. We love and respect each other, value each other, and involve each other in our lives and projects. Aristotle firmly believes that intellectual concepts, moral understanding, and personal and social interactions must harmonize in friendship (*NE* 1159b2-35). That is to say, there must not

¹⁸¹ David O. Brink. Eudaimonianism, Love, and Friendship, and Political Community. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 16:1 (Winter 1999), p.264.

be a schism in what friends rationally and morally believe and what they do. The understanding of right actions must lead to right conduct and the understanding of wrong actions must curtail the possibilities of their occurrence.¹⁸² *Phronesis* is a virtue. MacIntyre writes: "According to Aristotle then excellence of character and intelligence cannot be separated."¹⁸³

Aristotle therefore argues that the harmony of intellectual and practical virtues imparts coherence to a friendship. In the first place, friendship becomes a medium of an individual's all-round satisfaction and development. That is, it is crucial to the realization of his natural and moral ends, material and moral satisfactions. In other words, unlike Kant, Aristotle does not see any tension between an individual's happiness and his morality. He contends that a good life requires both. For example, generosity and magnanimity are virtues, and they both require material prosperity (*NE* 1122b5-24). Accordingly, an individual must have the material resources to act in a generous and magnanimous way. Likewise, he must have both intellectual and practical wisdom to make a considered judgment as to when he should be generous and when frugal. For instance, being generous towards someone who has a criminal intent may lead to terrible consequences and being frugal towards a suffering friend may cause an irreparable

¹⁸² D.S. Hutchinson writes: "Practical wisdom is an apprehension of what is good and bad for us at the highest level, together with a correct apprehension of the facts of experience, together with the skill to make the correct inferences about how to apply our general moral knowledge to our particular situations, and to do so quickly and reliably. It is used in our own cases when we are obliged to commit ourselves to course of action. Obviously it is very important asset; if we had it, we would be always act in the right ways and our lives would be successful and happy" (Hutchinson in *Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 207).

¹⁸³ Alasdair MacIntyre. *After Virtue*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p. 154.

loss.¹⁸⁴ Accordingly, one must have an educated ability to make good decisions in friendship. Thomas Hurka writes:

The different Aristotelian goods are all good for the same reason: They all involve sophisticated rationality, or generality in one's beliefs and intentions. This is a great merit of a formal approach to quality: while acknowledging the plurality of human goods, it gives a unified account of their value. While allowing many routes to excellence, it gives a single explanation why they lead to the same destination [a good life].¹⁸⁵

In the second place, virtues in friendship lead to a moral partnership among the friends. Friends care for each other's moral good, and contribute to its actualization; that is, I want my friend to have a good life, a life full of material prosperity and moral satisfactions. In ordinary terms, I exert additional efforts to secure my friend's betterment and good. He conducts himself in a like manner. We show a genuine commitment to each other's welfare, and our friendship becomes a partnership in perfection. Note that, unlike Mill who asks us to sacrifice our good for the maximum utility, Aristotle suggests that we must strike a reasonable balance between our personal and moral good in friendship. Accordingly, he argues that such a balance is necessary to a morally effective friendship.

Finally, virtue, Aristotle argues, is essential for the flourishing of the friends. That is, it leads to the cultivation of the inherent attributes and capacities of the friends, and helps them actualize their potentialities. On the one hand, this includes a true manifestation of their desires and wants, and intellectual and emotional propensities. And on the other hand, it entails a facilitation of their moral ends. Accordingly, Aristotle

¹⁸⁴ Aristotle writes: "Actions done in accordance with virtue are noble and done for the sake of what is noble. So the generous person will give for the sake of what is noble and in the correct way – to the right people, in the right amounts, at the right time, and so on, with the other qualifications that attach to correct giving. And this he will do with pleasure, or at least without pain, because what is done in accordance with virtue is pleasant or painless, and certainly not painful. Someone who gives to the wrong people, however, or not for the sake of what is noble but for some other reason, will be called not generous but something else" (*NE* 1120a24-30).

¹⁸⁵ Thomas Hurka. *Perfectionism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 136.

argues that a virtuous flourishing in friendship necessitates a complete realization of one's true nature, potential and ends.

In sum, Aristotle provides a very rich and meaningful conception of friendship. He construes friendship in terms of happiness and virtue, and argues that it is essential for a good life and a flourishing human existence. Accordingly, he argues that a good friendship must facilitate both natural and moral ends, and the material and moral gratifications of the friends. Thus unlike Kant and Mill, he views friendship as an engaging personal, emotional, and moral relationship. More strongly, he holds that the pursuit of the personal interests and ends in friendship need not, and do not, conflict with an individual's moral obligations, if they are sought in virtuous ways. Accordingly, he shows that the personal and moral communion of the friends, and not impartiality and distance, constitute the content of a moral friendship.

In the next section, I will show that Aristotle's view that friendship entails a genuine moral communion with other human beings is an essential constituent of his concept of a good life – it necessitates a mental and emotional proximity in friendship, and bridges the distance between personal and social associations, self and other(s).

V. Friendship: Bridging the Gap between Self and Other

Above, I have defended Aristotle's view of friendship. I have argued that friendship, as Aristotle understands it, is either virtue or it necessitates virtue, and is essential for a good life. In this section I will draw out more precisely the meaning and import of Aristotle's theory of friendship. First, I will ask what the true constituents of a good life are, and how Aristotelian friendship secures their realization. Second, I will examine the relevance of Aristotle's theory of a good life and friendship in our times.

Finally, I will show that virtue friendship can provide an enduring foundation to the self-other relationship.

A good life, according to Aristotle, has two main aspects. These are the personal and social aspects. The personal aspect requires a genuine and unhindered gratification of an individual's material and moral interests. In ordinary terms, this means that a good life necessitates a meaningful pursuit of an individual's desires and wants, aims and expectations, hopes and dreams. But all such pursuits, Aristotle reminds us almost persistently, require a social context (*Politics* 1252b27-30); that is, they cannot be realized either in isolation or in abstraction (*NE* 1157b1-37). Friendship, he argues, provides us with such a context, and is a critical constituent of a good life (*Politics* 1280b30-39).

In the first place, friendship entails a good will for others, namely, the friends (*NE* 1167a3-20). That is, friends love and respect one another for who they are as human persons, and care for one another's well-being and progress. This implies two things. On the one hand, friendship, at least a moral friendship, requires a moral appreciation of one another's individuality (*NE* 1156b34-37). I value my friend for his intrinsic moral goodness, virtues, nature and character, and not for his contingent and peripheral qualities. Likewise, my friend shows a regard for my moral-self, respects my human dignity, and desires to contribute to my moral development and contentment (*NE* 1157b5-24). Together, we enhance each other's satisfactions, and facilitate each other's moral development.

On the other hand, a good will in friendship, Aristotle argues, must translate into concrete and practical activities. That is, friends must do activities together, spend time

with one another, and participate in one another's life and projects. Moreover, the nature of this participation must be diverse and morally vibrant; by implication, it must not be monotonous and morally stagnant (*Magna Moralia* II. XI:11:1-4). That is to say, friendly participations involve a variety of activities, and different kinds of pursuits, some morally important and precious, others less so. For instance, sometimes my good will towards my friend takes the form of a moral communion with him, and at other times it takes the form a simple get-together and spending time with him (*NE* 1155a1-32). In combination, all the activities and endeavors add value to the friendship, and with time turn it into a moral project. Hurka writes:

Over time friendship becomes an organized project, with many particular ends serving larger defining goals. There are trivial ends such as shopping and engrossing ones such as raising a child, but all fit into hierarchy and have the added value that all such fitting things bring.¹⁸⁶

Hurka's main point here is not merely that friendship makes it easier to accomplish our goals. Rather, he is saying that our activities acquire a special meaning when they occur in a friendship. More strongly, the very fact that we do something with our friend makes our activities more meaningful and fulfilling; that is, friendship imparts an intrinsic value to our activities.¹⁸⁷ As result, even mundane activities, such as eating out and taking a long walk, become an enriching experience (*NE* 1171b27-35).

In the second place, friendship cultivates intimacy among the friends. Friends share their emotions with one another in a free and unimpeded way. That is to say, I know my friend, his nature and character, and am well acquainted with his strengths and weaknesses. For instance, I truly believe that my friend will never abuse my love and

¹⁸⁶Thomas Hurka. *Perfectionism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 135.

¹⁸⁷Aristotle writes: "Anyone who is to be happy, then, will need virtuous friends" (*NE* 1170b19).

affection for him, and he will never betray my trust. I am equally convinced that he will take all pains to honor my friendly feelings towards him, and will go to all possible limits to redeem my trust (*NE* 1159b30-33, 1160a6-9). This confidence is crucial to our friendship. It leads to a comprehensive moral cooperation in our friendship. I rely upon my friend for good advice and critical evaluation of my options, even my conduct, and he expects similar things from me. Together, we value one another's feelings, emotions, trust and confidence, and strive hard to enhance each other's satisfaction (*NE* 1172a12-16). Accordingly, our friendship becomes the medium of a pure moral communion, a good life. Sandel brings out this element of friendship; he remarks:

Friendship becomes a way of knowing as well as liking. Uncertain which path to take, I consult a friend who knows me well, and together we deliberate, offering and assessing by turns competing descriptions of the person I am, and of the alternatives I face as they bear on my identity.¹⁸⁸

Sandel is saying that friendship necessitates a common determination and evaluation of moral goods. That is, I help my friend in making crucial decisions in his life, and he assists me in a similar way. On important issues we deliberate together; we weigh our options and then determine the course of our action. Both of us want to help each other to make knowledgeable decisions and to be successful and happy in life. Moreover, though we assist each other in choosing the right course of action and finding out the best option, we do not burden each other with the consequences if things go wrong. Each of us takes individual responsibility for his decisions, acts and conduct, and neither of us abdicates his personal moral responsibility. Our virtues provide a unique

¹⁸⁸ Michael J. Sandel. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 181.

strength to our friendship, such that no difficulty shakes it and no failure undermines it. We value each other's emotional and moral help, and respect each other unconditionally.

Next, Aristotle argues that a good life necessarily requires civic associations, and that friendship, particularly civic friendship, gives expression to such associations.¹⁸⁹ It gives an expression to an individual's natural inclinations to socialize with other human beings, to live in their company and to engage in constructive social activities. It also symbolizes an individual's sentiments, care and concern towards other citizens, and a genuine commitment to contribute to their good. Furthermore, it gives a fuller expression to an individual's virtues. Virtues, he argues, grow in a social context (*NE* 1103a14-25); they require practice, and social associations with other citizens (*NE* 1103b1-2). For instance, generosity requires other human beings towards whom it can be exercised. Likewise, other virtues, such as courage, temperance, wit, friendliness and justice necessitate a practical and meaningful engagement with others. John M. Cooper remarks:

The sentiment of civic friendship, in short, transforms what might otherwise be hard and narrow forms of all the virtues. By grounding the disposition to act virtuously on love and disinterested good will towards others as persons with whom one shares social life to one's own and their mutual benefit, civic friendship is a necessary supplement to the virtues themselves, since only through it does a person come to have the warmth and the sympathetic attachment to other persons which one rightly demands of a perfectly and fully moral person.¹⁹⁰

In sum, for Aristotle, a good life requires a fine blend of both personal and social aspects. He argues that an individual must obtain an all-round satisfaction for a

¹⁸⁹ J. E. M. Cooper remarks: "In fact, Aristotle holds not only that active friendships of a close and intimate kind are a necessary constituents of a human life, but also that 'civic friendship' is itself an essential human good" (*Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

¹⁹⁰ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 334-35.

meaningful and flourishing existence. This includes a proper and fulfilling satisfaction of his emotional propensities and a complete realization of his moral potential.

Aristotle's above view that a good life necessitates an intimate connection between the personal and social domains of an individual's conduct has generated considerable interest in the present times. It is argued that by viewing human life in terms of both personal and moral perfections, virtue and *telos*, Aristotle provides us with a rich and fulfilling account of human interactions, and secures an underlying unity among the diverse aspects of human life, and a coherent relationship between an individual's personal and social conduct. MacIntyre remarks: "For Aristotle...the good life for man is itself single and unitary, compounded of a hierarchy of goods."¹⁹¹

However, Aristotle has been criticized for merging the two domains, the personal and the social, of an individual's life into one. It is claimed that Aristotle's view is inadequate to meet the complexities of a modern life, and is inconsistent with the modern idea of pluralism, that is, a respect for the divergent traditions, cultures, and concepts of a good life. Will Kymlicka remarks: "The 'fact of pluralism' defeats not only traditional communitarianism, but also the revival of Aristotelian republicanism."¹⁹² Since Aristotle's conception of a good life revolves around a closely-knit *polis* and presumes some form of underlying social unity and moral structure, and present day liberal societies (states) are large and contain a diffused value system, they are inherently incompatible with one another and they cannot be reconciled. In other words, the Aristotelian ideal of a good life cannot be infused into modern liberal societies without reversing the historical progress – from a pluralistic and diversified view of a good life,

¹⁹¹ MacIntyre. *After Virtue*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p. 157.

¹⁹² Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 295.

which accords equal value to the competing conceptions of a good life and does not prioritize one conception at the expense of the other, to a unitary and local conception of a good life: “Aristotelian republicans are trying, in effect, to reverse this historical shift, and restore the primacy of the ‘liberty of ancients’ to our conceptions of a good life.”¹⁹³

Kymlicka is critical of the above move of Aristotelian republicans.¹⁹⁴ He questions the authenticity of their premises and disputes the point of their departure. His arguments can be grouped under two broad heads. First, our current conception, i.e., the liberal conception, of a good life is much more rich and complex than that of Aristotle’s (Kymlicka, *CPP*, p. 297-298), as Aristotelian republicans fail to see. And second, Aristotle’s conception of a good life can easily slide into coercive regimes, and threaten an individual’s freedom of choice and moral autonomy. That is, it can, with very little amendments or defects, lead to the majority’s domination of the minority, and undermine central tenets of the liberal way of life (Kymlicka, *CPP*, p. 299). Below, I will discuss the merit and significance of Kymlicka’s arguments. I will show, specifically, that his first argument entails a liberal bias – it prioritizes the liberal conception of a good life over the ancients, without providing satisfactory reasons to do so, and it must be rejected. But his second argument, if we accept its underlying rationale, which is disputable though, has strength; it reflects some genuine modern worries and is grounded in historical experiences.¹⁹⁵ Accordingly, it deserves serious consideration.

¹⁹³ Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 295.

¹⁹⁴ Aristotelian republican – this nomenclature is ordinarily used to describe the scholars that argue for a true relevance of Aristotle’s moral and political thought to our times. Kymlicka uses it likewise (Kymlicka, p. 294).

¹⁹⁵ The domination of one conception of a “good life” over the other has, in the past, led to some catastrophic consequences. A truly virtuous conception of a good life (Aristotle’s, for instance), if truly executed, will never lead to such consequences, but the nobility of thought here must not be allowed to

Kymlicka's first argument questions the premises that constitute the starting point of Aristotelian republicans. Aristotelian republicans argue that a good life necessitates an intrinsic relationship between personal and social aspects of individuals' conduct, such that they both manifest virtue. Accordingly, Aristotelian republicanism, in its most potent form, holds that a good life requires a moral coherence between an individual's personal and civic conduct.¹⁹⁶ It equates and identifies a good citizen with a virtuous person – a good citizen is a virtuous person, and a virtuous person a good citizen. As a result, an individual must reflect an active political consciousness to live a good life, or to qualify as a virtuous person. This view of a good life, Kymlicka contends, has run its course, and Aristotelian republicans are mistaken in seeking its revival.

Against Aristotelian republicans, Kymlicka argues that it is indeed possible and even desirable to live a good life without an active (political) participation in the civic domain. Our personal and social life, he contends, is much more richer than that of the ancient Greeks – it has more elements, and is much more fulfilling than its historical counterpart. Hence, Aristotelian republicans are wrong in their contention that only a coherence in the personal and civic domains will facilitate us a good life:

Aristotelian republicans assume that people have turned away from political participation [civic life] because they find politics unfulfilling. Our attachment to private life, I believe, is the result, not (or not only) of the impoverishment of public life, but of the enrichment of private life. We no longer seek gratification in politics because *our personal and social life is so much more richer than that of the ancient Greeks* (italics mine. Kymlicka, *CPP*, p. 297-298).

overlook the realities that human beings are susceptible to wrong judgments and abuse of power. In fact, any such overlooking will betray a lack of practical wisdom (*phronesis*), which is a virtue.

¹⁹⁶ Mary Warnock writes: "One of the features of the good life in Aristotle's view is that a man should treat his fellowmen well, and be just and friendly to them. So that a man could not attain moral excellence who thought of nobody but himself. Neither could he attain it if he merely thought noble thoughts and did not put them into effect" (Warnock in Forward to J.L. Ackrill's *Aristotle's Ethics*. London: Faber & Faber, 1973).

The veracity of Kymlicka's remark can be disputed both on theoretical and practical grounds. First, Kymlicka's observation confuses a conceptual fact with an empirical reality, that is, Aristotle's concept of a good life is identified with the particular realities of the Greek society. The inference seems to be something like this: since modern (liberal) societies provide us with a better life than the ancient Greek society provided to its people, our conception of a good life is better than that of the ancient Greeks. But it may not be so; in fact, it is not so. Even a cursory look at Aristotle's conception of a good life shows that it entails a genuine satisfaction of all human faculties, and a full-fledged realization of all human potentialities. Aristotle envisions a good life in terms of moral and material gratifications, virtue and happiness, and as such his conception of a good life is wholesome, thorough and complete. Hence, Kymlicka's critique oversteps its primary purpose, that is, to show how the modern liberal concept of a good life is better than that of the ancient Greeks', particularly Aristotle's.

Second, Kymlicka's view that modern life is richer than that of the ancient Greeks is highly questionable. Without indulging in a thorough exposition of the Greek concept of life, it can be said with some confidence (if the Greek intellectual tradition be our guide) that the ancient Greeks had a very rich and fulfilling concept of life. This is not to deny that modern life, with its technological advancement and other forms of material progress, is much more complex than that of the ancient Greeks, but to challenge whether complexity entails enrichment. In the present context, it does not. Moreover, even if we grant to Kymlicka that the modern personal and social life is richer than that of the ancient Greeks, it would not justify his inference that a withdrawal from civic life is legitimate. All that it does is to explain why members of liberal societies are less

interested, and at times, even apathetic towards civic engagements and political cooperation with other citizens. It does not provide a justification for this disengagement. In fact, this disengagement is detrimental to the liberal principle of democratic and political participation.

Kymlicka's second argument states that the realization of Aristotle's conception of a good life, as an intimate union of personal and civic elements, in our times will necessarily invite coercion and abuse of power. He writes:

This doctrine [Aristotle's concept of a good life] could only be implemented through a coercive form of state perfectionism, in which the government pre-empt and constrains individuals' own judgements about the good life. This violates liberal commitments to individual autonomy and state neutrality.¹⁹⁷

Kymlicka is saying that a privileged Aristotelian conception of a good life will legitimize coercive state intervention in individuals' lives and will undermine their freedom of choice. Before we proceed with the counter-argument, a clarification is required. Kymlicka's argument has two aspects, and both the aspects are intimately connected at a deeper level. The first aspect is obvious. It rejects, on the grounds of coercion, the applicability of Aristotle's theory of a good life in our times. The second aspect is implied, yet contextually clear. Kymlicka contends that modern liberal societies are plural and diverse, and their citizens free and autonomous. Hence, the very idea of a 'unitary concept of good life', Aristotelian, or otherwise, is out of order. Accordingly, a satisfactory reply to Kymlicka's objections must establish two things: that Aristotle's concept of a good life is inherently incompatible with all forms of coercion and violence (mental or physical), and that it is fully compatible with all forms of pluralism.

¹⁹⁷ Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 299.

A good life, according to Aristotle, necessitates virtue. And “Virtue is a state of rational choice, consisting in a mean relative to us and determined by reason – the reason, that is, by reference to which a practically wise person would determine it” (*NE* 1107a1-3). That is to say, a good life as Aristotle understands it, has three prerequisites. In the first place, it requires a rational reason, that is, a reason unhindered by raw feelings and passions. A virtuous person must properly appropriate his reason, such that it empowers him to make good and knowledgeable decisions. Next, it entails practical knowledge. A virtuous individual must have the practical capacity to understand the daily life-situations, and a will to act in virtuous ways and to resist the vicious. Finally, the first two attributes depend upon a free moral agent, namely, the individual who rationally deliberates on the goods that he desires, the actions that he wants to perform, and the virtues that he wants to practice (*NE* 1113a3-14).

Accordingly, he argues that a good life requires a proper gratification of an individual’s moral and material ends, of personal and civic gratifications (*NE* 1171b27-35). It requires a harmonization of an individual’s personal interests, pursuits, aims and objectives with his wider social context and its inhabitants, such that his actions lead to the satisfaction and flourishing of all individuals who share his personal, moral and physical space. For Aristotle, the pursuit and realization of a good life is contingent upon an individual’s virtuous conduct both in the personal and civic domain. Aristotle, accordingly, suggests that an individual must associate himself with other citizens in a noble way. He must act in a just and truthful manner, and he must be friendly, generous and temperate in his dealings with his fellow citizens. This constitutes the heart of

Aristotle's concept of civic friendship, i.e., a good life in association with one's fellow-citizens.

That is to say, a good life, for Aristotle, involves a rational recognition of personal and social interests, and a desire to exhibit it in one's conduct, and such a life is totally incompatible with all kinds of coercion. The underlying theme that runs through Aristotle's conception of a good life is not that an individual can be forced or should be forced to choose a life of virtue and perfection (*NE* 1110b1-17); on the contrary, it impinges upon a rational choice and moral autonomy, which are manifested in, and by, only a free individual (*NE* 1113a3-14).

Thus, unlike the modern liberal conception of a good life, including Kymlicka's, which prioritizes *simply* an individual's freedom of choice, the Aristotelian view insists on a *right choice*, and a right choice here means a 'choice according to an individual's reason and virtue' (*NE* 1105a30-31). So, it cannot be based upon an individual's personal prejudices and narrow mindedness. For instance, a free choice, for Aristotle, requires a voluntary virtuous conduct and not a forced adherence to virtue. Likewise, it facilitates a coherence between an individual's personal and civic obligations, private and social commitments. It leads to a harmony among the diverse spheres of an individual's life, and it does not set them apart.

Kymlicka, along with other liberals, questions the above Aristotelian understanding of a free choice. The reasoning is that virtue as the content, and (or) determinant of an individual's free choice, may, or will lead to an arbitrary perfectionism and social coercion. It will restrict an individual's free choice: since both the content and determinant – virtue – of a free choice are already given, there is not much to choose

from. Kymlicka argues that it possible to have a more robust form of individual choice, such that an individual can adopt or abandon an end (personal or social) depending upon his free will, and address positively his concern towards the welfare of his fellow citizens, or, the pursuit of virtue in the civic domain. He writes:

The liberal view is sensitive to the way our individual lives and our moral deliberations are related to, and situated in, a shared social context. The individualism [the conception of an individual's free choice, and his social associations with others] that underlies liberalism isn't valued at the expense of our social nature or our shared community. It is an individualism that accords with, rather than opposes, the undeniable importance to us of our social world.¹⁹⁸

That is to say, the liberal notion of a free choice must not be construed in terms of social ambivalence, such that an individual is so self-centered and self-absorbed that he has no positive concern for his social context, civic associations, and fellow citizens. The liberal concept of free choice is fully in agreement with the moral and material welfare of others, and this agreement is to be found in the fundamental liberal belief that each individual is capable of constituting his own personal and moral ends and principles, and no one (neither a person nor an institution) should influence or impede his rational deliberations regarding such ends and principles. The liberal understanding of free choice is not without a content; on the contrary, it has a rich content, but this content is constructed and derived through an individual's rational investigation.

The idea that we all choose our moral ends and principles independently of our social context was put forward by Kant. And liberals, including Kymlicka, embrace it without much reservation (Kymlicka, *LCC*, p. 62). The thinking is that this Kantian presupposition is necessary to ward off interference and coercion in an individual's life,

¹⁹⁸ Will Kymlicka. *Liberalism, Community and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 3.

whereby an individual may be forced to adopt certain principles of conduct which are external to his being and alien to his individuality. I have pointed out earlier, in my chapter on Kant and also in the second section of this chapter, that this presupposition separates an individual's moral choice from his material choice, and creates a schism between personal and social interactions. By doing so, it leads to an impoverished understanding of a free will and free choice. On this view, there remains a perpetual gap, and a difference, between an individual's personal and social commitments.

Kymlicka realizes the above difficulty, at least partly, and seeks to rectify it by proposing a broader understanding of the self, that is, the liberal self. He argues that, though the self is ontologically prior to its personal and moral ends, in practice it is intimately associated with them (Kymlicka, *LCC*, p. 53-57). In this way, he intends to secure a free choice, without any content in the ontological realm, yet with an enriched content in the empirical domain – a content that is exclusively determined by an individual's own thought and rationality. He is saying that we can retain the Kantian distinction between the moral will and material will, such that an individual's moral choice, in its pure form, is without a content – that is, the content is constructed, formally, by an individual himself – and that this still provides a meaningful account of the liberal notion of free choice. But this is problematic. It restores the dichotomous nature of the Kantian free will (material and formal will), and creates a conflict between an individual's moral and material will, and his personal and social conduct. Aristotelian republicans criticize this version of free choice, and free will. MacIntyre writes: “In an Aristotelian perspective anyone who can formulate such a contrast [between personal and social] has no country, has no *polis*; he is a citizen of nowhere, an internal exile wherever

he lives. Indeed from an Aristotelian point of view, a modern liberal political society can appear only as a collection of citizens of nowhere who have banded together for their common protection.”¹⁹⁹

Kymlicka also argues that Aristotle’s concept of a good life is at odds with the present day liberalism, which celebrates pluralism by assigning equal moral merit and consideration to divergent conceptions of a good life (Kymlicka, *CPP*, p. 299). Present day societies, he argues, exhibit tremendous internal differences in terms of conceptions of a good life. There are several reasons for this. First, unlike the ancient Greeks, modern societies (and states) are much bigger in terms of population. They house different and often competing cultures, religions, social sects, and individuals. Furthermore, each of them embodies a conception of a good life, and so a fair and equal treatment to all of them requires that the state must not promote one conception of the good life over others. Second, sometimes there are bitter disagreements between different communities, cultures, and individuals; hence, a neutral state is required as an arbiter. Accordingly, Kymlicka’s critique requires Aristotelian republicans to show that Aristotle’s concept of a good life is consistent with modern political pluralism.

In fact, for Aristotle, a society (and, a state, for that matter) is an association of associations (*Politics* 1252a1-6). It is a larger political association, which is constituted by smaller associations, such as family, friendship and village. Family is the first form of a social association, and other associations come into being with human need, progress, and advancement. Since a good life requires multiple kinds of goods (material and moral), and a proper attainment of these goods requires a full-fledged association with other human beings, one association leads to another (for instance, several families form

¹⁹⁹ MacIntyre. *After Virtue*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p. 156.

a village), and finally they result in the constitution of a *polis*. The *polis* is a perfect association in that it facilitates all the essential ingredients of a good life (*Politics* 1280a31-32).

If so, then the very idea of a *polis* entails pluralism. That is, it is an embodiment of diverse kinds of associations, each equally important and meaningful. These associations signify a difference in interest, pursuits, aims and objectives. For instance, an association of carpenters does not have the same interests as that of musicians. Likewise, pleasure and advantage friends have radically different priorities in comparison to moral friends (*NE* 1156b1-15). For Aristotle, a *polis* contains different and even opposing associations. However, all individuals and associations, Aristotle argues, desire a good life – a life of personal and moral fulfillment. Aristotle's concept of a good life is meant to encompass a diversity of goods, values, and associations, and it is, in theory, perfectly compatible with all forms of pluralism.

However, it can be said that the citizens in modern societies (may) have certain irreconcilable differences regarding the concept of a good life, and, if so, then liberalism requires that those differences must be respected. Kymlicka writes:

A liberal democracy must respect such diverse conceptions of a good life, as far as possible, and should not compel people to adopt a conception of a good life which privileges political participation [an individual's active participation in the civic spheres] as the source of meaning and satisfaction.²⁰⁰

The merit of the above argument is undeniable, but its point of reference questionable. Kymlicka is right in saying that a civilized society must not coerce its citizens or any other human person, but he is wrong in implying that an Aristotelian

²⁰⁰ Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 299.

conception of a good life is open to such abuse. I have argued that Aristotle's conception of rational choice necessitates a complete realization of an individual's moral and material capacities, and is inherently incompatible with any form of force, coercion, and violence. A simple look at his idea of civic friendship shows that civic differences must be resolved within the context of virtue, not through power or coercion.

Civic friendship, Aristotle argues, entails a deep appreciation of the good of the other people.²⁰¹ It encourages an individual to contribute to the well-being of fellow-citizens, and social cohabitants in a meaningful and positive way. It requires us to value the material prosperity and gratification of other people. In simple terms, while seeking my own gratification and material well being, I am conscious that I live in a shared social space, and must not do anything that will cause harm to its inhabitants. I must not indulge in asocial or anti-social activities. I must undertake positive acts of generosity, magnanimity, friendliness, and sympathy. My civic conduct must be in agreement with virtue²⁰² and such a conduct, Aristotle believes, has an influential effect. That is, when other civic members see my commitment to virtue, they develop a positive outlook towards me, and also towards our overall civic interactions. Accordingly, my virtuous conduct secures virtue in my social spheres, and it reduces my differences with others.

Civic friendship also necessitates a moral respect for other human beings (*NE* 1155a). It puts me under a moral obligation to respect my fellow beings as ends in themselves, and to value them for their intrinsic moral capacities and humanness, and not for their extrinsic properties. This possession of an unconditional respect towards others

²⁰¹ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 371.

²⁰² Aristotle remarks: "The good person, however, acts for the sake of what is noble, and the more so the better he is; and he acts for the sake of his friend, neglecting his own interest" (*NE* 1168a33-35).

is a critical aspect of my own moral development,²⁰³ and it has a tremendous impact upon my fellow-citizens. For instance, we have it on common sense that no individual wants to be used in an instrumental way, such that he becomes a tool of someone else's gratifications. Now, when I respect the moral being of my fellow beings, they will typically respect my moral being. This belief that good conduct and moral actions generate similar reactions is grounded in Aristotle's teleological claim that all human beings aim at the good (*NE* 1094a1-3), and that we can attain our material and moral satisfactions, natural and moral ends only through a meaningful association with others (*Politics* 1252b27-30). Cooper writes: "On Aristotle's view, civic, and not just personal, friendship is an essential component in the flourishing human life. In order to flourish a person needs the more fully realized forms of the moral virtues that only civic friendship brings."²⁰⁴

To sum up our discussion, we can say that Aristotle provides us with an enriched theory of friendship, and a fulfilling concept of self-other relationships. He conceives of friendship in terms of an individual's full-fledged personal and moral development. Friendship is seen as an essential element of our personal life and civic associations. It signifies our desire for a moral communion with other human beings. Aristotle explains in this way how others are necessary constituents of our own happiness and virtue, and how to associate with them in a meaningful way.

Unlike Kant and Mill, Aristotle strongly believes that friendship entails a personal relationship, context, and communion, and that it cannot be based upon abstract universal

²⁰³ Aristotle writes: "Friendship is a community, and as we are in relation to ourselves, so we are in relation to a friend" (*NE* 1171b32-33).

²⁰⁴ J. M. Cooper. *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 335.

principles. It necessitates personal involvement in the life of one's friends, and a concrete contribution to their good. For, friends are partners in one another's moral perfection and material well-being. Aristotle shows that friendship is an essential ingredient of a good life, that it expands the deliberative powers of the friends, and imparts a virtuous content to their rational choices. Though he agrees with the fundamental tenet of present day liberalism that an individual must freely choose his personal and moral good, he shows that such a choice cannot be bereft of virtue. As a result, he imparts a meaningful content to the liberal idea of free choice and moral and political deliberations.

Taken together, all these aspects of Aristotle's theory of friendship show that friendship is a critical constituent of human welfare and flourishing. Accordingly, I conclude that a friendly communion with other human beings, and not an impartial distance, will provide an enduring foundation to the self-other relationship, and to present day liberalism.

Conclusion

My purpose in this thesis has been to critically examine friendship, and to determine its value in our lives. That is, I wanted to conduct a philosophical investigation into the qualities that characterise friendship and the principles that determine its content. So, I have considered what constitutes friendship, what kind of relationship friendship is, what gives friendship its meaning, and whether friendship is merely a personal relationship or has also a general moral value.

Any philosophically viable account of friendship must meet at least two requirements. In the first place, it must be grounded in our experience of friendship. That is, it must reflect our basic understanding of friendship and account for the dispositions that friends have towards each other. Friends have affection for each other, and show a willingness to help each other; they share common interests, spend time together, and contribute to each other's development. They participate in each other's lives and projects. As such, friendship becomes a medium of association with others.

In the second place, a viable philosophical account must explain the principles that underlie friendship and help determine its content. These principles are critical for understanding the motives that lead to the formation of a friendship and the values that determine its content. They help understand why we make friends in the first place, how we choose our friends, and what directs our activities in friendship. For instance, some people treat friendship as an intrinsically good relationship and as an essential part of their lives, whereas others treat it as personally valuable but still less than essential to their lives. Similarly, some people make friends for the cultivation of good qualities,

whereas others do so for the pursuit of their personal gratification. In order to understand properly these friendships and assess their value in our lives, we need to sort out the various distinctions and principles that inform them.

I have carried out this investigation through an examination of three leading conceptions of friendship. In the first chapter, I showed how Aristotle argues that friendship either is virtue or involves virtue. In other words, virtue constitutes the very essence of strong friendly bonds. Friends love each other, exhibit good will for each other, and value sharing parts of their lives with each other. Accordingly, friendship ensures their happiness, contributes to their moral goodness, and secures their psychological fulfillment. Furthermore, it leads to the cultivation of civic virtues and noble conduct. That is to say, for Aristotle, friendship provides the basis for cohesion between the personal and social domains of an individual's life.

In the second chapter, I showed how Kant founds friendship on pure reason and duty. Duty pertains exclusively to the rational and universal aspects of human nature, as opposed to the inclinational and empirical aspects. Accordingly, Kant conforms his understanding of friendship to this division. This means that moral friends perform duty for its own sake, while any effects on their own happiness are inessential. They establish their bond on rational understanding alone, independently of any affection, interests, shared history or experiences, etc. By contrast, inclinational friends conduct friendship according to their natural desires and ends, and exclude moral motives from their friendship. As a result, Kant's system effects a strong separation between a moral basis for friendship and an inclinational one. This leads to a severely defective view of friendship, where moral friends cannot value the ways in which they share in each other's

lives or make each other feel. They must constrain their association according to the commands of duty. Ultimately, Kant gives us a barren and unfulfilling account of friendship.

In the third chapter, I presented Mill's reaction to Kant's separation between the natural and moral ends of friendship. Instead of creating a dichotomy between these ends, Mill identifies them by the single criterion of utility. That is, the maximisation of utility, or happiness, captures both the moral worth of friendship and its role in our natural fulfillment. Nevertheless, by merging these two aspects of friendship together, Mill commits a different mistake. Specifically, he is unable to retain the distinctiveness of each person in one's life, and of one's relationships with them. Even though Mill introduces a qualitative distinction between goods, he still requires us to compare them objectively and assess the relative value of one action over another. This obscures the intrinsic, inestimable value that a friend may have for me. Instead of treating my friend as a unique individual with a special part in my life, I must treat him as an easily calculable member of an aggregate. Hence, despite Mill's different approach, his account of friendship is no more satisfying than Kant's.

Given the problems that Kant and Mill face, one may ask why they proceed in the ways that they do, and conceive of friendship in such abstract terms. Any satisfactory answer to this question must consider their overall ethical paradigm. They insist that a viable moral principle must hold equally for all human beings, and in all circumstances, relations, etc. They focus on general self-other relations, between both friends and non-friends, and want to ensure that one kind of relationship has no priority or primacy over the other. However, in order to secure these requirements, they must abstract from the

uniqueness of each human being, circumstance, relation, etc. In other words, they assume that moral principles must safeguard against the particulars that supposedly threaten the ethical value of such principles.

As a result, Kant and Mill construe the moral worth of friendship in terms of abstract, universal and impartial principles. Impartiality implies adopting a disinterested and distant vantage point that is separate from one's attachments and affections. That is, I must abstract from a given situation and ignore any particular ways in which I am involved in the lives of others. I must understand my friend primarily as an instantiation of a universal, before considering him or her as an individual. In other words, impartiality comes at the expense of friendship and friendly bonds. This takes away the personal value and meaning of friendship. Hence, by adopting the view that morality requires impartiality, Kant's and Mill's theories fail to properly accommodate friendship.

Not only does this approach hinder friendship in itself, it also undermines the general moral activity that Kant and Mill are trying to protect. That is to say, by problematizing one's associations with others, Kant and Mill obscure important elements of morality. For instance, if I do not allow my affections to influence my actions, I am ignoring something that gives meaning and satisfaction to my actions, and which makes me want to do good in the first place. Indeed, it is not surprising that both Kant and Mill have difficulty explaining how we can be motivated to do good for others. Hence, it is questionable whether abstracting from friendly bonds leaves a sufficient basis for truly meaningful activity with others.

By contrast, Aristotle provides a more harmonious, satisfactory, and fulfilling account of friendship. In the first place, he rejects any appeal to abstract impartiality. This

allows friendship to occupy a central role in one's moral life. In the second place, by grounding friendship on virtue, he provides a universal basis for one's entire moral and social conduct. Virtue determines one's proper disposition towards non-friends just as much as it does towards friends. Instead of requiring abstraction, one's virtuous disposition springs from one's personal associations. The personal aspect of one's life fosters and grounds one's attitude towards both personal and civic relations. This establishes the moral standard of fairness in general self-other relations, without the detachment of impartiality.

In this way, one's personal and civic relations form a continuum, and they draw on the same sense of virtue. Once I have a well-developed and virtuous attitude towards friendship, my good will and friendly dispositions flow beyond my personal friendships. I carry them in my broader social life. When I interact with others, I manifest a general desire for community and involvement, whether with personal friends or fellow-citizens. That is, my civic interaction is a meaningful part of my daily life, and I want all of my fellow-citizens to be happy. In other words, the thinness of my civic ties reflects a lack of time and ability to develop them, but it does not reflect any lack of propensity to do so. Indeed, civic friendship is an expression of this very propensity.

The very idea of such a civic partnership is missing in our times. Hence, Aristotle's views look unfamiliar to us. Under the influence of Kantian deontology and present day liberalism, we have come to understand our moral perfection largely as a personal and isolated endeavour, bereft of any genuine involvement with others. And Mill's utilitarianism, notwithstanding its questionable conclusion, has taught us to value pleasure even if it comes at the expense of other moral goods. Indeed, utilitarianism holds

that there can be no such other goods. However, friendship is one such good, as I have shown.

Aristotle recognises friendship as a distinctive moral good and establishes its intrinsic value in our lives and conduct. He shows that our propensity to make friends is natural and that this propensity is morally good. He contends that friendship is a necessary constituent of our personal and moral fulfilment. The very idea of a good personal and social life, he believes, impinges upon good personal and civic friendships. Taking these considerations together, I conclude that Aristotle provides us with a meaningful and enriched account of friendship. His theory of friendship harmonises the personal and social spheres of an individual's life, secures his personal and moral flourishing, and has a cohesive effect upon his overall personal and civic relationships. In sum, friendship, as Aristotle conceives of it, draws two individuals together, structures their relationship on virtue, reduces their personal and moral distance, and facilitates a good life.

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