

PLATO'S *LYSIS* AND ITS INFLUENCE ON KANT AND ARISTOTLE

A Thesis

by

MICHAEL OVIEDO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2008

Major Subject: Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Plato's *Lysis* and Its Influence on Kant and Aristotle.

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Most scholarship concerning Plato's *Lysis* focuses on the failure of Socrates' elenchus in its endeavor to define friendship. However, this construal of the dialogue is shortsighted. If one analyzes the dialogue's dramatic subtext then one will discover a fairly complete theory of friendship attributable to Plato. This issue is critical, for the *Lysis* is a significant influence on Aristotle's ethical theory. Thus, unless one grasps the relationship between Aristotle's ethical theory and this particular dialogue, then one could argue that one does not really understand Aristotle's motivations regarding his usage of friendship as the defining normative force of his political community.

Similarly, understanding the *Lysis* is paramount to understanding Kant's theory of friendship as well, for Kant can be interpreted as a virtue ethicist. And, analogous to other virtue ethicists such as Aristotle and Plato, Kant espouses a perspective on friendship, which utilizes friendship as the social cohesion of the moral community. However, unlike Plato and Aristotle who argue that friendship exists for the sake of the other person, Kant's theory claims that one must participate in friendships for the sake of

duty. This departure raises various issues regarding his understanding of friendship, for example, are friendships genuine?

For Kant, friendship enables those involved to gain a greater understanding of the moral law and nurture relationships which will facilitate that goal. In this respect, like good Aristotelians help one another attain *eudaimonia*, good Kantians help each other strive towards holiness. Hence, for Kant, the empirical facets of our relationships such as aspiring towards *eudaimonia*, are not as important as gaining a better understanding of the moral law. Thus, to whom the actions are geared does not matter; it is the actions themselves, which are important. In this respect, while the virtuous will *genuinely* desire to help their friend, they do not *genuinely* help their friend in the Ancient Greek sense, since their actions are performed for duty's sake. Nevertheless, Kant introduces humanistic qualities to friendship, e.g. trust, respect, and self-disclosure, which advances its study into the present day.

DEDICATION

For my mother and Chris—*thank you*

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1. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Most scholarship concerning Plato's *Lysis* focuses on the failure of Socrates' elenchus in its endeavor to define friendship. However, as the second section will show, this interpretation of the dialogue is not complete, for it fails to gain an understanding of the dialogue's dramatic subtext. As the next section will show, the dramatic subtext is where Plato's suggests his theory of friendship.

If one analyzes the *aporia* in the *Lysis*' final remarks, then one will encounter two seemingly different conclusions. On one hand, Socrates and the boys are unable to fashion a definition of friendship. In other words, they are unable to derive its first principle. On the other hand, Socrates states that the boys, through this process, would appear to others as friends. This comment suggests that Socrates possesses some understanding of what friendship is. However, if Socrates and the boys cannot define friendship, then how does friendship exist?

For Plato, friendship exists as an activity. It is the process of enhancing one's wisdom, or understanding, through shared philosophical inquiry. This insight, however, is not original. As the section states, Aristide Tessitore surmises a similar conclusion.¹ Though, as section 2 will show, Tessitore's assertion is cursory with respect to the depth of the dialogue, for while Tessitore states that friendship exists through philosophical

This thesis follows MLA style.

¹ Aristide Tessitore, "Plato's *Lysis*: An Introduction to Philosophic Friendship," *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 28 (1990): 127-28

activity, he fails to articulate Plato's conception past this point. Hence, Section 2 aims to excavate further information from the dialogue itself.

From the dramatic subtext, one can extrapolate a theory of friendship, which is surprisingly similar to the one proffered by Aristotle. Firstly, if one connects Socrates to Hermes, then one will discover that Socrates' role within the dialogue is to lead the boys on a journey and provide good advice so that the boys can successfully aspire to become "good." If one applies this correlation to the characters, themselves, then one will discover the following relationships. First, one will see that erotic relationships between, for example, the affection that Hippothales possesses towards Lysis, while seeming genuine is actually self-interested. Next, if one examines the conclusion of Socrates' argument concerning friendship and the good, which states that the good cannot be friends because they are self-sufficient, then one will see that there are two levels of self-sufficiency. On one level, there is health (hence, the doctor example), and on the higher level, there is 'the good', which can only be reached through the pursuit of wisdom. Therefore, from this distinction one can deduce the friendship of usefulness and its consequent bifurcation into the friendships that desire higher goods such as virtue and friendships that maintain basic goods such as health. While striving for virtue is necessarily involved with the pursuit of the greatest happiness, the latter type is not. For example, one can be famous or wealthy and still not happy.

At this juncture, one might wonder what Socrates' role within the dialogue is. We know that he represents Hermes but how does this allusion influence the dialogue. As Section 2 will show, there is a model that friendship follows: one befriends an

intermediary on account of the good to avoid the bad. Hence, one could make the argument that Socrates' relationship to the boys is actually a civic friendship. If this is the case, then not only is Plato's theory of friendship other-regarding in a similar vein to Aristotle's, but Socrates' friendship to the boys implies that the activity of friendship is the cohesion of the political community.

As Section Three will show Aristotle's conception of friendship is the community. Normative forces originate from many community-based sources such as the ruler, other friends, the household, virtue, and so on. However, for Aristotle the ultimate catalyst to becoming a virtuous person and thereby leading a virtuous life is how one befriends oneself.

For Aristotle self-love is integral, for it is through one's love for oneself that one becomes virtuous. This idea immediately suggests an 'other-regard', which as Section 2 showed is not an easy task for one who desires to garner a conception of friendship from Plato's dialogue.

Nevertheless, one significant difference for Aristotle is that he defines the state of friendship. Hence, it is no longer understood as just an activity. Aristotle, of course, is able to do this because he alters Plato's Theory of Ideas. No longer would different understandings of what friendship is be forced into one universal first principle. Instead, the form of friendship, for Aristotle, becomes equivocal. This enables Aristotle to create his polymorphic view and classify more types of relationships as friendships. Thus, in Aristotle one now has the complete form (character-based friendship) and the two incomplete (pleasure-based and utility-based). Through the complete form one can

participate in philosophical activity to attain *eudaimonia*. As such, for Aristotle the absolutely good still require friends to maintain the perfect life.

Section 4 explicates Kant's reaction to Plato's and Aristotle's respective views on friendship. First off, Section 4 explains Kant's relationship to virtue ethics in that since his theory possesses many parallels to virtue ethics, to be charitable towards Kant one must realize that Kant is both a virtue ethicist *and* a deontologist. And, once that connection is established, the section can discuss Kant's perspective on friendship, which, like Aristotle and Plato, utilizes friendship as the social cohesion of the moral community. However, unlike Plato and Aristotle who argue that friendship exists for the sake of the other person, Kant's theory claims that one must participate in friendships for the sake of duty. This departure raises various issues regarding his understanding of friendship, for example, are friendships genuine?

For Kant, friendship fulfills a function. In other words, friendship enables those involved to gain a greater understanding of the moral law and nurture relationships, which will facilitate that goal. In this respect, like good Aristotelians help one another attain *eudaimonia*, good Kantians help each other strive towards holiness. Hence, for Kant, the empirical facets of our relationships such as aspiring towards *eudaimonia*, are not as important as gaining a better understanding of the moral law. Thus, to whom the actions are geared does not matter; it is the actions themselves, which are important. In this sense, while the virtuous will *genuinely* desire to help their friend, they do not *genuinely* help their friend in the Ancient Greek sense since their actions are performed

for duty's sake. Nevertheless, Kant introduces humanistic qualities to friendship, e.g. trust, respect, and self-disclosure, which advances its study into the present day.

Consequently, through this brief genealogy one will discover the evolution of a particular friendship paradigm with similar objectives; manifest itself through all three (Plato, Aristotle, and Kant) major thinkers. Thus, while Aristotle is the most prominent example of this view for it permeates his ethical theory, both Kant's and Plato's respective positions, which are analogous to Aristotle, should not be ignored.

2. PLATONIC FRIENDSHIP: A RE-EVALUATION OF THE *LYSIS*

The *Lysis* takes place at a wrestling school during a festival honoring the god Hermes. Plato's decision to use this particular setting is significant. Since Hermes is the god of gymnastic sports, e.g. wrestling, this allusion connotes a strong tie between Hermes and the dialogue. Furthermore, since Hermes is also the patron of wayfarers, and Socrates functions as a guide for the boys in this dialogue, there is also a connection between Hermes and Socrates. Hence, one can claim that Socrates guides the boys on their journey towards wisdom through the activity of philosophical friendship. Since the object of discussion is friendship, the philosophical activity in this dialogue aims at comprehending, and subsequently, articulating friendship's first principle.² However, as this section will show, while the dialogue explores many different conceptions of friendship through Socrates' elenchus, the true theory of friendship lies within the dialogue's dramatic subtext exhibited by its interlocutors.

The following section will canvas Plato's position on friendship qua Socrates in the *Lysis* by exploring the dialogue's underlying dramatic subtext and, from that subtext, attempting to extrapolate meaning (latent and manifest conclusions or details) that may

² Aristide Tessitore, "Plato's *Lysis*: An Introduction to Philosophic Friendship," pp. 127-28. According to Tessitore, there are three conjectures one can draw from the *Lysis*. First, the activity of seeking understanding facilitates friendship. Second, through philosophical friendship, the dialogue attempts to define its first principle. Third, even though Socrates does not possess divine wisdom, he knows how to demonstrate the activity of friendship through philosophical inquiry, i.e. he has some idea of what friendship is. While these inferences from the text provide valuable insight concerning what the dramatic subtext reveals, this section will show that these basic speculative summations do not capture the depth of meaning that the dramatic subtext contains. Therefore, the following section will use these conjectures as a base to delve further into the dialogue in an attempt to gain a better understanding of what Plato is trying to convey but this section's conclusions will demonstrate that Tessitore's conjectures barely *scratched the surface*.

enable us to form an understanding of what Plato may have actually believed about friendship. While scholars debate many facets of this dialogue such as its contribution to Plato's project as a whole, for example, does the *Lysis* develop middle Platonic doctrines; this section will primarily focus on the following three issues.³ First, what is the significance of Plato's *aporia* in the dialogue's closing remarks; second, what do the dramatic subtext and closing paradox enable us to understand about friendship; and third, based upon what the dialogue states concerning friendship and what conducted scholarship has found regarding Plato's ethics, what might Plato's beliefs on friendship have been?

2.1 Plato's Paradox

In the *Lysis*, "Plato's paradox" is the culmination and subsequent disparity between the dialogue's surface interpretation and the dramatic subtext extant among the dialogue's participants. More specifically, it is the *aporia* Plato constructs in the dialogue's closing remarks where, on one hand, the failure of the group to define friendship (or its first principle) is contrasted by the dramatic subtext, which suggests that friendship was present through the interactions of the dialogue's interlocutors. Therefore, while the elenchus' participants could not articulate the essence of friendship as a state, the dramatic subtext illustrates the activity of friendship through the characters' interactions—through philosophical activity, or the pursuit of gaining wisdom or understanding. This pursuit will enable us through careful study to excavate

³ W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 4 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 143. See also A.E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (London: Methuen and Company Limited, 1926), 64.

information, which will permit construction of a speculative understanding of Plato's theory of friendship, which bears a similar resemblance to Aristotle's. For example, while Aristotle's three main types of friendship are character-based, utility-based, and pleasure-based; for Plato, true friendship will strive towards the attainment of higher goods, its neutral version will aspire towards self-sufficiency in basic goods, e.g. health, and its faux version will pursue erotic relations.

2.2 The Problem of Interpretation

The Socratic fallacy, according to Guthrie, states: "we cannot know anything about x unless we know what x is in the sense of being able to define it."⁴ Consequently, the following issue emerges: 'If Socrates does not know what 'friendship' is, then how can he imply that Lysis, Menexenus, and he appear to others as friends?' There are two considerations, which enable one to understand this paradox. First, one must consider the role of Plato's theory of recollection in the dialogue's construction. Second, by analyzing Socrates' final remarks, one can fashion a point from which one can attempt to fathom the underlying elements directing the dialogue, for example, the nature of Socrates' relationship to the boys.

2.2.1 The Question of Plato's Influence

As Bolotin interprets, the Greek word '*lysis*' means 'releasing', i.e. "a releasing from chains."⁵ Since the dialogue's central character is named Lysis, and since the dialogue's title shares that character's name, one can assume that the dialogue involves

⁴ W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 4, p. 242

⁵ David Bolotin, *Plato's Dialogue on Friendship* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979) 67. In Greek, 'λύσ' (*luo*) means "loose" and can be conjugated into 'λύσις' (*lysis*), which means "to analyze", "to untie", and "to release".

some form of change. Moreover, because the dialogue concerns an investigation into friendship, and more specifically, illustrates the nature of philosophical friendship, one can assume the change described concerns knowledge, for instance, Lysis' transition from a shy youth who finds contentment watching others play to one who rebels against authority exemplifies this idea.⁶ Additionally, it evidences Socrates' supposed "corruption of youth," which actually embodies youth's acquisition of wisdom.⁷

Socrates' role as facilitator of knowledge, or wisdom, is further shown through his symbolic association with Hermes who is the god of recollection. Just as Hermes provides good advice to guide wayfarers, Socrates germinates wisdom in the minds of others, thus enabling them to grow as rational human beings in life's journey. Hence, instead of viewing the *Lysis* as a rhetorical catastrophe, or as a less successful precursor to Plato's more prominent works on love, i.e. the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, one should focus on the *Lysis* as a kernel, from which Plato's social philosophy, in particular interpersonal relationships, grows. Thus, I shall explain how even though exploring metaphysical and epistemological issues, which would arguably be, more indicative of Plato, and likewise, how even though Socrates' primary concern was debatably ethics (then despite the *Lysis* being an early dialogue, which, as many maintain, defends Socrates' positions), there is evidence, which supports a more significant Platonic influence than many have previously interpreted.⁸ Though, as I.M. Crombie explains,

⁶ Plato, *Lysis*, *Plato: Complete Works*, trans. Stanley Lombardo, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997) 207a-c; 223a

⁷ Plato, *Apology*, *Plato: Complete Works*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997) 23d

⁸ I.M. Crombie, *Examinations of Plato's Doctrines*, vol. 1 (New York: The Humanities Press, 1963) 27-30

knowing exactly what knowledge Socrates may possess and what doctrines Plato wishes to convey through Socrates is a Herculean task.

2.2.2 *Plato or Socrates?*

If for the moment we assume that Plato's *Seventh Letter* is authentic, thus setting aside the current controversy, then one can assume that Plato possessed a disdain for written philosophy because he felt true understanding could not be conveyed through words. According to the *Seventh Letter*, Plato explains how words are slippery—*ambiguous*; not only do their meanings evolve through time and fail to grasp the entirety of the thought being expressed, but any constructed verbal statement contains holes that can be exposed. For example, *philos* possesses an ambiguous nature, meaning 'friend' as a noun and 'liked', 'loved', or 'dear' as an adjective.⁹ Therefore, hypothetically speaking, one could assert that Plato would never write a systematic treatise containing anything about which he ascribed importance because of the shortcomings of language, which he perceived.¹⁰

Furthermore, if we continue to assume the *Seventh Letter*'s authenticity, then one could claim that, for Plato, "[moral knowledge] can only come about in a man who has both mental ability and also an affinity to the subject."¹¹ As such, the progression of understanding the universe, as a whole, would be a "long" and "laborious" process where "words, definitions and empirical observations" would be discoursed through a

⁹ W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 4, pp. 136-37; See also David B. Robinson, "Plato's *Lysis*: The Structural Problem," *Illinois Classical Studies*, 11 (1986): 63-83. In fact, one could even argue that Plato purposely exploits the ambiguity of *philia* and *philos* as a way of showing language's inability to capture the essence of ideas.

¹⁰ I.M. Crombie, *Examinations of Plato's Doctrines*, vol. 1, p. 18

¹¹ I.M. Crombie, *Examinations of Plato's Doctrines*, vol. 2, p. 122

“cooperative refutation,” involving questions being asked and answered.¹² Hence, if the fallibility of language concerned Plato this much, then one could claim there is a strong possibility that he used the *Lysis* for educational purposes, e.g. classroom discussions.¹³

If Plato used the *Lysis* for educational purposes, then there are many potential implications, which require attention. For instance, the enigmatic nature of the *Lysis* may arise from Plato’s desire for the reader to discover her own truths. Ergo, Plato may have intentionally flawed Socrates’ arguments, forcing the reader to resolve, or at the very least grapple, with key issues concerning the dialogue’s topic, e.g. ‘If the good are self-sufficient, can they be friends’.¹⁴ In fact, Plato may not hold any of the *Lysis*’ insinuated or espoused positions. It might be the case that he established flawed arguments to inspire certain thoughts, which are like, similar, or contradictory to those that Socrates et al. may express.¹⁵ In this regard, “Perhaps it was his regular practice to set down what seemed to him to be possible lines of argument, whether or not he was in agreement with them.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, this poses a problem if one desires to ascertain doctrines through textual analysis.

There are three options at this point. First, one can confirm one’s theories regarding Plato’s doctrines through Aristotle’s texts. However, since those depictions are

¹² Ibid.

¹³ I.M. Crombie, *Examinations of Plato’s Doctrines*, vol. 1, p. 20

¹⁴ Plato, *Lysis*, 214b – 215c

¹⁵ I.M. Crombie, *Examinations of Plato’s Doctrines*, vol. 1, p. 18. Contrarily, one could argue, as Crombie shows pp. 27-30, that Plato’s primitive understanding of argumentation may have led to the *Lysis*’ logical flaws. However, while the charge that Plato was not superhuman and may have committed some of the fallacies may be applicable to other dialogues, based upon the role his elenchus containing the poor argumentation possesses, this view is doubtful here. His lack of understanding with respect to argumentation, though, may have exaggerated the poor quality of his arguments in the text, the faults manifest in the *Lysis* were most certainly intentional.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 18

both unflattering and may pertain to real-life Plato and not the comments associated with any particular dialogue, this could be problematic. Second, one can place the *Lysis* within the greater schema of Plato's project, i.e. how it relates to the *Phaedrus* or the *Symposium*; however, even if patterns of thought emerge, those observations would be subject to previous criticisms, for example, Plato may hold different perspectives than those expounded upon or alluded to in the dialogue, which would defeat the purpose of this investigation.

On the other hand, the third option would be, for the sake of argument, to analyze the *Lysis* on its own irrespective of its role within the schema of Plato's other dialogues. Through this separation one could ascribe the dialogue's doctrines to Socrates, especially since the *Lysis* is classified as an early dialogue. If one attributed the *Lysis*' doctrines to Socrates, then Plato would not be identified as their beholder. This option, however, is problematic as well, for if, in his standard elenchus Socrates reacts to what is being said by one of its participants, then his thoughts are not necessarily being represented, for instance, in the *Lysis*, Socrates does not share Lysis' and Menexenus' bewilderment towards friendship as evidenced by the dialogue's closing remarks.¹⁷ In other words, Socrates appears to have a solution to the paradox (which suggests that even though friendship's first principle cannot be defined, it can be observed through philosophical activity). Though, because Socrates is only a character in the dialogue, one can only assume from a character's perspective what that solution could be, which in this case, would be first person observational knowledge based upon dramatic activity

¹⁷ Gregory Vlastos, "The Socratic Elenchus," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 79 (1982): 711-14

among the dialogue's interlocutors. Unfortunately, without the dialogue's symbolism, for example, Socrates' connection to Hermes, it is difficult to progress past a cursory understanding of the manifested doctrines.¹⁸ Thus, since our understanding of the dialogue's doctrines goes beyond an observation that friendship is achieved through philosophical activity, then it would be reasonable to assume that the information presented through the dialogue's subtext, particularly represents neither the real life Socrates', nor the literary version.

In actuality, if the *Lysis* is a learning tool, for instance, for group discussion, then the opinions expressed could be anyone's. Nevertheless, despite this apparent shortcoming two things are certain. First, even if one is unsure of whom to ascribe certain beliefs within the text, this uncertainty does not entail that those beliefs do not exist. Second, Plato's intentions during the dialogue's construction will be guided by a philosophical agenda and whether or not his views are openly expressed, the dialogue, itself, should possess their unconscious manifestation. For example, even if Plato did not intend to link Hermes and Socrates as this section will show, there is an important connection.

2.2.3 Socrates' Final Remarks

In 223b, Socrates says, "Now we've done it, Lysis and Menexenus – made fools of ourselves, I, an old man, and you as well. These people here will go away saying that we are friends of one another—for I count myself in with you—but what a friend is we

¹⁸¹⁸ In fact, this could be Tessitore's problem. Because he omits Socrates' relationship to Hermes, he cannot draw the inference that Socrates can help the boys on their journey. This omission denies him the opportunity to draw from the dialogue the relationship dynamics necessary to fully explore Plato's theory.

have not yet been able to find out.” This is one of the only concrete bits of information provided in the dialogue. Since this information is provided as the dialogue’s final comments and since it contradicts the elenchus’ outcome, its anomalous appearance is critical to our inquiry, i.e. what in the dialogue prompted Socrates to assert this and how does this passage enable one to understand the dialogue?

Since Socrates’ final comments are in response to the elenchus’ conclusion and that conclusion is verbally ascertained using Socrates’ interlocution with Lysis and Menexenus, then 223b most likely references what that conclusion does not incorporate, which is the dialogue’s dramatic subtext. Thus, the last part of the above excerpt: “but what a friend is we have not yet been able to find out” most likely refers to the *group*’s inability to formally define friendship. The first part, which states: “These people here will go away saying that we are friends of one another” represents others’ construal of the group’s friendly *appearance*. Lastly, when Socrates states “for I count myself in with you,” he overtly claims to be part of the group, i.e. he acknowledges his friendship to Lysis and Menexenus. Thus, when he says, “These people here [e.g. Hippothales] will go away saying that we are friends of one another,”¹⁹ he states modicum understanding of how people become friends, i.e. he can recognize it. As Tessitore states, this implies “human wisdom” on Socrates’ part; though, this information is only available in the dialogue’s nuances, for instance, when Socrates lectures Hippothales on his ridiculous

¹⁹ First off, I realize that there are other people observing the Socrates, Lysis, and Menexenus; however, the reason why I bracketed Hippothales is because Socrates uses his elenchus to demonstrate to Hippothales how to befriend someone, more specifically, Lysis.

approach to pursuing Lysis and when he later banters with Menexenus on Lysis' and his "perfect friendship."²⁰

2.3 The Dramatic Subtext

If one recalls, Plato titled the dialogue after Lysis who is the dialogue's central character, and which, properly conjugated, is also the word for "releasing" in Greek. The word *lysis*, however, can also mean "solution". Ergo, since the dialogue ends with an *aporia*—an intellectual conundrum with no foreseeable solution—then, perhaps, one can understand Lysis' role within the dialogue as a key to that solution. According to Guthrie, "Socrates chose this insanely different topic to engage the boys to use their minds."²¹ Thus, the solution to the problem could come through the boys' mental transformation in the dialogue, i.e. their release from bondage. In this sense, one could argue that since Socrates engaged the boys philosophically and since the activity of philosophy is what engendered their progression towards attaining wisdom, then one could maintain that the solution to the *aporia* is that friendship exists. It exists as an activity. Hence, even though one cannot deduce its first principle, one can learn to recognize it and engage in behaviors conducive to it without that knowledge. Consequently, this section will focus on the following relational dynamics.

First, the connection, and subsequent importance, between Socrates and Hermes will require more explanation than what this paper, thus far, has provided. Second, while this discussion will gloss over Hippothales' relationship to Ctessipus, it must address in depth the relationship between Lysis and Menexenus, for their relationship is while

²⁰ Tessitore, Aristide, "Plato's *Lysis*: An Introduction to Philosophic Friendship," p. 128

²¹ W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 4, p. 144

receiving *un peu de* mockery as the “perfect friendship” by Socrates, a relationship between two noble souls. Lastly, this section will need to discuss Socrates’ friendship to Hippothales and how through that friendship, Socrates demonstrates for him how to charm Lysis, for this relationship provides Socrates basic friendship model.

2.3.1 Socrates and Hermes

Hermes etymologically means “he of the stone-heap,” “heap of stones, and stones by the wayside.”²² According to superstitions, when the gods acquitted Hermes of killing Argos, during the trial each cast their vote by throwing a “voting-pebble” at his feet, thus causing a pile to arise around him.²³ In ancient Greece roadsides were lined with piles, or cairns, of stones. On these stone-heaps, wayfarers would toss pebbles to bring their journey good luck. Hence, because Hermes brought good fortune to travelers and wayfarers, he became their patron deity, for he became known as “the guide and giver of good.”²⁴ In fact, they believed “it [was] his part to appear suddenly beside the traveler and help guide him with good advice.”²⁵ If one recalls from mythology, Hermes assisted Perseus in slaying the Gorgon Medusa by guiding him to resources, e.g. the nymphs, the witches, and Athene, which would enable him to succeed in his quest.²⁶

Similarly, because grave markers, which were also sometimes made of stone, lined Ancient Greek roadsides along with the stone-heaps, Hermes became known as the

²² W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London: Methuen & CO LTD, 1962) 88; aka Mercury in Roman mythology. “He of the stone-heap” means that Hermes came from a stone heap.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (New York: Black Bay Books, 1969) 201

²⁵ W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods*, p. 89; 91

²⁶ Friedrich Pfister, *Greek Gods and Heroes*, Trans. Mervyn Savill (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1961) 111-13. See also W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods*, p. 91: “Sent by Zeus, he guides the aged Priam safely into the tent of Achilles, and he gives Odysseus the magic plant that is to keep him from harm, and instructs him how to use it.

god who guided the souls of the dead to Hades.²⁷ Further, because of Hermes' capacity for winged flight, he became a messenger from the gods and, sometimes, their errand boy. Hence, if one synthesizes these identities, and moreover, incorporates Hermes' identity as a provider of good advice, then one can interpret Hermes as being the god of recollection. Since Socrates maintains that to know something is to recollect it, and since he is the catalyst for the boys' newfound awareness, then one can argue Socrates is the patron to the ignorant in a similar vein to Hermes. Thus, the correlation between the god Hermes and Socrates is logical. In this way, Hermes becomes the ideal god for this dialogue, and Socrates becomes an ideal physical representation.

Hermes was not only known for the speed by which he travelled but he was also known for his quick wits, which he used, for example, to slay Argus—the one-hundred eyed monster who guarded Io—by disguising himself as a common man and lulling him to sleep with soporific music and stories.²⁸ According to W.K.C. Guthrie, Hermes was considered the cleverest of the gods.²⁹ This association complements Socrates, for as Delphi prophesized, no one was wiser than Socrates.³⁰ As Socrates was cunning in his approach to rhetoric, Hermes was known as a rascal among the gods who, within five minutes of being born, stole Apollo's herd of cattle. This reputation caused thieves to consider him their patron, and unfortunately for Socrates, his rabble-rouser reputation earned him the dubious distinction of being known as youth's corruptor.³¹

²⁷ W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods*, p. 89

²⁸ Edith Hamilton, *Mythology*, pp. 98 – 99

²⁹ W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods*, p. 91

³⁰ Plato, *Apology*, 21a – e

³¹ *Ibid.*, 30b3

Furthermore, Hermes was the god of fertility, the deity of the marketplace and traders, and the patron of the common man. He stood as a symbolic stone-heap in front of homes to protect their inhabitants just as he warded wild beasts away from wayfarers, shepherds, and flocks. Also as mentioned above, Hermes was the god of gymnastic sports, e.g. wrestling; therefore, the wrestling school and the Hermes festival taking place at the wrestling school, as mentioned above, possess an obvious connection.³² Finally, Hermes invented the lyre and the shepherd pipe. The latter he melodiously played, and the former he gave Apollo as an amends for his post-natal chicanery.

Ultimately, the connection between Socrates and Hermes invokes an interesting idea of friendship that overlaps with textual analysis. When Hermes helps others, e.g. wayfarers, travelers, Odysseus, and so on, he offers good advice; he guides them towards their goal whatever that may be. Friendship, it appears, for Socrates can be analogously construed. If one looks at the dialogue's dramatic subtext, one will find that Socrates is a friend to wisdom like a doctor is a friend to health. In this respect, Socrates guides Lysis, Hippothales, and Menexenus towards wisdom while needing, desiring, or requiring little or nothing in return. In this respect, both Socrates and Hermes would be a guide; they would help others aspire towards some particular end. Whether that end is beheading a Gorgon or developing wisdom in others, they both help someone achieve a good. For Socrates, this good will be something that person lacks. Therefore, the good is beneficial for that person; it facilitates self-sufficiency.

³² Pindar, *The Extant Odes of Pindar*, trans. Ernest Myers, 1904, *The Project Gutenberg*, ed. Ted Garvin, Jayam Subramanian, and PG Distributed Proofreaders, 14 Jan. 2004
<<http://www.gutenberg.net/1/0/2/3/10234>>

2.3.2 *Subtext Exploration*

Hippothales is in love with Lysis—an attractive boy of noble birth. According to Ctessipus, Hippothales' attitude towards Lysis is ridiculous. Not only does he sing songs, which eulogize Lysis, his family, and his ancestors, but he talks about Lysis incessantly to others and even calls out Lysis' name in his sleep. This behavior galvanizes Socrates to address Hippothales' naivety, and consequently, invoke his awareness of it. First, while Hippothales may think his praises are for Lysis; in reality, they are for him. Second, his praises address Lysis' superficial qualities and not his nobility; hence, even if he was fortunate to attract Lysis, irrational and transient passions constitute his love in lieu of reason's culmination into wisdom.

Socrates, therefore, warns Hippothales not to celebrate his victory before being victorious. If Hippothales praises Lysis, and resultantly, wins Lysis' affection, then his conquest would be respected more by others. However, if Hippothales constantly lauds Lysis, then Lysis' ego will grow, thus making it more difficult for Hippothales to attract him. In effect, if Lysis rejects Hippothales after his relentless pursuit, Hippothales will not appear favorable to others at all. Thus, Socrates decides to teach Hippothales the appropriate way to talk to one's beloved. He advises Hippothales to control himself—mollify his behavior. To do so, Socrates recommends humbling Lysis and decides to demonstrate this approach to Hippothales.

In 206d, one becomes aware that the boys at the wrestling school are celebrating the festival of Hermes, and thus, are involved in rituals and sacrifices in honor of the god. In truth, this is the only section where anyone utters Hermes' name in the entire

dialogue. Since the dialogue possesses strong allusions to Hermes, this event is significant. Based upon where Hermes' name is mentioned in regards to where the dialogue is in its progression, one could say that this is where Plato links the symbolic elements of the dialogue involving Hermes to the dramatic subtext exemplifying that symbolism. Not only is this juncture one of the few places where something tangible can be garnered from the dialogue—Socrates' advice to Hippothales, but Plato uses the following paragraphs (206e-210e) to establish the groundwork for the more contentious parts of his elenchus with Menexenus. Additionally, this particular section marks the germination of Hippothales' journey where Socrates demonstrates the proper way to talk to one's beloved. As such, two significant things occur here, which are fundamental to not only the elenchus, but to grasping Plato's intentions on the whole.

First, through a brief series of questions Socrates establishes the near identity of Lysis and Menexenus. Bolotin argues that Plato uses the parallels between Lysis and Menexenus to show that even close friendships, which appear perfect, possess flaws. He suggests that Plato shows this by exposing their rivalry through arguing over who is older.³³ However, this interpretation misses the point of Plato's inquiry if one analyzes this section with respect to the dialogue as a whole. If Plato's intent is to show Lysis' and Menexenus' basic similarity, for instance, they are both good looking, from wealthy families, and of noble birth, and if he desires to establish their appearance as perfect friends, then it makes more sense to interpret this section as: 'Lysis and Menexenus admit their disagreement over who is older, from a nobler family, and better looking

³³ David Bolotin, *Plato's Dialogue on Friendship*, p. 84

because it emphasizes their likeness concerning physical attributes, familial background, and socioeconomic status, i.e. if the difference were apparent, then they would not need to argue'. In fact, regarding these traits, Plato desires to show their near identity, i.e. Lysis' and Menexenus' disagreement alternatively intimates sameness.

This view is corroborated by that passage's final remarks where Socrates states: "And friends have everything in common, as the saying goes; so in this respect the two of you won't differ..."³⁴ This statement is ironic because he establishes that they argue over different characteristics as to who is better; though, in actuality, the converse is shown.³⁵ Therefore, as the dialogue will show, their true difference is not in what they are or who they are, but in how they are, i.e. their personalities. This distinction is critical, for it illustrates what Socrates means when he asserts: "if you two are friends with each other, then in some way you naturally belong to each other."³⁶ Lysis, of course, is more docile, and Menexenus is more quarrelsome. In this way, they are naturally complementary.

Second, since they are alike and not identical, and since they belong to each other, and resultantly appear to be perfect friends, it is important to note that neither is self-sufficient. If Socrates is the wisest man in Athens and still views himself as a lover of wisdom, then neither Lysis, nor Menexenus can be wiser than Socrates, i.e. both must be deficient concerning wisdom. If both are deficient concerning wisdom, then neither is self-sufficient. Hence, when Socrates establishes the nobility of both boys, this reference

³⁴ Plato, *Lysis*, 207b

³⁵ Another way to read this would be that he addresses what bodily and material characteristics to possess to show that they possess the lower form of self-sufficiency, though, are still deficient in the higher form.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 222a6

implies that, at least, the boys desire to attain ‘the good’ and that even though they are not self-sufficiently good, they are definitely not bad. Therefore, if they are neither good, nor bad, then they must embrace the good on behalf of the bad—ignorance, i.e. they need an intermediary. Since Socrates can enable the boys to gain wisdom to shed their ignorance, then friendship exists between Socrates and the boys. In this regard, when Socrates exposes Lysis’ lack of knowledge, comparing him to a slave, it is more so a statement with respect to his deficiency than stating his “wholly ignorance” as he did to Hippothales.³⁷ In other words, he is awakening Lysis to the chains in which he resides, thus providing the necessary awareness for him to rebel against those oppressive authorities.³⁸ By illuminating certain truths about Lysis’ life, Socrates benefits Lysis (and Menexenus for that matter) and thus befriends him. This gesture insinuates to Hippothales that philosophical inquiry fosters the development of friendship in the best possible way.

According to Guthrie, Socrates equates ‘the good’ to what is always useful, or beneficial, and never harms. Therefore, something such as courage “leads to happiness when guided by wisdom,” i.e. “[it] cannot fail to be beneficial” if it is associated with reason. In extension, since what is useful with respect to ‘the good’ involves higher pleasure, then by seeking ‘the good,’ one receives a more profound pleasure than those activities associated with baser pleasures such as drinking, eating, and eroticism.³⁹

³⁷ Though, Hippothales is not bad either. If he were bad, then he could not love the good. Thus, Hippothales embodies Socrates’ belief (stated in 217-18) that one must become bad, i.e. a person who is neither good, nor bad may appear bad but may not actually be bad. Hence, while Hippothales’ pursuit of Lysis was ignorant, as Socrates shows, through the subtext, this is a condition is not permanent.

³⁸ Ibid., 223a

³⁹ W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers* (New York: Harper Touchbooks, 1975) 103-05

Hence, if a philosopher is a friend of wisdom, and wisdom is critical to pursuing ‘the good’, then the philosopher, who enables one to become wise, functions as an intermediary between the “wholly wise (the gods)” and the “wholly ignorant.”⁴⁰ While neither Lysis nor Menexenus are “wholly ignorant,” for if they were ignorant, then they could not possess goodness, or aspire to do so, for ignorance, by definition, infers unawareness, Hippothales is. Hippothales’ ineptitude while not qualifying him as being a bad person, does mark his ignorance. Thus, while Lysis, Menexenus, and Hippothales are all neither good, nor bad, there is a definite distinction between the levels of ignorance between Hippothales as opposed to Lysis and Menexenus. Though, these levels do not hinder the application of the model of friendship manifest in the text.

In 211a, Menexenus returns, thus shifting the focus back to both Menexenus and Lysis (the close friends) instead of upon Lysis alone (the moderately good but deficient individual). Moreover, in this section one becomes aware of the effectiveness of Socrates’ interaction with Lysis, for in this same paragraph, Lysis asks Socrates to “tell Menexenus what [he’s] been saying to [him].” Socrates, however, does not acquiesce Lysis’ request. Instead, in the spirit of Hermes, he tells Lysis to apply what he has learned and if he needs help would gladly assist him.

2.3.3 Occurrences of Friendship

Already the dialogue has established that Lysis and Menexenus desire ‘the good’. Moreover, the dialogue has shown that they are both not identical and that they are not

⁴⁰ W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 4, p. 149. However, one should obviously consider neither Lysis nor Menexenus “wholly ignorant.” This would be reserved more for Hippothales. Though, a better description for him would be that he is neither good nor bad. Otherwise, he would have no chance at befriending Lysis or Socrates.

self-sufficient. However, in 211e, Socrates admits his admiration of Lysis' and Menexenus' friendship. Friendship is something about which he is "absolutely passionate." To Socrates, it is the greatest external good—far more desirable than any animal and both Darius and his gold. He praises that they have achieved what he has sought his whole life so quickly and easily during their youth. Even though his praise has a playful connotation, there is truth behind his banter.

Socrates' elenchus, while broaching many pertinent topics, is a disaster, for it fails in its goal of formally defining friendship. In fact, its participants end the discussion in the same place they began both frustrated and seeming to have brought no iota of cogency to fruition. Nevertheless, despite this apparent surface failure, the activity itself underlying the elenchus was a success for many reasons. First, the activity of philosophy, or pursuing wisdom, has generated friendship among three seemingly good people, which according to the elenchus was not possible. After all, if one is self-sufficient, then one does not need friends.⁴¹

Plato, though, rebukes this idea through the interactions of his characters. If only the gods are absolutely wise, then any mortal is going to be deficient in this characteristic. Thus, every mortal will need to philosophize to pursue the good life. However, if no mortal can become wholly godlike, then she will never fully be able to achieve perfect friendship.⁴² As such, people who desire to be "good" will always

⁴¹ Plato, *Lysis*, 215b5

⁴² One interesting question is: 'Do the gods have friends?' While the following response is only speculative, it does still raises some interesting issues.

Every god had a function in relation to practical life. In other words, they would represent some facet of our existence, for example, while Ares was the god of war, Hades was the god of the dead. If each god had a certain role(s), then not all gods would be godlike in every way. Hence, it is not necessarily the case

require others to become self-sufficient. In effect, each good person functions as a *philosopher*—an intermediary—to the others to attain wisdom. For Socrates, this appears to be the highest exhibition of friendship.

Second, it appears that Socrates posits two ways in which the idea of friendship manifests: the friendship of usefulness (the higher kind, which enables the development of wisdom, and basic type, which facilitates fundamental goods such as one's health), and one way in which it can be deceiving: the erotic association. Demonstrating these distinctions seems to be why Socrates requires Hippothales. Hippothales is erotically attracted to Lysis, however, Socrates shows him that this attraction, as mentioned above, is base in two ways. Initially, he shows that his passion for Lysis is irrational. He shows this by addressing Hippothales' ignorance to his own self-interest, and how his complete lack of wisdom hinders his approach. Thus, Socrates attempts to invoke wisdom in this wholly ignorant boy. Once Socrates has demonstrated the appropriate way to talk to one's beloved, he shows how friendship exists among noble people through his elenchus. Unfortunately, Hippothales misconstrued Socrates' demonstration. Thus, understanding is not why Hippothales "beamed with every color of the rainbow."⁴³ Instead, he thought that Lysis now loved him. This misconception, of course, intimates

that all gods are wise. The only god to which this title could be correctly ascribed would be Athena who is the god of wisdom and courage (and perhaps Zeus and Metis—another goddess of wisdom and Athena's mother). However, since Athena is friends with Hephaestus, then it would appear that even those with godlike wisdom have friends. Perhaps, there is a different form of usefulness the gods require each other for and which enables friendship to occur. In other words, since gods reside at a level which supersedes our own, then maybe the gods need each other's specific areas of specialty in order for them to perform their function, which of course enables the world to exist. In this sense, they would still be useful, and thus good, to one another.

⁴³ Plato, *Lysis*, 222b2

that Hippothales may not have changed too much throughout the course of the dialogue. In fact, he still could be interpreted as bad.

2.3.4 *Two Senses of Useful*

According to Annas, “Friendship is construed as desire to possess or acquire some good quality which the agent lacks, where this lack is a bad thing. This is illustrated over a wide range—the body, for example, which is neutral, feels *philia* for medicine, which is a good, because of the presence of disease, which is bad.”⁴⁴ As stated above, ignorance is antithetical to wisdom, the former being good, and the latter being bad. However, the object of love in friendship does not necessarily need to involve immediate gains in wisdom. As the dialogue shows and Annas articulates, ‘the good’ can pertain to a range of objects. Socrates, however, focuses on a fundamental difference.

On the one hand, there is a sense of good, in which one *can* become self-sufficient. One can categorize this sense of ‘the good’ as a basic sense. There are three places that insinuate what this understanding of friendship is. First, in 211e Socrates states that while some people may value fame, money, or animals, he is absolutely passionate about friendship. This distinction creates two levels of useful objects: basic and higher. Socrates insinuates the significance of the latter in 207b where he reveals Lysis’ and Menexenus’ near identity with respect to external goods in their lives. However, although both have been fortunate in their lives concerning external goods, they lack what noble birth, wealth, and so on cannot obtain—wisdom. Therefore, because neither Lysis, nor Menexenus possess godlike wisdom, they are deficient. In this

⁴⁴ Julia Annas, “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism,” *Mind*, 86 (1977): 536

regard, while both boys represent what a common conception of “perfect friendship” is, as Socrates intimates, because their friendship lacks philosophical activity, it is not ideal. For example, one can be healthy, yet still locked in chains.

Lastly, in 218e Socrates discusses how a person who is ill overcomes that bad thing by befriending a doctor who will facilitate ‘the good’, which is health (and also a friend). While this relationship uses the model manifest in the dramatic subtext, it exhibits how we help one another attain basic goods and not virtue of character. As Aristotle states, “Socrates the senior thought that the End is to get to know virtue, and he pursued an inquiry into the nature of justice and courage and each of the divisions of virtue.”⁴⁵ This observation strengthens the claim that Socrates distinguishes between higher and basic benefit; and furthermore, suggests that while the basic sense pertains to health, fame, money, etc, this relationship is neutral for three reasons. Firstly, it cannot be bad because bad people cannot form successful relationships with others. Secondly, it is most likely not virtuous because virtue is something towards which one always aspires. Thirdly, one can be famous, wealthy, healthy, etc. but not be truly happy. However, if one is wise, this does not appear to be the case. Thus, it appears that this relationship is neutral, and since it is neutral, it will always be subordinate to the philosophical type.

Moreover, one can be self-sufficient with respect to basic goods, for if one is healthy, famous, wealthy, etc., then one will no longer require them. If one no longer requires basic goods, for example, if one goes to the doctor and regains her health, then

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, trans. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952) 1216b15

she is no longer deficient in that capacity; then that person will no longer need others, for instance, a doctor, to provide them. In this sense, one would no longer need to remain part of a community. However, since one can never fully be virtuous, i.e. since one cannot achieve godlike wisdom, and since wisdom enables the development of virtues, one will never be self-sufficient, and hence, will always require the assistance of friends.

Thus far, this section has suggested that there is a hierarchy of relationships within the *Lysis*. There is the bad, which is the erotic relationship; there is the neutral, which is the relationship based upon the attainment of basic benefits; and there is the good, which is the relationship based upon philosophical activity (this last relationship is the higher, more enlightened, representation of usefulness). As Guthrie stated, ‘the good’ is always useful, or beneficial, and thus, never harms. While the basic sense of benefit is capable of harm, for instance, the pursuit of wealth can lead to poverty, the higher sense is not capable of harm in any way, for even if one does not perform well in philosophical activity, that person still benefits because that person’s degree of wisdom increases. Therefore, even if “friends” are not absolutely good or wise, they can still facilitate others’ aspirations towards those goals. This is what Socrates, *Lysis*, and *Menexenus* evidenced through the elenchus, and this is what resolves Plato’s Paradox, for true friendship only exists through activity. It cannot be defined. This distinction will divide Aristotle and Plato qua Socrates, for in Aristotle’s ethical theory, friendship exists as both an activity in which one participates as well as an articulated state.

2.4 The Aristotelian Turn

Despite the presence of ascertainable information, many questions remain based upon our need to speculate—to interpret—the cryptic information manifest in the *Lysis*. Thus, while one could infer that elements of friendship, e.g. good will, generate friendship based upon questionable textual evidence, there is little proof to substantiate this claim. This is where Aristotle flourished. Questions Plato left unresolved such as: ‘What are the origins of friendship, i.e. what are the things that engender it?’; ‘Can friendship exist among strangers?’; and, ‘What is the nature of a parent and child’s relationship?’, invoke strong reactions in Aristotle, which he fully develops in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, and *Politics*.

As the next section will discuss, Aristotle espouses a polymorphic conception of friendship, which centers on how one befriends oneself, i.e. the good form of self-love. In this regard, Aristotle makes evident his belief that genuine friendship is other-regarding. This is not as obvious in Plato’s treatment where it appears the opposite would most likely be true. However, one must ask oneself: ‘Why is Socrates friends with Lysis and Menexenus?’; ‘How does he benefit by trying to help Hippothales?’ The short answer to this question is that like Aristotle, Plato possesses a conception of civic friendship. Hence, by helping the boys become more virtuous Socrates enhances the political community. Though, contrary to Aristotle, Plato’s theory of friendship is not going to have as significant a normative force, and while friendship still possesses cohesive properties concerning the community, people are not going to be as socially

enmeshed. This characteristic will replicate itself in Kant's theory of friendship in Section 4. For now, however, our attention will turn to Aristotle.

3. ARISTOTLE'S POLYMORPHIC REDEFINITION OF FRIENDSHIP BASED UPON PLATO'S *LYSIS*

While the importance of Plato's *Lysis* is debatable among scholars with respect to his project as a whole, there is no question regarding the profound effect this work had on Aristotle's ethical theory. The dramatic subtext, the baffling antinomies, and the closing *aporia* inspired the way in which Aristotle formulated many of his integral ideas concerning his theory of friendship. The following section will investigate the ways in which the *Lysis* influenced Aristotle's conception of friendship and the importance of that influence on his ethical theory as a whole.

First, this section will explore Aristotle's definition of friendship. This exploration will segue into an explication of how friendship affects the political community and its constituent parts. Next, based upon this foundation, this section will discuss Socrates' and *Lysis*' conversation about his relationship to his parents in relation to how Aristotle understands friendship as manifest in the household. This discussion in conjunction with our exploration of the political community will provide the necessary background to discuss how the *Lysis*' dramatic subtext and how Socrates' elenchus influenced Aristotle's comparatively dynamic conception of friendship, for example, Aristotle's reconstruction of self-love. By the section's close, our discussion will have developed the necessary background to dissect Kant's theory of friendship in Section 4 and discuss both Plato's and Aristotle's respective influence upon him.

3.1 What is Friendship?

Aristotle, as mentioned above, proffered a comprehensive theory on friendship, which included many other social relationships other than what ‘the good’ exhibited. As Ross states, “[friendship for Aristotle] can stand for any mutual attraction between two human beings.”⁴⁶ While this definition intimates the general idea, according to Cooper, who later rebukes Ross, this idea is too broad, for “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 φιλία.”⁴⁷ For example, Aristotle remarks: “Those who welcome each other but do not live together would seem to have good will rather than friendship.”⁴⁸ By definition, good will expresses genuine regard for others. However, if two virtuous people display good will towards one another, even though good will originates character-based friendships, good will only becomes friendship through reciprocation over time.⁴⁹ If the people are strangers and never see each other again, then despite their reciprocated amiability, their exchange will not have developed into any form of friendship. In response to Ross’s oversight, Cooper cites *On Rhetoric* as the appropriate starting point to understand and define what Aristotle’s conception of friendship is.

Aristotle, in *On Rhetoric*, defines a “friendly feeling” as wishing another well for her sake and doing what is necessary to facilitate that well-being. As mentioned, those

⁴⁶ W.D. Ross, *Aristotle*, (London: Methuen and Company Limited, 1923) 230

⁴⁷ John Cooper, “Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship,” *The Review of Metaphysics*, 120 (1977): 620; furthermore, ‘φιλία’ means ‘friendship’, which also may be stated as ‘*philia*’ in this section.

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985) 1157b18

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1166b30-1167a5

who reciprocate these feelings over time are what Aristotle regards as one's friends.⁵⁰ In this vein, friends treat us well; they share our pleasure and pain; and, they share in what we like or dislike and sympathize with whom or what we consider good and evil. Additionally, as Aristotle notes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, those sympathies include concordance concerning our choices as well as enjoyable activities in which we can share.⁵¹ Fittingly, "in loving [one's] friend [one] loves what is good for [oneself, i.e. friends share common desires]; for when a good person becomes a friend he becomes a good for his friend," exchanging with equality what that friend has received and enhancing that person's life.⁵²

Furthermore, friendship involves love. It pertains to how one loves, or befriends oneself, and how one loves, or befriends, others. As Aristotle notes, "loving is the virtue [and activity] of friends" and must correspond to a friend's worth.⁵³ Hence, through a sense of proportional equality friends exchange goods, i.e. the object of love qua friend, which one is pursuing. This exchange can manifest three ways: through pleasure, through advantage, or through virtue.⁵⁴ For example, two friends may find fishing relaxing, discover a professional bond, which enables both friends to earn more money; or, enjoy the other's company through philosophizing together. However, problems arise when each friend pursues the friendship for different reasons. For instance, if one befriends another for pleasurable reasons, e.g. as a fishing companion, and the other

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (Toronto: The Modern Library, 1954) 1379b35

⁵¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1166a1-10

⁵² Ibid., 1157b33-35

⁵³ Ibid., 1158b34-1159b52; Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1237a37

⁵⁴ Furthermore, Aristotle's three types of friendship can exist in one of two ways. First, friends can be equal; thus, friendships can contain equality. Or, second friends can be unequal friendships; hence, friendships can also possess a sense of superiority, e.g. a king and his subjects.

befriends that person for another reason, e.g. professional advancement, then because each friend enters the friendship pursuing a different object of love in the other, the friendship most likely will wane and consequently dissolve once one no longer perceives the presence of that good through the other. Case in point, when the lover stops feeling his love returned or the professional no longer requires the other for advancement. Here, the exchanged goods no longer equalize, thus causing one of the friends to become deficient in the friendship.⁵⁵

As alluded, good will is love's manifestation in one's regard towards another. In other words, it is friendship's catalyst among good people just as erotic passion and advantage cause the other, incomplete forms to arise. While Plato, in the *Lysis*, suggests good will as essential to friendship when he states in 219a that nothing is a friend of the lover unless it loves him in return, one cannot sustain this assertion as Platonic doctrine. Aristotle, on the other hand, elaborates on this claim by stipulating good will's importance to the perseverance of friendship. Without the existence of prolonged reciprocation of good will, one's friendship will disintegrate. Thus, evidencing good will is essential, and consequently, is the reason why two strangers exchanging its benevolence briefly will not be friends. As Aristotle maintains, those strangers only possess the potential to be friends, i.e. their friendship is inactive. In this sense, good will does not suffice for friendship even though it is requisite for it.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1163b25-1164a23

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1166b30-1167a5

3.2 The Whole and Its Parts

In the *Lysis*, Socrates argues that one befriends the neutral for the sake of the good and on account of the bad. In other words, friendship is the activity that enables those involved to strive for ‘the good’. This is why Lysis and Menexenus becomes Socrates’ friend and this is why Socrates befriends the boys. If one recalls from the closing remarks of the last section, Socrates exhibits civic friendship through his interactions with Lysis, Menexenus, and Hippothales. By enabling Lysis and Menexenus to develop wisdom, Socrates sets the boys on a path towards ‘the good life’. This gesture, in turn, facilitates the growth of a virtuous political community. However, for Plato, friendship does not possess the same importance as it does for Aristotle. While the activity of friendship may develop a virtuous community through various interactions, for Aristotle, “friendship is community.”⁵⁷

In order to be virtuous and attain *eudaimonia*, one must engage others, for it is only through the joint participation in activities where one actualizes and maintains the realization of one’s capacities, i.e. the co-existence of good people enables the appropriate cultivation of virtue.⁵⁸ Thus, since reason is our ultimate capacity and the activity of philosophy allows reason to fully enable one to realize herself as a human being, and thus, live a virtuous existence, our participation in that activity and our aspiration towards wisdom will enable the development of *eudaimonia*. Conversely one can conclude that the avoidance of philosophical endeavor will thwart one’s journey towards that ultimate goal. Hence, in response to Socrates and Plato, Aristotle states: “in

⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1172a30

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1169b15

awarding the happy person all the goods it would seem absurd not to give him friends; for having friends seems to be the greatest external good.”⁵⁹ This claim inverts Plato’s and Socrates’ belief, which alluded that friends were the greatest external good in aiding one towards the good life and not existing as a part of the good life itself.⁶⁰

3.2.1 Sources of Normativity

People, for Aristotle, are rational, political animals. We are social beings who can use reason to fathom needs and desires, and possess speech—communicative abilities, which enables us to convey those needs and desires and express what is painful or pleasurable, what is harmful or advantageous, and what is just or unjust. In effect, our awareness of needs and desires combined with our capacity for speech, naturally draw us together for generation, for example, man and woman, and for preservation, for instance, ruler and ruled.⁶¹ And, while various communities originate to stay alive, their ultimate purpose, however, is to help its members live well; it is to create an environment that endeavors to assist its citizens’ pursuit of *eudaimonia*.⁶² In this sense, friendship is the cohesion for all communities whether that community is one’s household or political, i.e. without the existence of friendship, which enables those citizens to meet their needs both daily and long-term, society would not exist.

Eudaimonia, of course, is our ultimate good; it is the ultimate end at which all of our actions are directly or indirectly aimed. It is completeness, happiness, flourishing, and self-sufficiency all incorporated into a single achievement—the good life. Since the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1169b10

⁶⁰ Plato, *Lysis*, 211d3-212b

⁶¹ Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, 1254a24-34

⁶² Ibid., 1252b27-30

function of cities is to facilitate this pursuit, then the virtuous city will enable its citizens the opportunity to become *eudaimôn*. In this regard, the city and its citizens strive towards the same end, and thus, are reliant upon one another to attain that end. This interdependency creates a cyclical effect within cities where a just city produces just citizens who, in turn, become just rulers, thus creating just laws, which further perpetuate the justice, prudence, and virtue manifest within both the city and its denizens. This is why the study of political science, what Aristotle considers the end of all sciences, is paramount to a virtuous society. It is the science that underlies the formation of laws that enable the society to which they are applied to either flourish or decline.⁶³ For Aristotle, as stated, friendship is integral to that pursuit.

Metaphorically speaking, the political community is the whole—*the body*, and the lower communities which form it are its parts. In effect, the political community controls the lower communities, which controls the individuals within those communities. The individuals in the lower communities, or the households, form villages to meet their daily needs just as the villages coalesce into a city to gain self-sufficiency. Therefore, the virtuous household manager will instill virtues within the household members. The households, as well as its members, will influence, through their various friendships, other households in the village. And, the villages will influence the political community through their concord concerning issues. Analogously, the legislators will construct laws that govern the people. If those laws are just, then the various communities will be just and develop just members, and consequently, those just

⁶³ Ibid., 1094a13-1094b12

members will rule their households with the same degree of justice as the political community in which they live. Thus, the political community is only as just as its members, and the level of justice will influence which style of friendship is most prevalent. Furthermore, since the community members determine the nature of the political community and vice versa, according to Aristotle, society has a cyclical nature. This nature causes three sources of normativity to develop: virtue-based, civic-based, and ruler-based; and, these forms of normativity are governed through the various friendships extant within the community.

The virtue manifest in the lower communities is contingent upon the justness of the higher. Ultimately, the justness of the political community will determine the justness of its individual citizens. The most just polity is a kingship where the ruler rules for the sake of the ruled and not for himself. In this particular polity, the king's relationship to his subjects is homologous to that of a father's relationship to his son. Aristotle describes this relationship as paternal; hence, the form of friendship is a "paternal friendship."⁶⁴

The king, like the father, is responsible for nurturing and educating his subjects as the father does for his children. Therefore, since the king is just, and consequently, rules for the sake of his subjects, his subjects will possess similar dispositions and character-based friendships will be common among them. In political communities such as this, because the king has instilled virtue through various laws and education into his subjects, his subjects are virtuous. Hence, since the king and his subjects are both

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1161a10-15

virtuous, they have a lot in common such as desires. Thus, since the king and his subjects share desires, the king's decisions will coincide with the will of his subjects. In this regard, the relationship between the king and his subjects is a character-based friendship where the king is superior to his subjects.⁶⁵

Political friendship, or civic friendship, is based on “advantage and with what affects life [as a whole].”⁶⁶ The legislator's job is to nurture civic friendship among the political community's citizens. This is the friendship, as alluded earlier, that is “cohesive,” i.e. it holds cities together. Therefore, if legislators do their job well by focusing on the development of virtue in their constituents, then not only will friendship exist among the citizens over whom they legislate, but since they have fostered virtuous friendships, the highest form of justice will prevail. Furthermore, if the highest form of justice prevails, then those within the various communities will have the same stable wishes and desires, i.e. the same mind. This homogeneity, consequently, will enable the existence of concord, and not discord, among citizens concerning decisions and resolutions made, for they will all agree upon what is advantageous. This agreement will enable communities to become a normative force among citizens.

According to Aristotle, “each [friend] moulds the other in what they approve of, so that ‘[one learns] what is noble from noble people’.”⁶⁷ As suggested, if the regime is egregious, then people will mold each other into iniquitous human beings by reinforcing

⁶⁵ Contrary to kingships are tyrannies where the ruler and the ruled have nothing in common for neither is virtuous, and consequently, stable. This is the worst form of political community, and thus, the ruler's normative influence upon his subjects is negative. Like the tyrant and his subjects, the subjects themselves have nothing in common.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 1167b5

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1172a14

those behaviors in others; however, if the regime is virtuous, for example, a kingship, then when the citizens educate one another on the good life, they will teach each other appropriate behavior. Therefore, in the best regimes those who excel are extolled by others while those who misbehave are punished.⁶⁸ For instance, the youth and the base are ruled by passions—the irrational part of the soul. Hence, both groups of people require corrective treatment to modify their behavior and instill as well as reinforce a sense of temperance.⁶⁹ In this respect, Aristotle applies a primitive behaviorism where honor and love are used as an incentive to render aversive behavior extinct. On the one hand, decent people desire confirmation from others concerning their actions. If decent people approve of their actions, then they know their actions have merit. However, since people see that those lauded have an excess of character, and consequently, receive their encomiums because of that character, people desire to become noble for nobility's sake and not for some ulterior reason such as fame or wealth. In other words, character and not material gains are their ultimate motivation, for while an excess of money or fame can bring comfort, only virtue can invoke *eudaimonia*. Virtue, in this sense, is another source of normativity, for it prevents one from developing a vicious disposition by supplying loose laws for appropriate action.

Virtue, for Aristotle, “(a) is a state that decides, (b) [consisting] in a mean, (c) the mean relative to us, (d) which is defined by reference to reason, (e) i.e., to the reason by reference to which the intelligent person would define it. It is a mean between two vices,

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1155a13

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1179b30-1180a5

one of excess and one of deficiency.”⁷⁰ In other words, virtue is “the state that makes a human being good and makes him perform his function well. Since our function is to reason well, then virtue assists our ability to problem-solve, or make decisions.”⁷¹ If one lives in a just community, then one will receive knowledge concerning the various virtues through moral education. Then, when one applies what one learns, one will harmonize what one learns with how one acts. This process will habituate virtue and facilitate correct reasoning. Correct reasoning will enable us to strive with intelligence towards the mean between the aforementioned vices, or extremes, for once one has intelligence, then one has all the virtues. For example, if one desires to be witty and one has the tendency for being boorish, then one needs to aim their actions more towards buffoonery so that that person can achieve the mean. As such, virtues normatively guide our behavior as a splint corrects a bone fractured in all directions. Eventually though, those who aspire to be noble hope that those splinters will become one euphoric unification of the soul.

If one compares this account of normativity to the account represented in Plato’s *Lysis*, there is one striking difference between the two theorists. While Plato’s theory proffers the pursuit of wisdom, and subsequently, virtue as the desire to become useful to others, Aristotle contradicts this account by arguing that a virtuous person self-cultivates virtue for the sake of itself. Further, if that person habituates any social norms, then that person will do so because she desires *eudaimonia* and not the goods others provide her, for she knows if she behaves well, then she will naturally procure those

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1107a

⁷¹ Ibid., 1106a20

goods, for example, since virtuous people have common desires, they are naturally drawn together unlike the egregious whose disparity distances themselves from one another.

Accordingly, the Platonic moral hero will shape herself based upon social norms into what the community views as virtuous. If one does not develop, for instance, wisdom then one will not become useful to others, and consequently, will not have any friends, which means that that person will not become self-sufficient. Hence, through self-invention one aspires to be useful, or beneficial. By becoming beneficial, that person will nurture companionship and perhaps friendships in many ways, e.g. erotic relations.

This line of reasoning is problematic for Plato, for if what is always beneficial and never harms is good, and one aspires to be beneficial, then, according to this account, one never really develops a true sense of self. Instead, one exists as a culmination of myriad social constructs, which one perceives as advantageous. Therefore, while both Plato's and Aristotle's conceptions of normativity stem from community engagement, it is how one engages that community that separates them. This idea will become more evident when I discuss Aristotle's conception of self-love.

3.3 The Household

In the *Lysis*, Socrates demonstrated to Hippothales how to talk to one's beloved by humbling Lysis through philosophical inquiry, thus exposing Lysis' general lack of wisdom. First, Socrates discusses Lysis' relationship to his father and suggests that Lysis' father must not view him in high regard since he not only allows slaves to do things that he forbids Lysis to do, e.g. drive mules, but he assigns guardians to escort

Lysis to school and employs schoolteachers to train him. Second, Socrates discusses Lysis' relationship to his mother. She, like his father, only permits him to participate in activities of which he has knowledge, e.g. letter writing and lyre playing. Lysis' neighbors, likewise, restrict what he can and cannot do based upon his lack of knowledge, e.g. rule Athens. As a result, since Lysis does not understand things, no one has any use for him, and because nobody has any use for him, no one will desire to befriend him. Consequently, no one will love him, including his parents. However, if he were to gain wisdom, as Socrates argues, the opposite would occur. In the *Politics*, Aristotle discusses the topics in this argument and combines them into a cogent framework.

First off, since Aristotle's ethical theory dictates that people are enmeshed in communities, we must isolate the relationships in this argument to grasp Aristotle's departure from Socrates. Hence, there exists the relationship of father and son, mother and son, father and mother, neighbor and neighbor, father and slave, son and slave, son and neighbor, and son and miscellaneous authority figure, e.g. schoolteacher. Secondly, since these relationships necessarily (with the exclusion of neighbor and neighbor) possess lopsided power dynamics, for instance, the father rules the son, exploration of normative influences will be essential. Lastly, since Socrates' argument pertains to what Aristotle considers the household, and since the household is the political community on the smaller scale, household management concerning these relationships as well as their correlation to the political community will be warranted as well.

3.3.1 Household Management

While those who rule the political community use political science to enhance the wellbeing of its citizens, household managers develop acumen in household science to procure daily household necessities for its members.⁷² Subsequently, household managers require property, or a “multitude of tools,” to obtain them. For example, households need non-living tools such as plows, and living tools, such as oxen. They need tools for “making” such as beds and clothes, which serve a specific purpose as well as tools designed for “doing” such as slaves, which function as assistants implementing into practice other tools, for example, a weaver who controls a shuttle, or a look-out man who stands atop a tower.⁷³ Therefore, through gaining adroitness in their household affairs, or business, household managers ensure those within their household that the limits of what is needed to attain wellbeing and facilitate the good life are met.⁷⁴ In this regard, the household manager, or father, rules his house like a king over his subjects; however, this relationship requires qualification.

To Aristotle, barbarian men and women lacked the capacity to rule. Because of this deficiency, they existed in a culture of slavery where women and slaves were considered the same. The Greeks, therefore, because the barbarians were unable to rule

⁷² Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, 1252b12

⁷³ Ibid., 1253b23-1254b16

⁷⁴ Business is called by Aristotle the “science of property” (1256b40-1258a) where each piece of property has two uses; its proper use, which directly concerns the household, and its unnatural use, or how it’s used for exchange. Consequently, there are two sense of business. First, there is the kind mentioned above regarding household affairs. Second, there is the kind associated with money where objects are exchanged for ones of equal value. From the latter wealth is obtained. However, as Aristotle notes, because there is no limit to the latter sense of business those who perform its art well obtain wealth beyond what they need to manage their household. For Aristotle, this can be problematic. If one fixates their life on accruing wealth, then the means to which that person strives for the good life would not be virtuous, for all that person’s actions would filter through that end, and ultimately, use others as means to that end.

themselves, were morally justified to enslave them. This example illustrates Aristotle's belief that some people are born slaves while others are born free. Those who are born slaves are not human beings; they are tools with souls.⁷⁵ As such, masters, or household managers in our case, and slaves have nothing in common. Their relationship is characterized by tyranny; though, according to Aristotle, since the master-slave relationship is analogous to body and soul, it benefits neither the slave, nor the master if they cannot coexist, for if the master rules the slave poorly, then neither will be able to fulfill their household role. In this regard, both master and slave gain if they can attain a mutual friendship, which allows both to fulfill their purpose well.

Referring back to Socrates' earlier argument, Socrates equated Lysis' position in life, at least with respect to freedom, as being beneath a slave. Further, he concluded at the argument's end that since Lysis lacked wisdom, and therefore usefulness, nobody would love him, including his parents. While Socrates' remarks were not meant to be taken as Socratic doctrine, there is textual evidence that he may have believed something similar.

Socrates, in 217c, creates an analogy using hair color based on a conundrum concerning 'the bad': 'In 214d, Socrates argued that since the bad are out of kilter—unstable, and thus, different from one another, they cannot be friends, nor can they befriend anyone. Contrarily, since the good have characters, which are both stable and similar, it is possible for those who are good to genuinely befriend others who are good. However, in 217c Socrates states if one befriends one who is neither good, nor bad, and

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1161b3

consequently loves 'the good' on account of the bad, then is the person really bad or only its appearance? If the person is truly bad, then it is impossible for that person to love the good, for the bad and good are disparate.' Socrates surmises that one is not bad yet if one is in the presence of the bad. In other words, one must become bad by renouncing the good on account of the bad. Alternatively, one must embrace it to become good, i.e. one must grow into it just as one's hair becomes grey in old age.

Lysis is like a lowly slave because of his lack of wisdom. While Lysis is not a bad person who is ignorant in itself, he is neither good, nor bad in the presence of ignorance. As a result, Socrates instructs Lysis that he should seek wisdom on account of that ignorance so that he can become useful. If he develops usefulness, then everyone will want to be his friend. They will belong to him, and as a result, he will become free. Conversely, if he remains ignorant, then not even his parents will love him. He will not belong to anyone like a friend belongs to another with complementary characteristics. He will be useless, which would be slightly lower than the useful slave who can function in at least one beneficial capacity.

Nevertheless, because Lysis is not naturally bad and is still incomplete, Socrates' conclusion, then, that Lysis' parents do not love him is exaggerated. Their love for Lysis is not the same as their love towards others, for this is not the nature of their relationship to him. As Aristotle suggests, the father rules over a child like a king over his subject and the mother rules over her child like an aristocrat over hers.⁷⁶ Therefore, there is both an intrinsic superiority and advantage within the relationship between parent and child.

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, 1259a40-1259b4

Further, since the parents rule over the child, this relationship implies growth, maturation, development. Hence, normativity also is a key facet of the relationship, for the parents are a necessary source of moral standards, or values, for the child. Both Aristotle and Socrates concur in this conclusion. However, while Aristotle considers this relationship friendship, Socrates, and subsequently, Plato do not.

While friendship for Plato (and Socrates) stems from a sense of usefulness, true friendship develops through the pursuit of wisdom. This characteristic, as Socrates holds, is not present in the relationship between Lysis and his parents. If that were the case, then Socrates would not have been able to surmise that Lysis' parents do not love him and thus show Lysis' lack of wisdom. As both Plato and Aristotle make evident, the parent-child relationship is that of superiority. The aim of that relationship is for the parents to ensure that the child is fed, educated, and so on by guiding the child's process of maturation. Therefore, because of the "oppressive" nature of this relationship, true friendship is not manifest within it for both Plato and Aristotle.

3.4 Self-love

From the political community our discussion has progressed to the individual where how one befriends oneself will determine how that person relates to others. For example, if one desires nothing but advantage, e.g. their ultimate aim is wealth, then that will be the basis of her interactions with others. The same can be said for those who base their friendships on pleasure and those who center their relationships with others on developing character. As stated previously, Plato only considered those who connected through philosophy as friends and based that ideal on a self-regarding form of self-love,

i.e. one befriended others for her own sake. For Plato, the ultimate goal of friendship was to gain one's own self-sufficiency—freedom. Hence, philosophy was a person's means towards that goal and one engaged others with that intention in mind. Alternatively, Aristotle's ultimate end is *eudaimonia*, which is by definition self-regarding as well. However, Aristotle ameliorates Plato by openly infusing an altruistic element into his conception of self-love.⁷⁷ Thus, as this section will demonstrate, the person who guides her life by virtue will perform actions, which are consciously other-regarding and as a result have a mindful understanding of what is best for not only her but in the various communities of which she is a member.⁷⁸

3.4.1 *Self-love's Two Sides*

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, self-love translates as *philautos*, which means “a friend to oneself.” Knowing the Greek root of the word is critical to grasping the function of this concept within Aristotle's ethical theory. Aristotle posits two forms of self-love; however, he connects what represents each form to the type of friendship the person expressing each form represents, for example, the good form correlates to character-based friendships and the bad form to pleasure-based and utility-based. Ergo, the virtuous person will demonstrate the good form and the vicious will evidence the bad. In this sense, reason guides the person who exhibits the good form of self-love just

⁷⁷ While Plato's theory of friendship demonstrates altruism as well in the actions of Socrates towards the boys, the connection between altruism and friendship is a lot more cryptic. In order to grasp altruism's relationship to friendship, one must know how the relationships fit together within the dramatic subtext, which, as shown, is by no means either an easy or obvious task. Aristotle, on the other hand, makes self-love, and hence, altruism a central theme in his ethics. While Aristotle never explicitly says the word 'altruism', its presence is a lot more pronounced in his conception of the good form of self-love.

⁷⁸ Confusion may result from my usage of “consciously.” When I say “consciously,” I mean that one is not only aware that the action is geared towards another person, but that was the action's intention.

as feelings guide the person who embodies the bad. Since reason guides the good form and since the good form involves well-being's cultivation, then because virtuous people naturally use their reason to cultivate their well being as well as the well-being of others, those who display the good form of self-love are virtuous.⁷⁹

Contrarily, feelings guide the bad form of self-love. Through their reliance on feelings those who display this form are self-regarding and not concerned about the well-being of others. They are vicious, incontinent people seeking pleasure and shunning life. They make poor decisions and are full of regret. But most importantly, they are not friends to themselves; they are unlovable people who destroy themselves instead of cultivating their well-being. Therefore, they are incapable of caring for the well-being of others because they are unable to correctly nurture their own.⁸⁰ These are the people who pursue pleasure and advantage in life and form relationships based upon those foundations.

3.4.2 The Second Self

Since self-love concerns how one befriends oneself, i.e. it's a manifestation of friendship, its development is integral, for this is how true friends originate. For Aristotle, true friends are a second self; they are an extension of who we are.⁸¹ Since true friends only exist among the virtuous and since the virtuous are similar and desire similar things, e.g. reason-based activities such as philosophical inquiry, then cultivating the friend's well-being is like cultivating one's own. Moreover, because the virtuous

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1166a10-1166b29

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1166b3-25

⁸¹ Ibid., 1168b5-10

person loves herself, and because the friend is a second self, the virtuous person will love and treat her friend as she would herself. In this sense, the virtuous person acts for her friend because the friend is essentially the same person. And, since the virtuous person and her friend are essentially the same person, they will have an analogous conception of not only what *eudaimonia* is, but what the best means of attaining it are. Thus, even though every action a true friend performs towards her friend aims at her *eudaimonia*, since the true friend is like a second self, that action aims at the true friend's *eudaimonia* as well and is, consequently, other-regarding.

Furthermore, Aristotle asserts that virtuous people perform actions that benefit the community's common good.⁸² Since virtuous people compete for what is finest, those who are virtuous strain to perform the finest actions. Moreover, since "the good person must be a self-lover...he will both help himself and benefit others by doing fine actions," even if those actions lead to costly sacrifices such as the sacrifice of one's wealth, one's honor, or one's life.⁸³ Because of this willingness to engage in virtuous activities, "each person individually will receive the greatest of goods."⁸⁴ For example, on a basketball court, there are five positions filled by five players: two guards, two forwards, and one center. Each person has a different function on the team, for instance, the guard passes the ball and shoots long-range shots and the center rebounds the ball and scores from close-range. In short, if the players on the team fulfill their functions and realize their capacities, the team is better as a whole. If the players on the team learn

⁸² Ibid., 1169a10

⁸³ Ibid., 1169a10-35

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1169a10

how to use the skills they developed together, then the team will become even better. Consequently, it will win more games, and the players will receive greater honor from those wins. On the other hand, if the players on the team do not develop their skills and they do not play well together, then the team will most likely lose no matter how talented its players are compared to the other team. The following two examples show this idea.

If a team's guard aspires to be excellent, then—based on the above description—she will have to develop her long-range shooting and passing abilities. While one of the skills (long-range shooting) attains greater honor through point scoring, the other (passing) is paramount to a team's overall success, for if a guard cannot pass, and therefore distribute, the ball well to her teammates, then the team will not be able to score as many points, and consequently, not win as many games. Therefore, if the guard increased her ability to shoot and did not practice passing, while she may become the league's top point scorer, the team may not have a winning record. As such, the player's demonstration of bad self-love hinders the prosperity of the team. This is further exhibited in the second example.

There are ten seconds left in the NBA finals. The Boston Celtics are losing by one point to the San Antonio Spurs. Ray Allen (Boston's All Star guard) steals the ball from a San Antonio player and begins dribbling the ball down the court towards the Spurs' basket. Allen notices, while dribbling down court, that Tony Parker (San Antonio's guard) is going to intercept him on his way to the basket, forcing a mid range jump shot, which while being a relatively easy shot for Allen, would not be for certain. Allen, however, has another option. In his peripheral vision, he sees Kevin Garnett

(Boston's Hall of Fame center) approaching the basket as well; he is open for an easy layup or dunk.

Rather than risking the game by missing the shot, since Allen is a virtuous player, he realizes the best option would be to pass the ball to Kevin Garnett. Even though he sacrifices the individual glory of winning the championship game, he realizes that winning the game is more important even for his own self-interest, for then his team would be champions, which is the highest honor a team can receive. Thus, in this case if Allen's teammates are virtuous, i.e. they feel that the team comes first and personal glory second, then his pursuit of *eudaimonia* both aligns with and benefits their pursuit. However, if Allen exhibited the bad form of self-love and had taken the shot so that he could procure more endorsements, then Allen's goal would not align with what is best for the team or for himself as an individual. Furthermore, if his teammates felt the same and acted only for themselves, thus not acting for what is best for the team, but for their varying goals, e.g. endorsement money, fame, and personal statistics, the demonstrated selfishness would most likely cause unfavorable results.

This example not only shows the nature of self-love but illustrates the way in which virtues normatively guide a person in how one befriends oneself, for if one desires *eudaimonia*, then one must strive towards being virtuous, for when one is virtuous, others benefit. More specifically, the community benefits as a whole. Though, if a person acts on behalf of her own interests, then the community is not necessarily benefited. This self-regarding attitude engenders tyranny because the aims of the just community and the virtuous person align.

This idea differs from Plato whose conception of friendship in the *Lysis* focuses more on individual aims. However, even though Plato's theory is not overtly other-regarding to the same extent as Aristotle, his representation of friendship does show how the pursuit of virtue indirectly benefits others. If one participates in philosophical inquiry to become wiser even if that person does not participate in the activity with the intention of benefiting the other, as previously stated, his pursuit of wisdom will still benefit those with whom he participates in the activity. Hence, one could argue that Plato's theory possesses an unintended altruism, i.e. altruism would be an unintended consequence of one's action. This summation, however, does not account for Socrates' genuine regard for the boys in the dialogue. If one recalls in the *Lysis*, Socrates does truly desire to help the boys. In this sense, helping those boys is his aim the activity. Therefore, it would seem for both Plato and Aristotle that the virtuous citizen enables virtuous communities to not only exist, but to exist in harmony.

3.5 Types of Friendship

In the last section, we explored the *Lysis*' dramatic subtext and discovered allusions to various relationships, which many would construe as being friendships, for example, the erotic relationship, parent-child relationship, basic good, civic, etc. While Socrates chased the idea of friendship's illusion, thus discounting those relationships as being friendships, Aristotle's polymorphic approach, as we have discussed, incorporated them and used their dynamics to construct an intricate social framework where friendships enabled cohesion on many levels. Like Plato's dramatic subtext, Aristotle proffers one true form of friendship and then offers two incomplete. While Aristotle and

Plato's conception of pleasure-based relationships are analogous, Aristotle and Plato differ in their understanding of the utility-based. And, while their position on true friendship has many parallels, Plato restricts our understanding of it to the recognition of and participation in the activity while Aristotle articulates the state.

3.5.1 Pleasure-based Friendships

Aristotle argues that pleasure-based friendships are guided by feelings based on what appears to be pleasant at the time. These pleasures are not long-lasting, though, but do provide immediate fulfillment for the individual's whims. Thus, because of the transient nature of these pleasures, the friendship is incomplete. People who participate in these friendships desire what is nearby and because they desire the immediate, the friendship is not meant to be long-lasting. It will only last as long as the encounter remains pleasurable or their desires are met. When the participants no longer desire what pleasures the other person offers, the friendship will dissolve. Aristotle cites the itinerant qualities of youth, especially concerning erotic love. This provides a prime circumstance where this friendship can be applied, for when one partner loses her sexual appeal, pleasure is no longer acquired from the other party and since pleasure is no longer gained, the friendship ceases to exist in the same capacity if at all. Therefore, the love in this friendship is the love of the incidental pleasure-providing features of the other, which facilitates pleasure in those pursuing the relationship.⁸⁵ In this respect, Aristotle's pleasure-based friendship mirrors the irrational lust of Hippothales where Hippothales praised Lysis' external qualities without recognizing who Lysis *really* was.

⁸⁵ John M. Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship", *Review of Metaphysics* (1977), pp. 619-648.

3.5.2 Utility-based Friendships

The utility-based friendship originates in the usefulness of others. Hence, those friendships that provide and are based on advantage compose this classification of friendship. In this friendship, the participants demand some benefit—some sort of useful good. This friendship can form based upon a variety of pursuits. For example, two co-workers may help each other advance, or two people may support one another as each respectively tries to re-establish a functional existence.

If one recalls from the *Lysis* and the last section, Plato also recognized the allure of different ends to achieve the same goal. Socrates preferred friendship to other external goods such as fame, wealth, and animals and Plato alluded to a difference between basic goods such as health and higher goods like courage. However, since the bad can neither befriend the good, nor each other, Plato construes this relationship as enabling good, for example, this relationship can assist one in becoming healthy. Furthermore, if one further recalls, one can become sufficient concerning the procurement of basic needs. Though, since this relationship does not directly permit the cultivation of virtue, then it is not friendship.

However, when one no longer enables the other to procure the goods or when those goods are no longer required, the friendship dissolves unless it morphs into another type, e.g. pleasure.⁸⁶ Oftentimes this scenario will occur when inequality emerges because one friend exceeds what the other is capable of providing, for instance, one

⁸⁶ A good example, which illustrates this last point, is the movie *When Harry Met Sally*. At first Harry and Sally hate one another. Later, they form a friendship which possessed both useful qualities, e.g. emotional support, pleasurable qualities, e.g. romantic relations, shopping, etc, and developed into a character-based relationship where a deep love was manifested itself. This realization, for Harry, occurred during a New Years Eve epiphany, which drove him to return to Sally and tell her all the reasons why he loved *her*.

friend is promoted at work to a high-paying position, or conversely, one friend loses her job and can no longer reciprocate workplace advantage. As such, like the pleasure-based friendship, this relationship is incomplete. Alternatively, Aristotle posits a third type of friendship—the character-based—which not only incorporates facets of both the utility-based and pleasure-based friendships, but is essential and not incidental.

3.5.3 *Character-based Friendships*

Only the virtuous are capable of attaining this form of friendship, for the virtuous are capable of recognizing a person's good character and are capable of forming a friendship for its own sake based upon that character. Further, since *eudaimonia* is sought by the virtuous, their actions aim at that end. As such, while their friendships will contain advantage and pleasure, those are not the objects of their affection. Instead, they pursue the good life, which means that character is the object they pursue.

Unlike Plato, the character-based friendship is not just something towards which one aspires. Instead, it is something attainable. Although as Aristotle notes, this type of friendship is not common. It is the first friendship; the primary form, which is self-sufficient and complete. These attributes, of course, as well are not achievable according to the *Lysis*. Nevertheless both Plato (through Socrates) and Aristotle hold that philosophical activity incites its development. Though, as Plato will dissent, the philosophical activity involved is self-motivated and self-regarding. This belief, of course, differs from Aristotle who introduces a primitive form of altruism in his conception of an other-regarding self-love.

3.6 Kant's Aristotelian Framework

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant voices his famous words concerning friendship: “Aristotle says: My dear friends, there is no such thing as a friend!”⁸⁷ With analogous authority, in *Lectures on Ethics*, Kant resounds: “Socrates remarks, ‘My dear friends, there are no friends’, he implies thereby there is no friendship which fully conforms to the Idea of friendship.”⁸⁸ While this assertion may seem natural concerning Plato who scholars have argued does not believe true friendship exists based upon the elenchus’ conclusion in the *Lysis*, this belief appears a bit peculiar when ascribed to Aristotle, especially if one were to claim, for example like Marcucci, that Kant corrects himself in the *Metaphysics of Morals* when he refers to Aristotle.⁸⁹

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant follows his assertion concerning Aristotle’s position on friendship with: “The following remarks may draw attention to the difficulties in perfect friendship.”⁹⁰ According to Marcucci, Kant was referring to the perfect equality between friends, which must occur if a perfect friendship is to develop. As Kant claims just prior, perfect equality between friends is something to which one can only aspire, for the tension between one’s desire to fully self-disclose oneself and the fear of not being respected once one does so prevents true friendship from materializing.

While Marcucci makes an astute observation concerning Aristotle’s concept of equality

⁸⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1996) 6:470

⁸⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Louis Infield (New York: The Century Company, 1930) 202.

⁸⁹ Silvestro Marcucci, “‘Moral Friendship’ in Kant”, *Kant-Studien* 90 (1999), 439-40. “Referring to the saying already used in his *Lectures on Ethics* and there attributed to Socrates, Kant, this time correctly attributing the saying to Aristotle. . . . And there is no friend, just because it is hard to realize the “balance” [*Gleichgewicht*] between love, which moves us to help friend but also to help him consider his faults, and respect, which one friend demands from another when he is considered as a person, and so not as a subordinate.”

⁹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* p. 215.

and how Kant might use that to interpret Aristotle's position on true friendship, there are three considerations Marcucci does not address. First, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle explicitly states that while perfect friendship is rare it does exist. Second, Plato can be speculated as being more explicit concerning his disbelief in true friendship than what one may openly interpret in Aristotle.⁹¹ Third, Aristotle is referring to shared activities and quality of character and not the dynamic relationship between respect and self-disclosure. While the conclusion to Socrates' elenchus on a surface level can suggest that there are no friends, for Aristotle this conclusion is not clear, and thus, requires some attention.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle states: “[character-based friendships] are likely to be rare since such people are few.”⁹² This assertion should settle this dispute; Kant is wrong. Though, to make this conclusion at this time would be a disservice to Kant. After all, Kant is one of the most important philosophers in history, and there are different ways to read Aristotle. Hence, I would like to briefly explore this topic before proceeding into the next section because Aristotle's framework regarding friendship is of paramount importance to Kant's. Thus, it would be beneficial to deduce a better understanding of their relationship.

First off, Kant states in his *Lectures on Ethics*: “[Friendship of disposition and fellowship] can exist only between two or three friends.”⁹³ This line concurs with the above excerpt from Aristotle. Hence, it certainly is possible that Kant does realize that

⁹¹ This remark is not meant to contradict conclusions from the first section, but to take a common position held by most until this point.

⁹² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1056b25

⁹³ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 206

Aristotle makes this claim. Therefore, the question arises: ‘How does Kant read Aristotle so that this parallel would exist?’ Furthermore, can Aristotle be interpreted to think that the idea of friendship is true but its absolute realization impossible? While this section has discussed Aristotle’s theory of friendship and explicated what Aristotle means by true friendship, it has failed to acknowledge ‘primary friendship’—a key element of Aristotle’s theory in the *Eudemian Ethics*, which, it appears, influenced Kant on a fundamental level.

While Aristotle deduces the types of friendship from ‘first friendship’—the primary form—in the *Eudemian Ethics*, he spends little time on this concept in his later work. The reason for this may be that Aristotle included the concept of primary friendship into his understanding of character-based friendship. In other words, if a person is one of the few who participates in a character-based friendship, then that person participates in a perfect, self-sufficient, complete, true friendship. However, if one focuses upon Aristotle’s deduction of friendship in *Eudemian Ethics*, then one *might* be able to infer a slight difference between the two concepts. This observation would be useful for two people: first, the person who considers the *Eudemian Ethics* as Aristotle’s more mature work; and second, the person who wants to interpret Aristotle as one who denies various concepts in their perfection, for example, friendship.

In regards to the first group of people, Kenny notes that relative consensus regarding the chronological order of these books (the *Eudemian Ethics* precedes the *Nicomachean Ethics*) was a more recent phenomenon. In fact, one could still interpret

the *Eudemian Ethics* as being the more mature of the two treatises.⁹⁴ Just because, as Kenny argues, the *Eudemian Ethics* resembles Plato's dialogues more regarding the terminology used, does not necessitate distance from the dialogues themselves. While one could classify Kant's reading of Aristotle as such, this endeavor would be far too speculative for this particular project.⁹⁵ Hence, while one could argue that because Kant favored a view which laid in between Aristotle and Plato, he preferred this particular treatise over the more *mature* version, this short thesis project is not sufficient for this issue. For the moment, there is a more viable solution to our problem if one focuses upon Aristotle's description of primary friendship.

According to Aristotle, the primary form of friendship is true friendship, or first friendship, i.e. it is the form of friendship towards which everyone aspires. In this sense, the primary friendship is similar to the character-based friendship he describes in both moral treatises. In fact, as he states in both moral treatises, the primary form of friendship is included in the character-based friendship, for where there is pleasure from goodness between two people who share in joint activities, the primary form of friendship is present.⁹⁶ However, is the primary form of friendship identical to the character-based? In other words, do the primary form of friendship and the character-based friendship share homologous qualities?

⁹⁴ Anthony Kenny, *Aristotle on the Perfect Life*, p. 113

⁹⁵ As the next section will show, even though Kant viewed himself as having the same intentions as Aristotle from a metaphysical standpoint (while he appreciated Aristotle's extrapolation of the categories from nature, he disagreed with their origins, for instance, the categories, for Kant, were internal and architectonic), and even though his philosophy was a *mélange* of Plato's and Aristotle's respective theories, which will be discussed more in the following section, this is not the turn to *unpack* this particular issue.

⁹⁶ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, trans. Horace Rackham, 1238a33

There is an important distinction at this point which must be made. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle establishes identity in his discussion of perfect friendship between primary friendship and character-based friendship.⁹⁷ However, one could read into the *Eudemian Ethics* the claim that this identity does not exist. Instead, the types of friendship are *related* to the universal as instrument relates to surgery in the term ‘surgical instrument’. This reading of Aristotle would be analogous to Kant’s position on friendship, which states that there are three ideals of friendship, which are patterned after the Idea.

According to Aristotle, the primary form of friendship is the universal. It is absolutely good and absolutely desirable. Ergo, it is perfect. However, while the primary form of friendship is universal among the different types of friendship: pleasure-based *friendship*, utility-based *friendship*, and character-based *friendship*, i.e. “The primary is that of which the definition is implicit in the definition of all,” the same is not true for character, utility, and pleasure, i.e. the definition of pleasure is not implicit within the definition of friendship.⁹⁸ In this sense, while character-based friendships can exhibit the qualities identically if they were to manifest in their purest form, since humans cannot achieve that level of friendship, and with that, those qualities, their friendships will always be deficient with respect to the primary form. This idea is analogous to Kant’s conception of true friendship as something unachievable because the necessary equality between self-disclosure and respect will not permit its culmination.

⁹⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156b5-1157a

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1236a15-25

Moreover, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, if one achieves a character-based friendship, then one has achieved the primary form of friendship for character-based friendships are identical. However, in the *Eudemian Ethics*, since character-based friendships are related to the primary form and since character-based friendships most embody the primary form, one could hold that only the highest manifestation of friendship is identical and not just related to it. In other words, both character-based friendships and primary friendships in their absolutely perfect state possess the same qualities. Otherwise, the two friendships are only relational.

Since human beings cannot attain absolute perfection, then the greatest degree of friendship two virtuous people could achieve would not contain all of the qualities of perfect friendship in how it exists in the primary form, i.e. it would be deficient in some capacity. Even if that deficiency is minute, it still obstructs one's aspirations of perfection. Kant posits the same relationship between his friendship of disposition or sentiment and true friendship where the relationship between respect and self-disclosure prevents the culmination of equality. In a similar vein, one could construct an argument addressing the qualitative differences of various properties with respect to certain friendship arrangements, i.e. the qualitative difference of pleasure in the pleasure-based friendship and the character-based friendship.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle claims that the utility-based friendship and the pleasure-based friendship are incomplete versions of the character-based. For instance, while the pleasure-based friendship will possess pleasure, this pleasure will be inadequate compared to the pleasure one derives from, for example, philosophical

activity. In this regard, there is a qualitative difference concerning pleasure and how it manifests in different relationships. With respect to the primary form of friendship in the *Eudemian Ethics*, one could argue that since primary friendship is represented differently in each friendship (for primary friendship concerns how the types relate to the universal, or definition) and this qualitatively changes based upon the kind of friendship to which it pertains (for example, two pleasure-seekers will strive towards achieving that object of love in the friendship), then there is no identity between the primary form and the character-based because the primary form of friendship is equivocal, i.e. there is not one definition that fits all exactly.⁹⁹ While this reading does not align with Kant's theory of friendship, it is certainly plausible that he read Aristotle this way and re-structured the problems he foresaw in Aristotle based upon that reading.

While these interpretations are speculative, it is critical to have some awareness of the possible relationship of Kant and Aristotle on this fundamental level because this relationship will constitute the bulk of the subject matter about which one can converse concerning the rest of his theory.

3.7 Kant's Copernican Revolution

As stated, Kant synthesizes Plato and Aristotle. While he keeps Plato's model, he utilizes Aristotle's framework. In other words, friendship for Kant is an idea towards which one aspires; it is a duty. According to Kant, friends help one another attain self-sufficiency—autonomy—through the mutual pursuit of holiness. In this regard, Kant's ethical theory, e.g. his conception of friendship, is teleological. Furthermore, like

⁹⁹ Ibid., 1236a10-35

Aristotle, Kant's conception of friendship is polymorphic in nature, thus categorizing a variety of relationships as friendship. And, like both Plato and Aristotle Kant's understanding of friendship gels the community. The following section will examine these differences and commonalities in an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of Kant's treatment of friendship.

4. FROM *PHILIA* TO *FREUNDSCHAFT*: AN EXPLORATION OF KANT'S COPERNICAN REVOLUTION

Kant's 'Copernican Revolution' facilitated the reconciliation of an irreparable rupture in the history of philosophy by fusing classical and Christian thought into a perspective framed by the boundaries of human reason both theoretical and practical. Through this reconciliation, Kant not only advanced metaphysics by shifting the foundation, thus modifying the paradigm from which systems formed, but also Kant proposed an ethical theory, which utilized a Greek sense of virtue while being guided by *a priori* moral laws excavated by reason and not provided through faith. With this contribution, Kant would progress the study of ethics, by creating a rational duty-based system and exploring neglected regions of ethical theory virtually untouched since Antiquity, e.g. friendship, which according to Wood, "One would have to go back as far as Aristotle to find a major philosopher for whom friendship is as important to ethics as it is for Kant."¹⁰⁰ For friendship is paramount to Kant's anthropology, providing the micro details for Kant's macro project—the *ethical community*.¹⁰¹ Hence, to truly fathom the aims of Kant's moral philosophy, one should develop an understanding of Plato's and Aristotle's respective ethical theories.

If one recalls from the last two sections, both Plato and Aristotle believed in the existence of true friendship. While for Aristotle true friendship was something attainable and its definition understandable, Plato espoused a view, which defended the activity of

¹⁰⁰ Allen Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 275.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 316-17.

friendship, e.g. people can demonstrate friendship towards one another, but could not define the concept. Through the contrast between Plato's and Aristotle's respective theories concerning *philia*, Kant proffered an understanding of *Freundschaft* (friendship), which synthesized the perceived strengths of both philosophers: Plato's Theory of Ideas and Aristotle's Categories. Through this amalgamation, Kant constructed a framework, which possessed familiar attributes, for example, analogues to Aristotle's basic types of friendship; innovations such as the dynamics involved in respect and self-disclosure; and differences, for instance, Kant's view that neither the activity of friendship, nor its perfection are realizable by humans. In this sense, Kant's theory of friendship is an ideal case study to analyze Kant's connection to the Greek virtue ethicists.

Oftentimes, Kant's critics overlook or downplay the strength of this connection, which is unfortunate since even the deontological, or duty-oriented, facets of Kant's theory possess overtones of virtue ethics. Hence, this section will address the following issues. First, it will explicate Kant's paradigmatic shift in a historical context. This exposition should provide the necessary background to appreciate Kant's moral philosophy, which utilizes pure reason as its primary source of normativity. Afterwards, this section will discuss Kant's relationship to the Greeks where through a comparative analysis will support the claim: 'Kant's ethical theory is a vein of virtue ethics'. This section will, further, address two common criticisms of Kant, which state: First, Kant's ethical theory is "morally schizophrenic" and second that it is too stringent. With respect to the first critique, in one sense the attack is false, for example, the virtuous person in

Kant's ethical theory, whose will mirrors the moral law, will perform the virtuous actions dictated by the moral law because she wants to. However, there is one sense in which genuineness is problematic. When one acts for the sake of duty, one does not necessarily act for the sake of the person. This issue will be demonstrated through the "Friendship Dilemma," which will not only exploit a limitation in Kantian friendship, but will also raise the question as to whether Kant's theory is other-regarding. Thus, through a comparative analysis between Kant's theory of friendship and Plato's and Aristotle's respective theories, this section will show that unlike the Greeks whose ethical theories are other-regarding for the sake of the agent, i.e. the people involved and the circumstances matter, Kant's ethical theory will focus on the action itself because one is bound by the moral law to perform that action (the empirical elements of the action are irrelevant). This distinction is a defining departure from the Greeks and can be argued to be "schizophrenic".

4.1 Reconciling the Irreconcilable

The popularization of Christianity during the Roman Empire galvanized a paradigm shift that would henceforth redefine philosophical endeavors in Western Thought. Through this paradigmatic shift, the concept of duty became prevalent among ethicists. Resultantly, the infusion of duty would alter what constituted 'the good life' in the following epochs.

While the Romans praised aspects of Greek culture, e.g. philosophy and art, they believed the grandeur of Rome, itself, derived from their faith in the gods. They were devout; they were patriotic. They believed that those who held political ideals, which

dissented from the conventional ones enforced by the Empire, were rabble rousers who could incite the unraveling of the pristine order which manifested itself in the splendor that Rome embodied.¹⁰² Thus, the adoption and resulting success of legalizing Christianity is no surprise given the nature of how it was implemented. By synthesizing Stoicism and Jewish Tradition, the Romans had established a means of controlling the population as well as a new vehicle that would function as a splint nurturing the proper growth of philosophy throughout the next millennia.¹⁰³ This paradigm would be characterized by a reliance on faith and emphasis on duty. Thus, the Greek's moral hero became tragic, falling from grace atop Mount Olympus to her knees where she was humbled before God as a casualty of social change.

Descartes would incite the next epochal shift, catalyzing the decline of religion-guided philosophy by enthroning reason.¹⁰⁴ This empowerment would demystify certain prior spiritual myths, by demanding that knowledge be accountable to "computation and utility." Hence, what did not conform to these standards would be subpoenaed by reason to the courts of judgment where it would cast its verdict condemning those truths that betrayed the laws of the Enlightenment.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, since religion began to use philosophy as a means of justification, decadence would follow leading to religion's

¹⁰² M.L. Clarke, *The Roman Mind: Studies in the History of Thought from Cicero to Marcus Aurelius* (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1968) 12-13.

¹⁰³ Richard Taylor, *Virtue Ethics*, Section 4.

¹⁰⁴ Heinrich Heine, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, trans. John Snodgrass (State University of New York Press, 1986) 60.

¹⁰⁵ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, (Continuum Publishing Company, 1999) 6. "The program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy... For the Enlightenment, whatever does not conform to the rule of computation and utility is suspect" (3; 6).

inexorable destruction, for the nature of religion requires no such proof.¹⁰⁶ Though, while this change meant detriment to religion in relation to philosophy, it incited a re-evaluation of the Ancient Greeks, and this re-evaluation illuminated the path that would engender Kant's 'Copernican revolution' and reconcile these two traditions.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the following section will explain Kant's relationship to both duty-based ethics as well as virtue ethics.

4.2 Kantian Virtue

Is there a disharmony between reason and motivation within Kant's ethical theory? While Michael Stocker does not address Kant directly the following passage represents how one might criticize him:

...a morally good intention is an essential constituent of a morally good act. This seems correct enough. On that view, a morally good intention is an intention to do an act for the sake of its goodness or rightness. But now, suppose you are in a hospital, recovering from a long illness. 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, travelling all the way across 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 the best. You at first think he is engaging in a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving the moral burden. But the more you two 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 his duty.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Heinrich Heine, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁷ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 73 (1976) 74

In “Kant’s Virtue Ethics,” Louden responds to this style of objection against Kant’s ethics. According to Louden, Kant is typically the “whipping boy” for deontology by its various critics. However, those who primarily criticize Kant, for example, virtue ethicists such as Foote, Macintyre, and Williams, usually focus too much upon the deontological facets of Kant’s ethical theory. In other words, adversaries usually accentuate Kant’s position concerning discrete acts and downplay his regard for the agents themselves. According to Louden, “[Kant] sought to build an ethical theory which could assess both the life plans of moral agents and their discrete acts.” Hence, Kant’s ethics possessed elements of both deontology *and* virtue ethics. In fact, as Louden concludes Kant’s views on morality laid in between the two positions.¹⁰⁹

Louden’s observation is critical to this section’s developing examination of the parallel between Kantian ethics and Greek moral philosophy, especially concerning his treatment of friendship. In effect, Kant’s ethics *were* teleological; they *were* aspirational; and the cultivation of virtues *was* a significant aspect of his theory. Hence, even though pure reason’s application of the categorical imperative enables one to fathom the synthetic a priori practical principles of the moral law, there is a process of becoming—a self-created rational end—towards which one strives and from which one can gain a level of fulfillment, which is superior to the empirical conception of happiness posited by Greeks such as Plato and Aristotle.

¹⁰⁹ Robert B. Louden, “Kant’s Virtue Ethics”, *Philosophy* **61** (1986), p. 473-74; 478.

4.2.1 A Normative Re-adjustment

For both Aristotle and Plato, the community shaped us. While for Plato community influence occurred through a self-regarding desire for completeness, and its consequent freedom through one's interactions with others; for Aristotle, citizens were enmeshed within social networks, which inculcated their members with favorable patterns of behavior oftentimes through education and a variety of friendship arrangements.¹¹⁰ For example, Aristotle emphasizes the need for a human being to receive an appropriate education so that that person can mature into a virtuous human being who demonstrates good will to those in the political community. Kant, however, differs from Aristotle concerning moral education, especially with respect to the community in which one is a part. In regards to the education of ethics, for instance, Wood notes in *Kant's Ethical Theory*:

[Kant] opposes the "catechistic" method, which tests only the pupil's memory, and favors the "erotectic" (Socratic) method, which develops the pupils own reason...Kant's Enlightenment view is that the principle of morality is an idea each of us possesses in our reason. This idea starkly opposes much of the human conduct around us, including the customs and traditions of our societies, and therefore the habits, feelings, and perceptions that have been trained into us. Abstract reasoning has the advantage over particular perceptions and feelings that the self-alienation involved in it serves to protect us against the prejudices and self-deceptions that present themselves to us as self-evident moral truths when they take the form of immediate feelings and perceptions.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ When I make this statement, I realize that Plato would not consider most relationships friendships. Hence, when I say "variety" above, it is in more of a limited sense. Instead of types of relationships, it would concern moreso the relationships themselves.

¹¹¹ Allen Wood, *Kant's Ethical Theory*, pp. 151-52

Wood concludes that if our social relationships and institutions enhanced our moral wellbeing, then one could rely on our interactions with others to develop our moral principles. However, since the opposite is true and people within society are in incessant opposition, one must rely on the principles obtained through abstract reasoning.

This depiction opposes the normative role Aristotle ascribes to education as well as the role, which the community's diverse social forces play in our development. As Woods stated, Kant favors the Socratic Method in developing virtue in others. This preference most likely occurs for two reasons. Firstly, community influences, e.g. socially-based identities, are empirically grounded. Hence, from the community one could internalize, at best, moral precepts, which would not necessarily ensure that others are treated as ends-in-themselves. Secondly, if one engages others analogously to how Socrates, for example, engaged Lysis, then one can develop another person's understanding of the world. This does not necessarily occur through the community where inferior behaviors permeate. Thus, for Kant, since one has a duty to one's friend to correct that person's judgment when that person is in error, the best source of one's ability to do so would be through rational means, which originate in the faculty of thought.

As mentioned, while Kant viewed himself as having a similar project to Aristotle, he disagreed with how Aristotle posited a conception of the categories, which originated in an external source. Kant disagrees with Aristotle's understanding of the community based upon the same reasoning. For Kant, the community is not the whole and its constituent parts. Instead, it is the parts and the whole it subsumes. Normativity for Kant

derives from within. Hence, even though one is influenced by what is occurring in the sensible world, for instance, our life plan to attain happiness, our understanding of the moral law is more critical to our character. Thus, the following section will discuss the nature of that virtuous character. This understanding should enable us to not only better grasp our relationship to the moral community, but it will answer the objection in the beginning of the section of whether or not disharmony exists in Kant's ethical theory.

4.2.2 Practical Reason

In a similar fashion as the Greeks, Kant proffers a teleological ethical theory. However, instead of positing happiness as one's ultimate good, he insisted upon something more objective, something more rational—something a priori. So, Kant maintained that while happiness was *a* good, it was not *the* good. Thus, Kant created two forms of imperative to construct two sets of principles to aim at two different kinds of ends. On the one hand, there is happiness, which is material and based upon the faculty of desire. On the other hand, there is holiness, which one only attains through the duties dictated by the categorical imperative. Thus, while the former coincides, in a sense, with the law of nature, and thus, conditioned theoretical principles, the latter exists as a priori laws—the ultimate law, which one is to understand through reason's employment. Therefore, even though Kant incorporates happiness, as espoused by the Greeks, he diminishes its importance in comparison to the moral law.

Through the categories of freedom, one is able to use pure practical reason to formulate judgments concerning which actions are good, and which are evil. As Kant

defines it, the will is “the practical use of our pure reason.”¹¹² And, as space and time are conditions through which one understands objects of the sensible world, freedom is the condition, which enables us to “encounter” the moral law. Through our understanding of the moral law, one is able to aspire towards holiness where God and immortality are “conditions of the necessary object of a will determined by that law.”¹¹³

From our development of maxims we employ our pure will and aspire to develop a holy will, which coincides perfectly with the moral law, i.e. we strive for a will “incapable of any maxims which conflict with the moral law.”¹¹⁴ The continuous, unending progress of developing our maxims through our desire to attain a holy will is what Kant considers virtuous.¹¹⁵ To Kant, one has a duty to oneself to cultivate one’s natural powers not for the purposes of one’s natural needs but to enhance one’s capacities.¹¹⁶ Hence, like happiness, holiness is something the virtuous person *genuinely* desires to attain. In this sense, the duties derived from our understanding of the moral law and which enable us to successfully strive towards holiness are teleological, and consequently, the more complete our understanding of the moral law becomes; the more our will correlates to its principles. Ergo, for the virtuous person, the moral law becomes like a second nature. The following example illustrates this idea.

¹¹² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1993) 4 [4]

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32-33

¹¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor 6:445. See also Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View,” *On History*. Trans. Lewis White Beck (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001) 11[17]-26[44].

4.2.3 *The Addict*

With respect to Kant, one could categorize one's pursuit of the moral life as analogous to one's attempt to overcome an addiction.¹¹⁷ Once developed, addictions become permanent parts of one's existence; hence, even if one ends one's participation in its practices, or behaviors, life after cessation is never the same as before the addiction's development. While the days after cessation usually become easier, one must develop coping mechanisms in order to maintain one's sobriety. In this sense, life after cessation becomes like a second nature.

Furthermore, it takes tremendous willpower to overcome an addiction. Hence, one's ability to rationalize why one does not want to continue the substance or behavior to which one has become accustomed is integral. In fact, one's ability to maintain focus on sobriety is oftentimes hindered by addictive reasoning, which justifies courses of action that can quickly counter one's progress. For this reason, recovering addicts have buddies—sponsors—to help keep them straight. Kant, likewise, has the categorical imperative and friendship. For Kant, if one follows the categorical imperative one can gain greater acumen concerning the moral law, which can enable one to overcome one's empirical desires.

Through the categorical imperative one can use one's will to overpower desire. Though, like with addictions, one's empirical nature can tempt one to perform actions, which are conducive to a "less desirable" existence. For example, the recovering alcoholic requires willpower not to "slip" when certain behaviors or events might trigger

¹¹⁷ This example stems from training as a social worker, formal education, personal experience, experience with friends, and familial experience.

withdrawal and possible relapse. The ability to endure through the initial misery enables behavior modification over a period of time where the reliance upon the substance or behavior begins to fade and is replaced by other activities, for instance, healthy eating habits and exercise.

Eventually, one's life transforms to the point where life without the presence of addictive behaviors becomes second nature just as one whose will corresponds to the moral law. In this sense, one must want to quit; want to live a "better life"; and, one must continuously maintain the will to overcome vulnerable moments. In other words, if one equates the maintenance behaviors of overcoming an addiction to duties with respect to the moral law (in both cases, one could consider those behaviors virtuous), then any action performed towards the pursuit of that goal, e.g. holiness or freedom from addiction, will be genuinely desired by that person. Therefore, even if the behavior towards which one has a duty does not provide empirical gratification, it leads to a greater fulfillment if one views that action with respect to *the bigger picture*.

4.3 Kant's Theory of Friendship

In his lecture on "The Ethical Systems of the Ancients," Kant argues: "the ancients had no conception of any higher moral perfection than such as could emanate from human nature. But as human nature is very imperfect, their ethical principles were imperfect. Thus their system of ethics was not pure; it accommodated virtue to man's weakness, and was, therefore, incomplete."¹¹⁸ The Greeks, of course, did not have a concept of practical reason analogous to Kant, nor did they have a similar perspective on

¹¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 10-11.

God. Hence, as shown, their ethics were empirically based in Kant's view, which for Kant made their pursuits of the good life problematic. If one recalls, Kant believes the empirical is based on desires, which are conditioned, contingent, and subjective.

Therefore, actions performed using the faculty of desire, will always be inferior to those performed with awareness of and conjunction to the moral law.

Nevertheless, despite this critique of the Greeks, Kant was greatly influenced by them. As the previous sections have shown and the following section will show, even though Kant creates a realm of moral understanding that superseded the Greeks' empirical conception of virtue, many of the ways in which his ideas are structured; in other words, the schematic he uses to frame his theory of friendship will be laden with Platonism and Aristotelianism (for example, as mentioned above Kant entwines Plato's Theory of Ideas and Aristotle's categories). As Louden noted, this relationship is usually downplayed by critics, especially virtue ethicists; however, when one acknowledges the existence and importance of friendship within Kant's ethical theory, primarily, his anthropology, Kant's relationship to the Greeks becomes more pronounced. As such, the following section will establish the foundation for that connection.

4.3.1 The Origins of Friendship

Aristotle argued that friendship originates from one's expression of good will towards another.¹¹⁹ For Aristotle, it is a 'kindly feeling' that occurs through good people concerning character-based friendship and although it is not friendship, itself, it provides the necessary foundation on which friendship can flourish. Through the reciprocation of

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terrence Irwin, 1167a4. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, trans. Horace Rackham, 1241a1-20.

good will, good people become accustomed to one another, thus attaining the necessary comfort and developing the necessary confidence so that those involved in the newly formed acquaintance can grow to know each other and, therefore, themselves over time. As Aristotle notes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, good will does not pertain to loving; it lacks both intensity and desire.¹²⁰ However, even though good will does not exude the properties of love, as described by Aristotle, the genuine desire to do ‘good’ for the sake of doing ‘good’ is essential to the best representations of friendship.¹²¹ Kant proffers a similar position.

For Kant, friendship germinates in the exchange of ‘kindly feelings’ too. As expressed by Wood, reciprocal benevolence is “The ground of friendship [and]... always the general or philanthropic love that we rationally feel for every human being as a rational nature. This is a benevolence (*Wohlwollen*) grounded on the well-pleaseness (*Wohgefallen*) we experience in the dignity of the other’s rational nature as an end in itself”,¹²² Through this reciprocation, one develops trust in one’s friend, and over time the reciprocation of benevolence facilitates genuine love to develop. This love invokes within friends the desire to disclose their selves to their friends. Though, according to Kant, this feeling is usually counterweighted by one’s awareness that if one discloses too much, then the friendship will wane. In this respect, friendships are always in a struggle for equilibrium.

¹²⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1166a30-5

¹²¹ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1241a1-20

¹²² Allen Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Theory*, pp.278-79

In this vein, absolute equality in friendship is an ideal towards which one strives. In fact, Kant uses an Aristotelian framework to explicate this particular facet of his theory, for as one might recall, Aristotle posits three types of friendship, which can exist in equality or superiority. Like Aristotle, Kant's ideals of friendship possess the same dynamics. Kant applies the concepts of superiority and equality to friendship analogously to Aristotle. Contrary to Aristotle, however, he maintains that although one always strives for equality, one person is always, at least slightly, superior to the other, i.e. equality can never be achieved.

4.3.2 *The Types of Friendship*

Kant's three ideals of friendship are similar to Aristotle's three types. Though, instead of pleasure, utility, and character as the ways in which friendship can primarily manifest, Kant maintains that friendships form based upon need, taste, and disposition or sentiment. According to Kant, "[friendship] is an aid in overcoming the constraint and the distrust man feels in his intercourse with others, by revealing himself to them without reserve."¹²³ To Kant, we find refuge in our "communion" with others. Hence, as Kant argues, we have a duty not only to ourselves but to others to be social and develop friendships. We must form "an all-inclusive circle of those who, in their disposition, are citizens of the world – not exactly in order to promote as the end what is best for the world but only to cultivate what leads indirectly towards this end."¹²⁴ However, similar to Aristotle, the community of which one is a part will determine the frequency of certain types of friendships to emerge. For instance, while the friendship of need is

¹²³ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 206

¹²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:473

prevalent among savages, the friendship of disposition or sentiment is more common among “civilized” societies.

In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle describes the utility-based friendship as being the most common type of friendship, forming when two people use each other to gain an advantage in some way.¹²⁵ Like the pleasure-based friendship, Aristotle considers this form defective; it is incidental and not essential like the character-based type. Hence, when the mutually reciprocated advantage ceases for one or both parties, i.e. equality becomes gravely imbalanced, the friendship terminates. This feature is shared by the friendship of pleasure. Both are unstable, for both will change with circumstances similarly to the pleasure-based friendship, which disintegrates frequently from the fickle whims of the involved parties. Hence, for Aristotle, the enduring friendship is the character-based, which, as mentioned, originates in reciprocated good will and allows for those participating in the friendship to share in activities, e.g. contemplation, that will enable both to strive towards *eudaimonia*.

As mentioned, the state of the community influences the prevalence of certain types of friendships. In the lowliest of natural conditions there exists the friendship of need. This type of friendship is more specific in Kant’s theory than Aristotle, for in Kant’s theory, the need-based friendship is characterized by helping others attain basic life needs. The hunting party, for example, illustrates the basic idea of this form of friendship interaction. In a hunting party, hunters group together for the procurement of food. Over time, as the community develops and moves away from barbarism to a more

¹²⁵ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1236a35

cultured society, this type of friendship is needed less, for societal advancement has enabled people to care for their own needs.¹²⁶

The occurrence of Kant's need-based friendship declines as the community evolves, for when the community evolves, its members become capable of handling their own affairs; they gain a level of self-sufficiency, for instance, community members can now provide for themselves and for their families. Thus, if one cannot attain a basic level of self-sufficiency, then one becomes a beneficiary to others; one admits need.

Admitting need is not something, which is acceptable to Kant. Hence, "no true man will importune a friend with his troubles; he will rather bear them himself than worry his friend with them. If, therefore, the friendship is noble on both sides, neither friend will impose his worries upon the other."¹²⁷

The friendship of need is presupposed in every friendship, not for enjoyment, but for confidence."¹²⁸ This confidence, of which Kant speaks—the belief that the friend will care for them as they care for themselves—is a sacred pact, which can only be assumed and not asked to be proven. Hence, for Kant, friendship is not a trivial matter. It is the mechanism that intertwines as well as shares a common end to the ethical community.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 203-04. "When the stage of luxury, with its multiplicity of needs, is reached, man has so many of his own affairs to absorb his attention that he has little time to attend to the affairs of others. At that stage, therefore, [the friendship of need] does not exist; it is not even wanted..."

¹²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 204

¹²⁸ *Ibid*

¹²⁹ Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Theory*, p. 316. Furthermore, Wood maintains: "Kant's model for the ethical community is obviously an idealized Enlightenment version of the Christian church, with its evangelical mission one day to unite the whole human race into a single "Kingdom of God" (316-17)."

According to Kant, the friendship of disposition, or sentiment, is both pure and genuine “in the absolute sense.”¹³⁰ Like Aristotle’s character-based friendship, it does not occur often; however, unlike Aristotle whose model endeavors towards human excellence, Kant’s conception strives towards intimacy. Ergo, the participants involved in the friendship of disposition, or sentiment, seek to fully disclose not only their dispositions but their judgments. This way, friends can lovingly correct each other’s judgments when they are in error so that they can achieve a happier, more fulfilled life. This notion is analogous to Aristotle who espoused that friends mould each other in one another’s image. Contrary to Aristotle, though, Kant explains that because of our ‘frailties’, we do not fully disclose ourselves to even our closest friends.¹³¹ Thus, even though we desire to share ourselves completely with someone and aspire towards a *niveau de la communion parfaite*, our respect for our friend overcomes the love that seeks to bind us, preventing us from reaching the level of intimacy for which we yearn.

Like Plato, Kant distinguishes between a relationship established for the pursuit of basic goods and one that desires the higher form. Thus far this section has discussed the progression from the former to the latter. However, like Plato, Kant proffers an analogue relationship. While Plato considered this analogue a relationship based upon erotic pursuits (and consequently bad), Kant establishes it as a relationship based upon taste (and subsequently cultured). Hence, Kant’s friendship of taste, with this understanding, becomes more of a pseudo-friendship.

¹³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 205.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 206.

For Aristotle, the pleasure-based friendship commonly exists among the youth, pertaining on many occasions to erotic love (similar to Plato). However, this type of friendship involves myriad other activities from which friends derive pleasure, e.g. drinking, playing sports, and shopping. Conversely, Kant's friendship of taste lacks this multiplicity of activities. In fact, while Aristotle focuses on the feelings of those involved, Kant centers his conception on entertainment, more specifically, on social situations where those involved possess something the other lacks, i.e. the businessman and the scholar can converse on a variety of topics "provided the scholar is not a pedant and the business-man not a blockhead."¹³² In this sense, Kant encourages diversity, maintaining that variety is paramount.

As suggested by Marcucci, this aversion to 'like' befriending 'like', i.e. a scholar befriending a scholar, probably arose from feuds Kant had with other academics, such as Johann August Eberhand who condemned Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as the "Leibnizian Critique of Pure Reason."¹³³ Hence, as Marcucci explains, while Kant would battle with other philosophers, he would dine with people representing an array of vocations and social positions such as "the criminalist Jensch, the secret councilor von Hippel, the government councilor Vigilantius, and the parish priest Sommer"¹³⁴ Therefore, when trying to grasp Kant's friendship of taste, one must remember that "[Kant] had neither life nor history. He led a mechanical, regular, almost abstract

¹³² Ibid, p. 205.

¹³³ Silvestro Marcucci, "'Moral Friendship' in Kant", p. 434-35.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 437.

bachelor existence in a little retired street of Königsberg, an old town in the north-eastern frontier of Germany.”¹³⁵

Based on this excerpt, it is difficult to imagine Kant embracing the hedonism involved in Greek tales such as Plato’s *Symposium*, especially since standards of decency had evolved eliminating certain practices, e.g. pedophilia, from both social and moral norms. Consequently, we must assume that the friendship of taste concerns those jovial lunches that Kant hosted and not the feeling-based activities espoused by both Aristotle and Plato.

4.4 The Second Self Problem

The last section discussed Aristotle’s understanding of self-love and how it relates to friendship. According to Aristotle, good friends are like a second self. Hence, one can gauge the quality of one’s action regarding one’s friend based upon whether or not that action would facilitate one’s own *eudaimonia*. Furthermore, because one loves oneself and because one’s good friend is a second self, then one loves one’s friend as one loves oneself. In this sense, one loves one’s friend for the sake of that friend because that friend possesses a character, which is analogous to one’s own.

Aristotle believed there was a commonality among the virtuous because various normative forces shaped them in a similar way. According to Kant, since the universal moral law is the same for everyone and since moral agents through the employment of reason will deduce the same laws through the application of the categorical imperative, then the moral law will possess a similar function as the political community (with

¹³⁵ Heinrich Heine, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, p. 108.

respect to normativity) does for Aristotle. Therefore, like Aristotle, those who Kant would describe as virtuous would possess a commonality with respect to their character.

The difference between Aristotle and Kant, however, is that good Kantians will perform an action for the sake of duty and good Aristotelians will do so for the sake of the *individual* agent. Thus, while Loudon is correct in that virtue ethicists downplay the importance of the cultivation of virtue in Kant's ethics and its role with respect to moral agents, virtue ethicists, e.g. Stocker, are partially correct in their critique that there is a "moral schizophrenia" possible within Kant's theory and that this bifurcation of motivation and reason can be problematic. For example, earlier this section discussed how being honest under all circumstances is mandated by the moral law. The following two thought experiments will show how this can be problematic not only for the decision-maker but for Kant's theory.

4.4.1 The Friend's Dilemma

There are ten soldiers in a prison camp. The captors only have resources to support five, and furthermore, five prisoners are sufficient collateral for the captors' needs (with respect to the "enemy"). Hence, they devise a game to eliminate five of the prisoners they have just captured. The rules go as follows. There are three prisoners: A, B, C. Prisoner A is asked a question. If she answers correctly, then prisoner B is immediately shot. If he answers incorrectly, then prisoner C is immediately shot. Further, prisoner A is immediately shot if he fails to answer the question at all. The captors decided that when there are five prisoners left the game is over.

Prisoner A is asked the question: 'What is the official language of Cambodia?' Prisoner A knows the answer to this question; it's Khmer. The following issue arises. Prisoner B is prisoner A's best friend from the platoon. In fact, not only had prisoner B saved prisoner A's life but prisoner A and prisoner B had decided to open a business together upon their return home. On the other hand, prisoner C is one of the worst human beings Prisoner A had ever met. His incompetence while on guard duty enabled the soldiers to be captured in the first place. What should prisoner A do?

If prisoner A decides not to answer the question, then he would die. While Kant would permit self-sacrifice in certain circumstances, for instance, for the preservation of the moral law, this would not likely be one of those situations, because not answering the question in this particular situation would be one not desiring not to make a difficult decision. Furthermore, the reason why the decision would be difficult would be empirically-based, which is what the categorical imperative was designed to overcome. On the other hand, if prisoner A answers the question, he will not desire to do so truthfully because that decision would cause the death of his good friend. This decision, however, would violate one's perfect duty to others, which supersedes any duty one has to one's friend. Therefore, according to Kant's ethics, prisoner A must answer correctly. This course of action, though, will result in the death of a good friend over a wanton.

For Kant, human beings are all ends-in-themselves. Hence, with respect to our duties to ourselves and to others, each person should have equal consideration because one's decision is based upon objective laws provided by our understanding of the moral law. Thus, variables such as towards the person whom the action is directed (for

example, one will possess different feelings for a friend as opposed to a stranger), and the effects of that action are irrelevant to the decision-making process if one desires to be holy (for instance, one may be required to adversely affect the friend for the sake of duty to the stranger). If this belief is true, then what effect does this have on friendship? What value do our friendships possess?

First off, one has an imperfect duty to oneself to develop one's abilities. Secondly, one has a duty to involve oneself in friendships as well as correct the judgments of one's friends. Thus, with respect to cultivating virtues, Kant's conception of friendship has a similar function to Aristotle and Plato. In this sense, not only does our understanding of the moral law provide normative force to our actions, but our knowledge of the moral law requires us to develop the understanding of our friends in the community. In this regard, friends assist one another in becoming better human beings and help the community, as a whole, strive towards its rationally perceived ideal. Broadly speaking, friends provide support when one is in need; they are persons whom one can trust and respect; and, they are persons to whom, because of that trust and respect, one can disclose oneself. Therefore, friends enable intimacy and development. Though, that intimacy and that development concerns what it takes to develop oneself and one's understanding of the moral law, which are independent of the circumstances, in which that law must be executed. This point raises another issue and inspires the second thought experiment, which is similar to the first. Is Kant's philosophy truly other-regarding?

With respect to duty, Kant's philosophy is other-regarding, for people genuinely desire to do what is best for others for duty's sake. In this sense, there are many parallels between Aristotle's sense of other-regard and Kant's. For example, both Aristotle and Kant will treat the other as a second self; furthermore, both will permit (and sometimes require) self-sacrifice on behalf of virtue; also, both will posit conceptions of friends as those who realize themselves in each other; and lastly, Kant, like Aristotle, will present a conception of the "good life". While Aristotle prizes *eudaimonia*, Kant maintains holiness as the ideal towards which one should endeavor. Therefore, it would appear that even Kant's deontological ideas have virtue ethical undertones. Nevertheless, despite these similarities, Kant views self-love as being empirical, and thus, a vehicle of potentially base actions whereas, for Aristotle, the *good* form of self-love is what enables us to become the virtuous individuals capable of genuinely acting on behalf of others. Thus, to answer the question raised earlier concerning Stocker's criticism. While there is no schizophrenia concerning Kant's theory when one performs an action for the sake of duty, for one genuinely desires to perform that action, Kant's ethics are schizophrenic when agents are concerned. Because Kant's ethics require one to make decisions for duty's sake and not for the agent's, there is a "disconnect" between reason and motivation, which can be problematic depending on how one takes this discrepancy.

4.5 A Final Word

The aim of this section was to demonstrate Kant's similarities to the Greeks—similarities which are often overlooked by critics, for example, Kant *does* value the lives of moral agents. His distrust of humanity in its natural state could be why he sought

wholeness in the divine, for through reason one could find a moral law that could objectively guide one's actions so that others would not be harmed by one's empirical pursuit of happiness. This issue was Kant's primary concern with the Greeks. It was not that they desired 'the good life' but that the good life that they desired had limitations because those who aspired towards it had limitations. Hence, human beings required a normative foundation, which was not empirically flawed to guide us.

While I am not a Kantian, it is not difficult to appreciate what Kant's moral project entailed. Though, despite the aesthetic appreciation I have for his arguments, as the thought experiment showed, Kant's theory of friendship was problematic in one sense. As shown above, genuineness in friendship was an issue because if friendships as well as the actions of its participants are shrouded in various duties, then the interests of the individuals within the friendships can be ignored and subsequently, force decisions that no human being would desire to make and which would cause severe psychological issues. Nevertheless, even though Kant may devalue facets of our being such as identity, it does not mean that his project as a whole is a failure—*far from it*.¹³⁶ Today, many philosophers are working with Kant's ideas to produce fascinating innovations, which no doubt facilitate philosophy's progression. In this light, Kant's influence will remain among us as an integral part of our intellectual tradition.

¹³⁶ Christine M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, ed. Onora O'Neil (New York: Cambridge University Press, 100-01. In this particular work, Korsgaard uses Kant to address this issue and frames her conception of normativity in practical identities formed through community interaction.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to show the evolution of a certain conception of friendship held by three philosophers integral to the Western philosophical tradition. This conception began in Plato's *Lysis*, proliferated in Aristotle's ethical theory, and then appeared in Kant's moral philosophy later. Though, unlike Plato and Aristotle, Kant's theory of friendship as shown in the last section does not allow for other-regarding actions to occur in the same sense as they do in both Plato's and Aristotle's respective ethical theories. The following section will recount the development of this argument in more detail.

5.1 Plato's *Lysis*

Plato's *Lysis* is where the conception of friendship explored in this thesis was originally established. Though, Plato's ideas concerning friendship have remained unexamined by contemporary scholarship. So, the first section endeavored to explore and then speculate what this theory most likely entailed. In order to begin this analysis, the relationship between Socrates and Hermes required explanation.

If one recalls, Hermes was the patron god to many Ancient Greeks. Concerning this particular dialogue, Hermes was the patron deity to wayfarers and he was the god of gymnastic sports. While the latter connection was not explored in depth, the former was. The presence of the Hermes-Socrates connection enabled the extrapolation of a model of friendship based upon the dialogue's dramatic subtext.

In the text, Socrates proffered a model of friendship which mirrored the dialogue's dramatic activity. While in the dialogue this model was debunked through Socrates' elenchus, the version presented in the subtext was not. In fact, this is what led to Socrates' closing remarks where he stated that while they could not determine what friendship was, it would appear to others that they were friends.

The model proffered in the *Lysis* states that people befriend others for the sake of the good on behalf of the bad. In other words, people seek intermediaries to help each other become self-sufficient. As the dialogue showed, while the good could become self-sufficient in certain ways such as health and wealth, this does not necessitate that they become self-sufficient in every way. For instance, since Socrates is the wisest man in Athens and he does not view himself as possessing divine wisdom, then neither the boys or any other citizen of Athens were divinely wise as well. As such, people are always dependent upon one another to partake in philosophical activity to become wiser. Since even those who "lose" in discourses gain wisdom by the activity, philosophical activity is the most important activity in which one can participate. And, through this activity, Plato will insinuate, true friendship occurs.

Through this understanding, the dialogue suggests that Socrates is the intermediary, Lysis and Menexenus are neither good nor bad (who seek the good on account of the bad), and Hippothales remains bad despite Socrates' demonstration. Furthermore, the interactions among these interlocutors suggest many different types of relationships. There is the parent-child, the citizen-slave, the erotic, the basic goods, the higher goods, and civic. Only the last three are considered friendships. While the basic

goods friendship is neutral, the higher goods friendship is virtuous. Moreover, the civic friendship exhibited by Socrates reveals an other-regard concerning one's actions. This observation is of paramount importance, for it is through this type of friendship where Socrates escapes egoism.

5.2 Aristotle's Expansion

As mentioned in the third section, Aristotle believed that friendship is the community. Normative forces arising from all facets of the political community shape us as we develop. First, there is the ruler who along with the legislators establishes laws which create an environment where its citizens can prosper and successfully endeavor to become *eudaimôn*. Then, there are people in various communities extant within the political community who shape the behavior of each other. Next, there is the household which influences the development of, for instance, children, thus molding them into virtuous adults. After that, there is virtue which guides one's behavior. This, of course, germinates from one's desire to become *eudaimôn*. This desire, however, is determined by social influences. In this sense, as section three showed, Aristotle's conception of the political community is cyclical and his theory of friendship is polymorphic, for all of the normative dynamics just discussed involve different forms of friendship.

Unlike Plato who presented different ways relationships exist, Aristotle describes those relationships as friendship. Hence, the just ruler befriends her subjects, citizens befriend one another through civic friendships, and fathers rule the household and demonstrate a form of friendship to kin within the household just as those within the household befriend the father. Those within the household, furthermore, befriend those

within the community where individuals befriend each other through three types of friendship: pleasure-based, utility-based, and character-based.

As the end of the section showed, the pleasure-based and the utility-based friendship are both incomplete versions of the primary, complete, true form of friendship—the character-based. However, this reading of friendship is not held by everyone. In fact, one could argue that Kant held a slightly different view, which fundamentally influenced his conception of friendship. In this view, character-based friendship and the primary form would not be identical; they would be related. While this difference may not seem significant at first, its implications would redefine the way which one interprets Aristotle, for if one views Aristotle’s perspective this way, then one would most likely believe that Aristotle did not believe true friends exist. This opinion, of course, was espoused by Kant in the *Metaphysics of Morals* where he defined true friendship as an absolute equality where respect and disclosure are in equilibrium.

5.3 Kant’s Theory of Friendship

As stated in section 4, Kant believed that friendship was an idea towards which one had a duty to strive. Furthermore, we have a duty to others to help them strive for this goal as well. In this respect Kant resembled virtue ethicists. While this understanding of Kant is not commonly held, section 4 maintained that Kant’s ethical theory mirrored Aristotle in that it posited a conception of the good life; it offered instructions and means of striving for that end-goal. Also, it contained three ideals of friendship as well as an analogous view as Aristotle’s concerning self-love except that, for Kant, the friend is like a second self because that person is noumenal. In other words,

because the friend is an end-in-itself and because the rational moral law is what generates and determines virtuous actions in Kant's ethical theory, the friend as a noumenal self is the same as the person performing the action.

Like Aristotle, Kant had three types of friendship. The first was the friendship of need. This type of friendship, while being assumed in the friendship of disposition or sentiment as well as taste, is most prevalent among primitive human beings who rely on one another for basic needs. As the community evolves and becomes more cultured, people are capable of taking care of their own needs. Hence, this type of friendship is no longer needed. Instead, the friendship of taste, which pertains to socialization, and the friendship of disposition or sentiment become more prevalent among people. Furthermore, like Aristotle, Kant believes that the friendship of disposition or sentiment is the rare and exhibited by few within society. Hence, while Kant's conception is similar to Aristotle's and Plato's in certain respects, it does possess its unique identity. One way this is done is through Kant's idea of other-regard.

For Aristotle and Plato, other-regard concerned moral agents. One acted on behalf of another for the sake of that person. Kant, on the other hand, posits a different conception. For Kant, one acts on behalf of duty. Hence, one no longer acts on behalf of the other person. Instead, acts on behalf of the actions that duty allows. Thus, there is a disconnection between reason and motivation in this regard. This causes a lack of genuineness to emerge, though, not in the sense that many would critique Kant for. For example, some critique Kant as having a disconnection between reason and motivation for actions alone. However, as section 4 showed, this was not the case. When one acts

utilizing the moral law as the basis for one's action, one genuinely wants to perform the action, however, as I just mentioned, this is not for the sake of the person. The genuine desire to perform the action is for the sake of duty, which is different. And, depending upon who one talks to is, consequently, problematic. As such, while Kant's theory adds a humanistic quality to friendship in that it incorporates our needs for respect and self-disclosure, it lacks arguably one of the most integral facets of friendship, which is the desire to help another not for the sake of any particular duty but because that person is one with whom one forms a bond—an alliance; an implicit agreement to help one's friend not for the sake of any duty, but for the sake of one's friend. In this sense, Kant's theory lacks an essential quality that both Plato and Aristotle possessed.

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