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Abstract: It has been not atypical for commentators to argue that Aristotelian friendship features disinterested concern for others, that is, concern for others that is completely independent of one’s own happiness. Often, the relevant commentators point to some normative features of Aristotelian friendship, wishing goods for the other’s sake and loving the other for herself, where these are assumed to be disinterested. While the disinterested interpretations may be correct overall, I argue that wishing goods for the other’s sake and loving the other for herself constitute a dubious foundation for disinterested interpretations. For wishing goods for the other’s sake does not involve a reason for *action* on the other’s behalf, and the primary point of loving the other for herself is the role of the other in facilitating one’s own happiness, specifically conceived of by Aristotle in terms of one’s own virtuous activity.

Keywords: Aristotle, disinterested, friendship, goodwill, love

1: Introduction

Aristotelian friendship, relatively ignored by scholars for thousands of years, has received much attention in the last half-century.¹ One particular question has received the lion’s share of this attention: does Aristotelian friendship feature disinterested concern for others, that is, concern for others that is completely separate from one’s own happiness or living well

(*eudaimonia*)—despite the fact that Aristotelian ethics takes one’s own happiness as the ultimate end of all of one’s pursuits (*Nicomachean Ethics* [*NE*] Book 1, Chapter 7)? An intuitive explanation for the scholarly focus on this question is that it would seem that for Aristotle’s ethics to be relevant to or useful for the modern West, it must make room for disinterested concern.

Now, the strongest evidence for disinterestedness in Aristotelian friendship would seem to be some features that Aristotle attributes to virtue friendships:² loving x for x himself and wishing goods to x for x’s sake. These types of concern, most commentators assume, are disinterested.³ And as Aristotle takes these types of concern to occur (at least) in *virtue* friendships, we might then think that his *normative* theory of friendship endorses disinterested concern.

Read this way, Aristotle would be taking a step towards the modern West and away from Plato’s *Lysis*, an aporetic dialogue on friendship that assumes that one needs friends because of the ultimate ‘dear’ (*philon*), one’s own happiness (219c5-d2). *NE* 9.9 in fact agrees with the *Lysis* that one needs friends for happiness, but commentators have tended to view Aristotle’s answer as diverging from the *Lysis* towards disinterestedness.⁴ This and various other arguments for disinterestedness in Aristotle might be correct,⁵ but I am going to argue that the two pieces of evidence that are almost always assumed to obviously imply disinterestedness in Aristotle are not obvious supports for disinterestedness. First, even if wishing goods for x’s sake is disinterested, it is hardly a form of disinterested *concern* since it does not implicate a reason for *action* on behalf of x (Section 2); hence, wishing goods for x’s sake does not play the role often desired by those who argue that it operates in Aristotle’s lower friendships, of pleasure and of utility, as infusing such friendships with a source of significant disinterestedness (e.g. Badhwar and Jones 2017, Cooper 1999, and Whiting 2006). Second, even if there is an element of disinterestedness in the *loving* x for himself that (as

assumed by most) occurs only in virtue friendship, such love's primary role (as overlooked by most) is to highlight the aspects of friendship that facilitate one's own happiness (Section 3). This type of concern centres on x's virtue, but while Aristotle makes clear that virtue is valuable "for its own sake", he also makes clear that it is valuable for the sake of something else, happiness. Indeed, *NE* 1 is riddled with denigrations of virtuous *state* (*hexis*) of character *sans* its expression, namely virtuous *activity* (*energeia*), which for Aristotle is at least the most important aspect of happiness (1.5.1095b30-1096a2, 1.7.1097b31-1.8.1099a7, 1.13.1102b1-8). So while loving x for herself centres on x's virtue, I will argue that the other's virtue is valued for the sake of one's own virtuous activity.

This is not to totally deny disinterestedness to Aristotelian friendship; it is simply to suggest that wishing goods for x's sake and especially loving x for himself can constitute only a dubious foundation for disinterested interpretations. Even this limited critique of disinterested interpretations might meet with resistance, but it is unclear why. To see this, consider the example of (modern Western) marriage. One might say that there is a significant element of disinterestedness to marriage; this is at least the spirit of 'until death do us part'. But disinterestedness is perhaps not the primary element, as it is in charity work. What distinguishes marriage from charity work is the emphasis on one's own happiness; one does not usually propose to a potential spouse or celebrate an anniversary with an actual spouse by saying that the marriage's justification has nothing to do with one's own happiness, and at least the implicit justification for a non-trivial amount of divorces is one's own happiness. Now, *NE* does dismiss as an accidental (*kata sumbebēkos*) friendship one that involves wishing goods *just* for one's own sake (8.3). But it also rejects, against *Rhetoric* 2.4, *EE* 7.6.1240a23-b1, and 7.12.1245b37-1246a1, that one should wish or do good to a friend just for the friend's sake and not one's own sake (9.8.1168a34-5).⁶ *NE* denigrates accidental friendship then not simply for the involvement of seeking one's own interest, but for the fact

that one's own interest here is defined in terms of an incorrect conception of happiness. As we will see, virtue friendship also involves seeking one's own interest, but in terms of virtuous activity, what is at least the principal component of happiness as conceived by Aristotle.⁷

Before proceeding, I will make two preliminary remarks. First, I focus on *NE* and mostly set aside the two other ethical treatises in the Aristotelian tradition: the *Eudemian Ethics* [*EE*] and the *Magna Moralia* [*MM*]. This is due mainly to space constraints, but there are also methodological problems with considering these two other treatises. First, *MM*'s status as a genuine work of Aristotle's is widely disputed. Second, *EE*, while generally taken as a genuine work of Aristotle's, only briefly discusses goodwill or wishing goods for the other's sake and does not discuss loving because of (*dia*) or on account of (*kata*) the other himself⁸ (as *MM* does not).

Second, here is a note about justification and motivation. When discussing justification in this paper, I am discussing what *Aristotle's normative theory* takes as a reason favouring a certain action; motivation can be understood as a reason that Aristotle depicts *the agent on the ground* as taking as favouring a certain action. Many commentators on Aristotelian friendship, including those who are preoccupied with depicting Aristotle's ethics as substantially disinterested, would admit that there is not (pure) disinterestedness at the level of justification while demanding (pure) disinterestedness at the level of motivation (e.g. Annas 1988, 12). My position crucially differs from these in suggesting that disinterestedness is lacking not only at the level of justification but also at the level of motivation (see the end of Section 3, up to which point my focus is on justification). And again, my position crucially differs from almost all commentators in not assuming goodwill to x and loving x for himself as obvious evidence for disinterestedness—at any level, whether of justification or of motivation.

2: Wishing goods to x for x's sake

In this section, I will attend to (a) wishing goods to x for x's sake and (b) being goodwilled to x. After some terminological remarks and an exposition of (a)-(b), I will argue that the relevant expressions are questionable as evidence for disinterested concern. (A)-(b) are distinct from (c) loving x because of (*dia*) x himself, (d) loving x on account of (*kata*) x himself, and (e) loving x for who x is (*hēi ho estin*). As we will see, most commentators understand (c)-(e) to centre on x's virtue and to contrast with loving accidentally (*kata sumbebēkos*). Despite the consensus on (c)-(e), the distinction between (a)-(b) and (c)-(e) is not always clear in the literature. But as loving and mere wishing are crucially different (for reasons we will explore at the end of this paragraph and at the end of this section), failure to clearly distinguish between them yields confusion. For an example of such confusion, consider the following, now familiar debate about Aristotelian friendship (one that will be resolved in Endnote 14). Virtually all commentators agree that only virtue friendship features wishing goods to/loving x *on account of* x himself, while some suggest that lower friendships feature wishing goods to/loving x *for the sake of* x. The slashes in the previous sentence indicate that it is not always clear when commentators use passages about *loving* x on account of himself to make claims about *wishing goods* to x on account of himself, etc. But in *NE*'s books on friendship (8-9), *kata* ('on account of') never pairs with 'wishing', *heneka* ('for the sake of') pairs only once with 'love', in a seemingly non-normative context, and *dia* ('because of') pairs only once with 'wishing'.⁹ Despite this, Cooper's classic 'Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship' argues at length about wishing in respect to *dia* (see especially 322-3), Rogers has chosen the title 'Aristotle on loving another for his own sake', and more recently, Walker 2014 argues that 'loving another for his own sake' is explained by 'loving another for the sake of his virtue' (see Endnote 13 for more discussion), although the most relevant

passage would appear to be talking about wishing instead (*NE* 8.3.1156b9-12, assessed below). All of this indicates a need to reset the discussion and in a way that sets wishing and loving apart. Indeed, this is particularly important for the relevant prepositional phrases; in ‘wishing goods (to x) for x’s sake’ and ‘loving (x) for x himself’, ‘for x’s sake’ (where ‘x’ is not represented by a reflexive pronoun) in the former refers to the numerically distinct x whereas ‘for x himself’ (where ‘x’ is represented by a reflexive pronoun) refers to what is separable from the numerically distinct x, virtue.

One last terminological remark involves (a) wishing goods to x for x’s sake and (b) being goodwilled to x. I follow the orthodox view in taking being good-willed to x and wishing goods for x’s sake as coextensive, which one might doubt (e.g. Hadreas 1995). The relevant words are the noun ‘goodwill’ (*eunoia*), verb ‘being good-willed’ (*eunoiein*), adjective ‘good-willed’ (*eunous*), and verbal phrase ‘wishing goods’ (*t’agatha boulesthai*). I take it that goodwill towards x entails a specific type of wishing goods, namely that for x’s sake. *NE* 8.2.1155b32 suggests that the ones who wish goods “thus” (*houtōs*) are called “good-willed”, and ‘thus’ would most naturally refer to the immediately preceding ‘for the sake of that one’ (8.2.1155b31). Merely wishing goods to x does *not* count as goodwill, for 8.2.1155b29-31 implies that wishing goods for the sake of the friend goes over and above merely wishing goods to her, which can be just for the sake of oneself.¹⁰ Next, consider the fact that 9.4-7 assume the interchangeability of the expressions of interest. 9.4 discusses various features of love (*philika*) and focuses on how they are displayed towards oneself, while 9.5-7 elaborate on these features as displayed towards *others*. 9.4 emphasizes one feature of love in particular, wishing goods for x’s sake; the chapter never mentions ‘goodwill’. But 9.5, which presumably expands on wishing goods for x’s sake, talks principally of ‘goodwill’ and only once of ‘wishing goods’ (1167a8). So either ‘being goodwilled to x’ and ‘wishing goods for x’s sake’ are interchangeable, or we should take 9.5

(and 9.6-7) as breaking new ground and not elaborating on 9.4; but there is little reason to go with the latter. I will therefore speak of ‘goodwill to x’ and ‘wishing goods for x’s sake’ interchangeably.

Turning from terminology to substance, we can observe that the other person x is, in Aristotle’s causal framework, the final cause or “that for sake of which” (*hou heneka*) of wishing goods here; one wishes goods *for the sake of x*. However, beyond the question of what causes the wishing of goods, there is the question of what causes *goodwill to x* or wishing goods specifically *for the sake of x*. As Aristotle opens his account, he suggests that friends “are good-willed to one another and wish good things (not being unaware of this) because of (*di*) some one of the things having been spoken about” (*NE* 8.2.1156a4-5), most probably the three lovable things “because of which people love (*di* *ha philousin*)” just mentioned at 8.2.1155b27: the useful, pleasant, and good (see also 8.3.1156a9-10).¹¹ In his explication of ‘being good-willed’, Aristotle cites lovable qualities of persons, not the persons themselves, as *causes* of goodwill. Two further passages suggest that goodwill could hardly be caused by anything beyond those qualities—for example, the irreducibly unique bearer of those qualities (see also *EE* 7.7.1241a1-14). First, *NE* 9.5.1167a19-21 points only to the qualities of persons as causes of goodwill. Second, 9.5.1166b34-5 says that goodwill can arise suddenly and without any prior familiarity with the individual. In sum, goodwill as such is caused not by the other but by the *qualities* of the other, where the quality in question is (at least apparent) virtue.¹²

This comes out clearly in *NE* 8.3.1156b9-12:

(A) And the ones wishing goods to the friends for the sake of those ones are most of all friends, (B) for it is because of [the friends] themselves that they are so disposed (*di* *hautous gar houtōs echousi*), and not accidentally. (C) Their friendship, therefore, lasts as long as they are good, and virtue is a stable thing.

(A) says that those who wish goods to their friends for the sake of their friends are friends most of all. (B) then gives the grounds for (A), that such are friends most of all, while simultaneously giving the grounds for wishing goods for the other's sake; the people mentioned in (A) are so disposed, that is, wish goods for the sake of the other, *because* of the friends themselves, where we will see that this last expression refers to virtue (Broadie 2002, 410).¹³ What this means is that in wishing goods for the other's sake, the other is not a completely independent final cause; the other's virtue explains why the other is a final cause at all. As (C) puts it, the friendship of those who wish goods for the sake of each other is sustained by goodness, explicitly elaborated upon in terms of 'virtue'.¹⁴ As *NE* 9.5.1167a19-21 makes clear, we wish goods for x's sake because x is (at least apparently) good; x is the final cause of wishing goods, but the reason why we wish goods for x's sake at all is because x is virtuous. In terms of Aristotle's causal framework, x's virtue then is at least an *efficient* cause of goodwill to x, in that wishing goods for x's sake is a response to x's virtue.¹⁵

Is there disinterestedness with wishing goods for x's sake? Aristotle suggests that we would not wish goods for x's sake unless x appeared virtuous, and as I suggest in the next section (and Kim 2021), Aristotle says that we value others' virtue for (at least) prospective contributions to our own virtuous projects. Nevertheless, one wishes goods *for x's sake*, where virtually all commentators assume 'for x's sake' connotes disinterestedness. But even if there is disinterestedness here, it is unclear that there is disinterested *concern*. Consider the following passage: "goodwill can occur suddenly, for example as it does towards contestants; for people become good-willed to them and wish together with them, but they would not collaborate in any action... or go to any trouble on their behalf" (*NE* 9.5.1166b34-67a2, 10).¹⁶ Goodwill is fairly insubstantial; it does not implicate a reason for *action* on behalf of the other, and so hardly counts as a form of disinterested *concern*, even if it is disinterested. It is closer to an *uninterested* lack of substantial concern, something like a lack of ill-will. This

should not be surprising. Aristotle likens friendship to virtue in that it is also spoken of in two respects, state and activity (8.5.1157b5-7), with goodwill being the state aspect of friendship (8.5.1157b17-19 and 8.6.1158a7-10). Designated “metaphorical” friendship (9.5.1167a10-11), goodwill is very insubstantial, as we have seen, and we should expect this from the fact that it is relegated to the status of state; as 1.13.1102b2-11 says, the state of virtue without its activity is akin to sleep, which fails to substantially distinguish between the virtuous and the vicious. Analogously, goodwill fails to substantially distinguish between friendship and enmity. To see if there is substantial disinterestedness, then, we must turn from goodwill to love.

3: Loving x for himself

I will now argue that when Aristotle says, ‘y loves x for himself’, he means that y loves x for the sake of x’s virtue, which is valued for the sake of y’s own virtuous activity. After some terminological remarks, I will assess the single positive and illuminating instance of ‘loving x for himself’ before turning to *NE* 9.3 to determine whether this phrase connotes disinterestedness.

‘Loving x for (x) himself’ is an umbrella expression I use to refer to loving x because of (*dia*) x himself, loving x on account of (*kata*) x himself, and loving x for who x is (*hēi ho estin*). I take these three as coextensive, for three reasons. First, all the relevant expressions refer to the same thing and are opposed to the same expression. Aristotle contrasts ‘loving accidentally’ with ‘loving the friend for who he is’ (*NE* 8.3.1156a14-21), ‘loving on account of the friend himself’ (8.3.1156a11), and ‘loving because of the friend himself’ (8.3.1156b10, 8.4.1157a18, 8.4.1157b1-5). And as we will see, all three expressions refer to virtue, what 1.7’s famous ‘Function Argument’ designates the actualization of the rational essence of humanity. Second, Aristotle takes *kata* and *dia* as interchangeable when appending these

prepositions to friendship language; so he speaks of loving (*philein*) *dia* one of the lovable qualities and of friendship (*philia*) *kata* one of the lovable qualities,¹⁷ where the latter entails the former (but not vice versa, as when there is loving because of what is lovable but not friendship if the love is unrequited by an animate object or is directed at an inanimate object). Finally, 8.3.1156a10-14 appears to take as interchangeable ‘loving because of x himself’ and ‘loving x for who he is’ (more precisely, ‘for being a certain sort’; see Endnote 18). When I speak of one of the three expressions or of the umbrella expression ‘loving x for himself’, then, I am speaking of all three.

For all that terminological setup, there is only one illuminating positive instance of ‘loving x for himself’:¹⁸

(A) The base will be friends because of pleasure or because of the useful, being similar in this way, (B) but the good will be friends because of [the friends] themselves (*hoi d’ agathoi di’ hautous philoi*), (C) for [they are friends] insofar as they are good (*hēi gar agathoi*). (D) These latter therefore are friends simply, but the former are friends accidentally and by being similar to the latter. (*NE* 8.4.1157b1-5; see also *EE* 7.2.1237a40-b5)

(A) says that the base are friends because of pleasure or utility. (B) says that the good are friends because of *themselves*. (C) then explains (B), as the ‘for’ (*gar*) indicates; the good are friends insofar as they are *good* or virtuous (see Aquinas 8.3.190-196 on *NE* 8.3.1156b12). In sum, loving another because of himself is glossed as loving because of virtue (Aspasius 167.6-7).¹⁹ Therefore, I think that when Aristotle says that “it is impossible to be many people’s friend because of their virtue and because of themselves” (*NE* 9.10.1171a19), we should understand the ‘and’ (*kai*) as meaning ‘that is’, and ‘being friends because of their virtue’ as simply another way of saying ‘being friends because of themselves’.

Now, virtue is central to any given numerically distinct virtuous person, but it is important to keep virtue and numerical identity distinct. In ‘loving x for x herself’, the first ‘x’ refers to the numerically distinct x, while ‘for x herself’ refers not to the numerically distinct x but to x’s virtue, which is separable from x. To see this, consider an interpretative problem that would arise if one takes ‘for x himself’ in ‘loving x for x himself’ to instead refer to the numerically distinct x. *NE* 9.3, which I will soon discuss, depicts a virtue friendship in which one party then loses his virtue. As involving virtue friendship, this scenario involves loving the other for himself. Combined with another element of the scenario, the other’s loss of virtue, we appear to have the following paradox: loving x for *himself*, that is, for the individual x, amounts to loving x for something that x can lose, virtue, but even if x loses his virtue, x is still *himself*, i.e. the same individual (Bostock 2000, 171; Price 2010, 190). This puzzle is predicated on the assumption that individuality is at stake with the first instance of ‘himself’ (in ‘loving x for *himself*’); but I have argued that ‘for himself’ refers to virtue. Now in both ‘wishing goods to x for the sake of x’ (note the absence of a reflexive pronoun) and ‘loving x for x himself’ (note the presence of a reflexive pronoun), the grammatical object of the *verb* is the numerically distinct x. However, there is a difference in the referent of the *prepositional phrase*; ‘for x’s sake’ in ‘wishing goods to x for x’s sake’ refers to the numerically distinct x, whereas ‘for x himself’ in ‘loving x for x himself’ refers to what is separable from the numerically distinct x, x’s virtue.

So loving x for himself cannot be *as such* understood as disinterested concern for the numerically distinct x. Now, since wishing goods for x’s sake may be disinterested “concern” for the numerically distinct x and since *NE* 9.4 indicates that wishing goods for x’s sake is a component of loving, presumably inclusive of loving x for himself, loving x for himself may *include* disinterested “concern” for the numerically distinct x; but given the referent of ‘for himself’, concern for the numerically distinct x could hardly be Aristotle’s point in

introducing love of x for x himself. Still, can we understand loving x for himself as such to be disinterested concern for *virtue* (in the spirit of Whiting 2006, 292)? The question now is how such love can be construed as *not* disinterested, how another's virtue can be understood as valued for *one's own* happiness.

An answer lends itself in *NE* 9.3, where Aristotle claims that virtuous agents dissolve friendships if the prospect of sufficiently equal levels of virtue dissolves:

(A) But if one remains (*ei d' ho men diamenoī*) but the other becomes more decent and greatly changed in respect to virtue (*ho d' epieikesteros ginoito kai polu diallattoi tēi aretēi*), is it necessary for the latter to be a friend to the former? Or is this not admissible? (B) In the case of a great distancing it becomes most of all clear (*en megalēi de diastasei malista dēlon ginetai*), for example among childhood friendships; for if one remains in respect to his thinking a child (*ho men diamenoī tēn dianoian pais*) but the other is a man of the best sort, how could they be friends when they do not take pleasure, rejoice, or are pained regarding the same things? (C) Nor will these things obtain for them concerning each other (*oude gar peri allēlous tauth' huparxei autois*), and without these, as was said [in *NE* 8.5-6], there are no friends; for they are not able to live together (*sumbioun gar ouch hoion te*). (1165b23-31)

Virtue is given as a reason for friendship here, but a reason for what about friendship and what kind of reason? These questions are important for establishing disinterestedness. For some disinterested interpretations could readily concede that one *gets into* virtue friendship for the sake of her own happiness but might less readily concede that one *maintains* friendship for the sake of her own happiness. Further, a disinterested interpretation might concede that one's own happiness *explains* getting into or maintaining friendship but deny that one's own happiness *justifies* and/or *motivates* getting into or maintaining friendship.²⁰

As the question in *NE* 9.3 is about whether one should *maintain* the friendship, and as the answer appeals to the *maintenance* of an equal level of virtue, virtue figures into the reasons for maintaining the friendship. Now, it is safe to say that these reasons are at least in a bare sense explanatory. They are also justificatory; that is, Aristotle thinks equal virtue is a reason that favours getting into and maintaining friendship. For 9.3 obviously endorses the behaviour it describes, and the present passage is no exception. (A) asks if a superior party should dissolve a friendship with an inferior party. (B) grants that the decision may be complicated and is clear only in extreme cases. But it would be misleading on Aristotle's part for the conclusion to then be that one should *not* dissolve a friendship with a greatly inferior party. Aristotle clearly endorses the opposite course of action.

So Aristotle endorses breaking off a virtue friendship on the grounds of insufficiently equal virtue.²¹ This is a stronger claim than dissolving the virtue friendship on the grounds of *losing* virtue, the claim in the immediately preceding *NE* 9.3.1165b13-22.²² But there is a key similarity between the two claims: they are both about prospects. In the preceding passage, the friendship dissolves in the event of incurable vice (*aniatois kata tēn mochthērian*, 9.3.1165b18), that is, if the prospect of virtue simpliciter dissolves; in our passage, the friendship dissolves if the prospect of *sufficiently equal* virtue dissolves. That the *prospect* of sufficiently equal virtue is at stake is suggested by Aristotle's depicting the gap as *insurmountable*; if the gap was surmountable, why not exhort the advanced friend to improve the static friend, or exhort the static friend to try to catch up? Since the prospect of virtue matters, virtue must be at least a final cause of love here, what this love is for the sake of (*heneka*); for prospects are irrelevant to the three other Aristotelian causes. The efficient cause sets something into motion, whereby the something in question responds to this cause. For example, a cart moves at time t because of a force at t or $t-1$, but its moving at t is not contingent on that force's being present at $t+1$. The case is similar with the formal and

material causes. The soul (formal cause) and body (material cause) of a human not being present at $t+1$ makes no difference for the human's being a human at t . But the future *is* relevant with the final cause; if x loves y for the sake of utility at t , for example, then it *does* make a difference if there is no chance of utility accruing to x at $t+1$. The relevance of prospects then entails at least a final causal role of virtue for love: the friend loves *for the sake of* virtue. We now have the resources to clarify what Aristotle means by his glossing 'loving someone for herself' as 'loving someone because of her virtue'. This 'because of' is at least *final* causal; 'loving x for herself' refers at least to loving x *for the sake of* her virtue.

If the final causal story ends here, if the axiological bedrock of love is the other's virtue, then we have disinterested concern. To determine whether or not the final causal story *does* end with the other's virtue, we must answer why it is important for a friend to be good enough for oneself. Is the idea that virtue is a non-instrumentally valuable object of admiration (in the spirit of Irwin 2019, 333, and Whiting 2006, 295-6), such that x abandons y on the grounds that y was not a sufficient source of admiration? This not only sounds strange, but also wrongly makes virtue qua state rather than virtue qua activity ultimate. If we instead respect Aristotle's idea, mentioned in Section 1, that it is *activity* that is ultimate, we can understand the abandonment of the inferior friend as follows: the ultimate final cause or source of value is not the other's character, but rather the activity facilitated by that character, just as *NE* 1.7 depicts virtue as valuable not only for itself but also for how it facilitates the virtuous activity that is the principal ingredient of happiness. So the final causal story extends past virtue to virtuous activity; 'loving x for himself' refers to loving x for the sake of x 's virtue, which is valued for the sake of virtuous activity.

Whether *this* amounts to disinterested concern depends on whether what is valued is the other's virtuous activity, one's own virtuous activity, or virtuous activity simpliciter (that is, independently of whose it is). Most probably, one's loving the other for herself *involves*

the facilitation of the other's virtuous activity. Yet as *NE* 9 proceeds, Aristotle emphasizes *one's own* virtuous activity as what is valued. We can first note our 9.3 passage's suggestion that the reason why virtue friendships hinge on equality of virtue is that sufficient *inequality* denies the possibility of living together (*sumbioun*; C),²³ which 9.12 characterizes as a superlatively beneficial form of sharing activity whereby the partners shape (*apomattontai*) each other into ever more virtuous individuals (1172a12-14). With Pakaluk (1998, 72) and *pace* Cooper (1999, 323), it is not too unnatural then to conceive of loving a friend for the sake of preserving and boosting the friend's goodness; preserving and boosting (to some adequate level) the virtuous *state of one's partner* is required for facilitating the virtuous *activity of oneself*.²⁴ The idea is that happiness consists in superlatively valuable activity that one shares with others (think a professional tennis player's relationship to tennis), but one needs an adequately virtuous partner to adequately engage in this superlatively valuable activity (think a professional tennis player's choice of partners; it would be odd for the top-ranked tennis player to choose to constantly play with professional yet unranked tennis players). All of this is reinforced by a claim in 8.5, which concerns activity in friendship: *equalizing* exchanges occur in Aristotle's normative paradigm of *complete* friendships *most of all*, indicating that Aristotle's *ideal* friendship is *maximally* intolerant of inequality (1157b33-1158a1; for a Confucian parallel, see *Analects* 1.8). This eliminates one disinterested interpretation, whereby loving the other for herself is ultimately founded on the *other's* virtuous activity; if the *other's* virtuous activity is the point of emphasis, Aristotle should instead prescribe a charitable relationship, sticking with the inferior friend and boosting her (insurmountably inferior) virtue even though this compromises optimal stimulation of one's own virtuous activity.²⁵

However, one might raise another disinterested interpretation, whereby loving the other for herself is ultimately grounded on virtuous activity simpliciter, that is, regardless of

whose it is (in the spirit of Whiting 2006, 297). This interpretation, however, is in tension with what immediately precedes our *NE* 9.3 passage. 1165b15-17 states that another's vice is devalued for its negation of *one's own* virtuous activity: "Nor should the wicked be loved; for it is necessary that one not be a lover of the wicked, nor to become similar to the base; as it has been said before that similar is friend to similar". Note that Aristotle prohibits loving the wicked on the grounds of what *oneself* becomes: one becomes similar to what one loves, which here involves becoming (more) wicked (see also 9.12.1172a8-10), where engaging in wickedness constitutes unhappiness (1.10.1100b34-35, 9.4.1166b6-29). Note that Aristotle is *not* saying that we should not love the wicked because the consequence of becoming wicked is *wrong, independently of our happiness*. At the end of the just cited 9.4.1166b6-29, which occurs in the chapter immediately succeeding 9.3, Aristotle separates the intensions of wickedness and unhappiness by appealing to unhappiness as the reason to avoid vice (1166b26-8). So we should read 9.3.1165b15-17 as saying that one should not love the wicked, for one will become unhappy (due to the negation of virtuous activity).

We should then expect symmetry in what follows, our extended *NE* 9.3 passage. One *should* love the *virtuous*, for one will become (more) virtuous (see also 9.12.1172a10-14). And the process of one's *becoming* (more) virtuous simply amounts to one's *acting* virtuously (2.1.1103b13-22, 3.2.1112a1-3); we again see an ultimate appeal to *one's own* virtuous activity, at least the most important part of one's own happiness. Once more, it is crucial to emphasize that happiness is at stake; Aristotle is *not* saying that we should love the virtuous because the consequent virtuous activity is *right, independently of happiness*. As I have mentioned several times in this paper, Aristotle says that the state of virtue is valuable for the sake of the activity of virtue; yet while he clearly has in mind the virtuous activity that is a component of if not coextensive with happiness, Aristotle chooses to *say* that virtue is

valuable for the sake of “happiness” (e.g. 1.7.1097a34-b6). Aristotle suggests that virtue is valuable for virtuous activity *understood as happiness*.

On Aristotle’s normative account, then, loving x for himself amounts to loving x for the sake of x’s virtue, which is valued for the sake of virtuous activity *qua* one’s own happiness. Loving others for themselves is therefore not disinterested in its *justification*. I have so far been silent about motivations, particularly virtuous motivations, that is, the reasons that Aristotle’s theory takes the virtuous agent on the ground to take as favouring love; this differs from the reasons that Aristotle’s theory takes as favouring love. Now, the fact that ‘loving x for himself’ implicates one’s own virtuous activity as a final cause does not itself entail a claim about motivation, since Aristotle’s final cause, the that for sake of which, does not itself entail conscious aiming. For example, processes in nature may have final causes, according to Aristotle, but they do not thereby have conscious aims (Whiting 2002, 284). However, I think that at least our analysis of *NE* 9.3 entitles us to a claim about motivation. Aristotle tells us that a person should break off a friendship because her own virtuous activity is not being sufficiently facilitated. It would be strange to say that Aristotle is providing only a justification and not the person’s motivation here; that is, the person in question would have to be strangely unreflective during this process, reacting in the aforementioned way to insufficient facilitation of virtuous activity *without* at least at some point taking her own virtuous activity as a reason favouring friendship. By analogy to Section 1’s marriage example, it would be strange to say of a person deliberating a divorce that her own happiness justifies but does not motivate the marriage, that the person does *not* herself take her own happiness as a reason favouring the marriage. Aristotle would probably suggest that purging motivation of one’s own interest comes at the cost of imposing an implausible lack of reflectiveness on oneself.

4: Conclusion

Let me sum up the whole paper, in reverse. Section 3 analyzed Aristotle's notion of loving another for himself. Positive, illuminating instances did not abound, but what was clear was that such concern is caused by the other's virtue. Further, we saw that virtue plays a *final* causal role, as evidenced by *NE* 9.3's suggestion that virtue friendships dissolve if the *prospect* of the other's virtue being equal dissolves. I argued that the final causal story goes deeper in that the value of the *other's* virtue lies in its facilitation specifically of *one's own* virtuous activity, which Aristotle designates as at least the principal component of one's own happiness. This focus on one's own happiness makes 'loving the other for himself' dubious evidence for disinterested concern.

In Section 2, I assessed goodwill. Like loving the other for himself, wishing goods to the other for the other's sake is caused by virtue. There might seem to be disinterestedness here, insofar as one wishes goods *for the other's sake*. However, as a type of concern, goodwill is severely attenuated in that it does not involve a reason for *action* on the other's behalf; one might have goodwill to the other, but Aristotle emphasizes that one would not thereby do anything at all on the other's behalf.

So whatever the merits of the many arguments for disinterestedness in Aristotle (see Endnotes 4-5), 'loving someone for herself' and 'wishing goods for her sake' should not be assumed, as they widely are, as obvious pieces of evidence for disinterested interpretations.²⁶

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¹ I use ‘friendship’ for the Greek noun *philia* and ‘to love’ for the Greek verb *philein* (translations in this paper are my own). While such translations are conventional, the translation of ‘friendship’ obfuscates the domain of the discussion; the Greek *philia* can apply to almost any relationship, whereas the English ‘friendship’ typically refers to closer bonds.

² Aristotle divides friendship into utility friendships, pleasure friendships, and virtue friendships. These three classes further subdivide into friendships between equals and those between unequals (*NE* 8.7). Aristotle’s paradigm of complete (*teleia*) friendship or friendship of the good/virtuous people (*tōn agathōn*) is a type of virtue friendship between equals (8.5.1157b36-1158a1, 8.6.1158b1-11).

³ There are few exceptions (e.g. Adkins 1963, 42-3, and Rogers 1994, 292-3); these doubt something that is widely assumed in the literature, that loving someone for virtue automatically implies disinterestedness.

⁴ Annas 1977, 543-4; Cooper 1999, 353; Kahn 1981, 30-39; McKerlie 1991, 95-100; Pakaluk 1998, 215-16; Walker 2014, *passim*; Whiting 1991, 17-19; and Whiting 2006, 294-302. For resistance to the disinterested readings of *NE* 9.9, see Kim forthcoming.

⁵ See for example some interpretations of Aristotle’s claim that we love friends as other selves, whereby such love is ultimately grounded on shared virtuous character: Annas 1977, 539-51, Kahn 1981, 34-9, Kraut 1989, 142, Price 1989, 106 (but see 124), Schroeder 1992, and Whiting 1991. See Carreras 2012 for an example of an attempt to use the idea of ‘another self’ to challenge the distinction between self-interested and disinterested concern.

⁶ Cooper 1999, 329-31. Annas 1988, 4-5, and Rogers 1994, 291, 296-7, take Aristotle to *accept* the common opinion that one should set aside one’s own interests. In this connection, one might raise two passages. (1) *NE* 8.10.1160a36-b9 contrasts the correctness of monarchy and the incorrectness of tyranny in that the monarch, being self-sufficient and needing

nothing, seeks his subjects' and not his own benefit, whereas it is the reverse for the tyrant (8.10.1160a36-b9). 'Benefit' here must be understood as referring narrowly to goods such as utility, such that the monarch's own interests are not completely precluded from her pursuits. First, *NE* 9.9 considers a person who is self-sufficient and needs nothing (1169b3-8) and concludes that this person does not need utility friends to benefit her (1169b22-5) but should yet seek out virtue friends for her own activity (1169b10-13, 1169b27-1170a4; for more discussion, see Kim forthcoming). Second, 8.13.1162b34-1163a1 contrasts the beneficial with the fine (*to kalon*), and 5.9.1136b20-22 and 9.8 suggest that the virtuous person will give up various beneficial goods for the fine, on account of the latter's superlative value. For an argument suggesting the coextensiveness of the fine and virtuous activity in these contexts, see Kim 2020. (2) Parallel to *NE* 8.10.1160a36-b9, *Politics* 3.6.1278b39-1279a4 says that in correct constitutions, ruling is on account of itself for the subject's sake but only accidentally for the ruler's sake. Unlike *NE* 8.10.1160a36-b9, *Politics* 3.6.1278b39-1279a4 is not restricted to a narrow point about benefit; 7.14.1333a3-16 implies that the relevant 'for the sake of' tracks not merely a beneficiary but also an end (Endnote 10). While this allows the ruler's own happiness to be an end, the ruler's own happiness is only an accidental end of the ruler. This would seem to align the *Politics* with the *Rhetoric* and *EE* against *NE*.

⁷ In this connection, it is important not to conflate the utility of utility friendships with instrumentality generally speaking, as seen in Pangle 2003, 51, Schroeder 1992, 204, and Walker 2014, 161. For Aristotle clearly distinguishes between the two. After explicitly concluding its discussions of dissolutions of pleasure friendship and utility friendship (1165a36-b8), *NE* 9.3 turns to virtue friendship (see Section 3). Aristotle argues that if a virtue friendship evolves so that the gap in virtue between the parties becomes large, it should dissolve on the grounds that living together, which we will see in this paper amounts to shared activity, becomes impracticable (1165b23-31). Aristotle sets aside utility yet discusses

friendship's instrumental facilitation of activity. Or consider 9.7's explanation for why benefactors love their beneficiaries more than vice versa. Common opinion reports that this is due to the benefactor expecting a return of utility from the beneficiary, and the beneficiary being begrudging of this debt of utility (1167b17-25). But Aristotle denies this explanation and explicitly sets aside utility in his own explanation (1167b28-33), which instead appeals to how the beneficiary is involved in the benefactor's activity (1167b33-1168a9; for more discussion, see Kim 2020). Again, Aristotle sets aside utility yet discusses the instrumental facilitation of activity.

⁸ Pakaluk Unpublished, 5. See Endnote 9.

⁹ Of all relevant instances in the friendship books, *dia* ('because of') occurs most often with love cognates (e.g. *philos*, *philein*, *philia*) and only six times with wish cognates like *boulēsis* and *boulesthai* (*NE* 8.2.1156a5, *EE* 7.2.1236b30, 7.6.1240a25, 7.6.1240a26, 7.7.1241a6, 7.7.1241a7; note that *EE* uses *dia* here as *NE* uses *heneka*). *Kata* ('according to' or 'on account of') occurs only with love cognates. *Heneka* ('for the sake of') occurs six times with wish cognates (*NE* 8.2.1155b31, 8.3.1156b10, 8.5.1157b32, 8.7.1159a10, 9.4.1166a4, 9.8.1168b3), thrice with action cognates like *prāxis* and *prattein* (*NE* 9.4.1166a16, 9.8.1168a34, 9.8.1169a19), once with 'community' (*koinōnia*) (*NE* 8.9.1160a20), and once with *philein* (*NE* 9.1.1164a10). *Charin*, a synonym of *heneka*, occurs twice with wish cognates (*NE* 9.4.1166a5, *EE* 7.6.1240a25), twice with action cognates (*NE* 9.4.1166a17, 9.8.1168a31), and once with 'community' (*NE* 8.9.1160a12).

¹⁰ *De Anima* 2.4.415b20-1 indicates that 'for the sake of' can designate a beneficiary or an end. These two senses can come together, but they can also come apart. For example, Aristotle indicates that nature does (if 'does' is even appropriate) various things for the sake of god as an end to be imitated but not as a beneficiary (Charles 2012, 228; Lear 2004, 80-4). In 'wishing goods for the other's sake', both senses are implicated. In context, *NE* says that

you cannot wish goods to wine, presumably because there is no good to be benefited (8.2.1155b27-31). Wishing goods *does* occur in lower friendships (8.3.1156a9-14), where this implicates a beneficiary; what wishing goods *for the other's sake* adds in virtue friendship is the fact that the other is an end.

¹¹ One might think that the 'and' in 'good-willed to one another and wish good' militates against my claim that goodwill to x and wishing goods for x's sake are coextensive. There are two possible replies. One is that the 'and' is epexegetic, yielding the following reading: friends are good-willed to one another, *whereby* they wish good things because of the lovable things (Hadreas 1995, 394, charges the epexegetic reading with redundancy but it does not seem that this particular version of the reading, which reminds the reader of the relevance of the lovable, falls to the criticism). A second possibility is that Aristotle is distinguishing some friends, virtue friends, who have goodwill towards each other, and other friends, pleasure friends and utility friends, who wish goods to each other but not for the other's sake (see Endnote 14).

¹² Aquinas, 9.5.114-123, Cooper 1999, 322-3, Michael of Ephesus, 487.19-21, Rogers 1994, 292-3, Schollmeier 1994, 40, and Walker 2014, 155, are among just some who take goodwill to exist because of a person's virtue (strictly speaking, Walker is discussing *loving* x for x's sake; see Endnote 13).

¹³ This reverses Walker's claim that being loved because of oneself is explained by being loved for the sake of oneself (2014, 155). Walker only shows that the two are coextensive, not that one is explanatorily prior to the other. I am using Walker's language here, but it is worth noting that of the relevant instances 'love' pairs only once with 'for the sake of', and in a seemingly non-normative context (see Endnote 9).

¹⁴ Commentators still argue that wishing goods for the other's sake obtains in utility friendships and pleasure friendships while also conceding that this is not because of the other

himself; apparently then, the point (made by Alpern 1983, 308-9; Broadie 2002, 410; Irwin 2019, 317) has not been sufficiently recognized that wishing goods *for the sake of* the other is here explained by wishing goods *because of* the other (this is stronger than the claim that the two are coextensive, made by Adkins 1963, 39; Price 1989, 108). So while ‘wishing goods for the sake of the other’ and ‘wishing goods because of the other himself’ mean different things (*pace* Stewart 1892, 406), Aristotle uses the latter to explain what is important about the former, not to separate them, *pace* Badhwar and Jones 2017, §1; Cooper 1999, 329; Nehamas 2010, 224-5; and Whiting 2006, 287. This is to suggest, with Alpern, 310, Irwin, 316, 336, Kraut 2017, §9, Pakaluk 1998, 61-3, 178-80, Price, 150, and Walker, 185-7, *pace* Badhwar and Jones, §1, and Nehamas, 220-1, that Aristotle’s initial characterization of *all* friendship as entailing wishing goods for the other’s sake in *NE* 8.2 is only a provisional statement (assuming 8.2 is in fact claiming this for all friendship; see Endnote 11); the considered view, which seems fairly explicit in 9.5, is that such wishing of goods obtains only in virtue friendship. Now, Nehamas (226-7, 244-5) and Whiting (281-3) imply that the present passage explains, by appeal to virtue, why the *virtuous in particular* wish goods for the sake of others; this leaves open kinds of wishing goods for the other’s sake that are *not* explained by appeal to virtue. But (A) indicates that the topic here is wishing goods for the other’s sake *simpliciter*; the participial construction ‘the ones wishing goods for the other’s sake’ implies ‘*whoever* wishes goods for the other’s sake’. So we cannot follow Nehamas and Whiting in taking the present passage to be specifically about *virtuous* wishing goods for the other’s sake.

¹⁵ The preceding chapter, *NE* 9.4, holds this for self-directed goodwill as well. Having introduced various features of love and focusing on one in particular, wishing goods for the sake of x, 9.4 states that the virtuous display these features of love to themselves to the extent that they seem virtuous to themselves (1166a10-29) and that the non-virtuous *fail* to display

these features of love to themselves to the extent that they *fail* to seem virtuous to themselves (1166a10-13, b3-6, 25-6). 9.5's assertion that wishing goods for x's sake only occurs because of virtue (1167a12-14) might seem incompatible with wishing goods for the sake of the non-virtuous. But for two reasons, we might think that 9.5 must be referring not just to the full (*kuriā*) virtue of Aristotle's practically wise person but also to attenuated forms of virtue accessible to the non-virtuous, like the natural (*phusikē*) virtue that does not require practical wisdom (6.13). First, 9.5 gives the example of contestants or others that we know extremely little about (no prior familiarity is required), so it is most probable that a person's non-full virtue can invoke goodwill or wishing goods for her sake; it seems hard to believe that in having goodwill for a person we have very little knowledge of, this very little knowledge must include the fact that the person is *fully* virtuous. Second, 9.5 suggests that in non-virtue friendships like utility friendships and pleasure friendships, most of which presumably comprise of the *non-fully* virtuous, the friends have goodwill (only) towards themselves (*eunous... einai... heautōi*; 1167a15-17). It is worth noting that while *NE* discusses self-love (9.4 and 9.8), it uses only 'wishing goods for x's sake' and 'being good-willed to x' and not 'loving x for himself' in a self-directed way.

¹⁶ The 'and' in 'become good-willed to them and wish together with them' would seem to militate against the idea that goodwill to x and wishing goods for x's sake are coextensive. I believe that an instance of the expegetical mechanism mentioned in Endnote 11 is in play here. In that previous instance, the 'wish' clause can be understood as bringing in the element of the lovable, whereas here the 'wish' clause can be understood as bringing in the element of togetherness; 'together' is a prepositional prefix of 'wish' (*sunthelousin*; *NE* 9.5.1167a1).

¹⁷ *NE* 8.6.1158b7, 8.11.1161a23, 8.13.1162b5, 8.13.1163a21, 9.1.1164a35, *MM* 2.11.1209a14, 2.11.1210a9, *EE* 7.2.1237a10, 7.2.1238a31. Both *kata* and *dia* are appended to the same entity in *NE* 8.3.1156b11 ('bearing in this way', that is, 'wishing goods for the sake

of that one’), 8.3.1156b19-21 (‘friendship’ and the features that compose it), 8.4.1157b3-4 (‘being friends’); see also *MM* 2.11.1209a19-29. While there is little doubt as to *dia*’s referring here to Aristotle’s efficient cause, what sets things in motion, there is some doubt as to whether *dia* can refer to the final cause, the end or that for the sake of which something obtains (Cooper 1999, 323; Whiting 2006, 285). Yet there is little doubt that *NE* 1.7, when using *dia* and *kata* interchangeably in its discussion of various layers of ends (1097a26-b6), takes *dia* to refer to the final cause. Across *NE*, *dia* might be used in different ways, but in the context of friendship, it seems best to follow those who believe that *dia* (at least sometimes) refers not only to the efficient cause but also to the final cause (Irwin 2019, 315; Price 1989, 151; Walker 2014, 155n26; Price may be taking the thesis too far when he says that *dia* is interchangeable with *heneka* and *charin*, as it is in 1.7; per Endnote 9, the use of prepositions in the friendship books appears more ordered).

¹⁸ *NE* does not have other positive and illuminating extrapolations of the phrases ‘loving because of himself’, ‘loving on account of himself’, and ‘loving for who one is’. The other instances are contrasted with loving because of/on account of accidental qualities, like pleasure or utility. Two other positive instances are not illuminating. 9.10.1171a19, discussed below, is abrupt. 8.3.1156a10-14 parallels loving because of the other himself and loving the other for being a certain sort (*tōi poiōus tinas einai*) but does not elaborate on what this certain sort is.

¹⁹ Some commentators, like Badhwar and Jones 2017, §1, Burnet 1900, 360, Stern-Gillet 1995, 73, and Whiting 2002, *passim*, take the causal prepositions to track the essence of the object; this is one of the options *Metaphysics* 5.18 gives us for understanding *kath’ auto* (*kata* plus a reflexive pronoun). In their analyses of loving x for himself, commentators generally identify virtue as the relevant essence (e.g. Cooper 1999, 324-5; Irwin 2019, 317; Walker 2014, 155; Whiting 2002, 275n9). However, Payne (2000, 60) and Price (2010, 190) have

rightly argued that the essential feature of humans is rationality, that is, the sheer rational *capacity* (*dunamis*) that is below virtue, any *actualization* of that capacity. While I think then that it is wrong to take the relevant prepositional phrases as referring to essence, such an interpretation is not far off; the prepositional phrases refer to virtue, which is the actualization of what is essential to humans, rationality.

²⁰ One can undercut the normative impact here by interpreting *NE* 9.3's discussion of intimate, time-intensive virtue friendships as implying that the person who is insufficiently equal in virtue is not actually virtuous (Cooper 1999, 319; Irwin 2019, 333). However, there would be a redundancy if this scenario discusses abandonment of a non-virtuous person. For the reason for such abandonment would be the same as in the immediately preceding scenario (9.3.1165b13-22), where one abandons the straightforwardly vicious person; one should not become similar to the non-virtuous (i.e. the non-*fully* virtuous, as discussed in Endnote 15, a class which includes but is not exhausted by the straightforwardly vicious) and negate one's happiness. Rather, the second scenario indicates a different risk: not the total loss of happiness by becoming similar to a non-virtuous person, but de-optimization of happiness by having a virtuous but nevertheless significantly inferior partner in activity. It is important not to be led astray by (B)'s case of childhood friendships whereby "one remains in respect to his thinking a child"; (B) presents an *extreme* case where the decision to dissolve the friendship is obvious. (A) and (C) present a more nuanced case of virtuous people and (C) clearly distinguishes itself and (A) from (B). It opens with 'nor will these things obtain for them', where 'these things' refer to (B)'s shared pleasure, rejoicing, and pain. (C)'s 'nor', which implies a *change of parties* from (B), would be highly misleading if 'for them' refers to the same parties mentioned in (B)'s extreme case. Rather, 'for them' returns us to the more nuanced case of (A), where it is not (B)'s "man of the best sort" and one who "remains in respect to his thinking a child" who are in play but two virtuous people; these are

nevertheless like the people in (B) in that they do not adequately share pleasure, rejoicing, and pain and therefore cannot live together.

²¹ Aristotle does not discourage *unequal* virtue friendships (see Endnote 2), as might naturally occur in relationships of clearly asymmetric assimilation (e.g. see *NE* 8.7.1158b15-23's characterization of parent-child relationships). Most commentators assume that the inequality of unequal virtue friendships refers to an unequal *state* of virtue. In turn, what does *this* inequality refer to? It refers to cases when one party has one kind of virtue (e.g. full virtue) and the other another kind (see Endnote 15). The superior in an unequal virtue friendship is more virtuous in this sense. She is *not* more virtuous as in cases where the kind of virtue is shared but the superior has greater degrees of that virtue (9.12.1172a10-14), corresponding to greater degrees of virtuous activity (2.1.1103b13-22, 3.2.1112a1-3). Degrees of virtuous activity are highly variable (think the specific accomplishments on a CV, beyond basic educational credentials); it would be a mistake to base unequal or equal standing in virtue friendship on such variability, for most if not all virtue friendships would then be unequal and the exceptional equal cases would not admit of the stability required for anything called a 'class' or 'form' of friendship. To sum up, Aristotle does not discourage unequal virtue friendships, understood as friendships of unequal virtuous character, understood as different kinds of virtue as opposed to different expression levels of the same kind of virtue. So why does our scenario from 9.3 endorse the dissolution of virtue friendship between unequals? The problem under discussion is for equal as opposed to unequal virtue friendships (Pakaluk 1998, 161). Unlike with unequal virtue friendships, the parties here have the *same* kind of virtue, but there is a major discrepancy in activity (the actualization of that virtue), with no prospect of equalization (Aristotle might have in mind *NE* 4.3's superlative virtue of magnanimity). As this denies the key feature of equal virtue friendships, the shared activity of living together, there is a dissolution; this is like 8.5.1157b8-13's case of friendships

separated for a long time by distance dissolving due to inactivity. Note that living together is not merely a matter of sharing space, for which equality would not seem particularly important; Aristotle characterizes living together in terms of shaping one another (9.12.1172a12-14) and sharing words and thoughts (9.9.1170b10-14).

²² For a parallel analysis of *NE* 9.3.1165b13-22, see Kim 2021, §2.

²³ In agreement with Badhwar and Jones 2017, §2; Kraut 2017, §9; and Pangle 2003, 139.

²⁴ It is also possible that Aristotle is discussing love of a friend for the sake of the friend's virtuous *activity* (as facilitating one's own virtuous activity) and not just the friend's virtuous *character* (as facilitating one's own virtuous activity). That is, Aristotle's talk of 'loving for the sake of *virtue*' might simply be shorthand for 'loving for the sake of *virtuous activity*'; this would be similar to how *NE* 8.7.1159a34-5 says that loving (*to philein*) is the *virtue* (*aretē*) of friends, when we might think that it is rather the *activity*. 8.5.1157b5-7 has prepared us for such shorthand expressions, as it says that 'virtue' can be spoken of in two ways, as state or as activity.

²⁵ Pangle 2003, 139. There is room for charity in Aristotle's account of friendship, but it does not figure into his ideal model, whereas it might for the account of love (Greek *agapē*, Latin *caritas*) in the Christian tradition of self-denial (see Konstan 1997, Chapter 5, especially 156-60; Nehamas 2010, 235-6; Pangle 2003, 139-41). Note that even in cases of charity, Aristotle's axiological focus is on one's own activity. Aristotle says that benefactors love beneficiaries more than vice versa because of actualization of *their own* existence (*NE* 9.7.1168a3-8).

²⁶ I would like to thank Roger Crisp, Terence Irwin, Karen Margrethe Nielsen, Anthony Price, and the anonymous referee and editors for the *European Journal of Philosophy* for feedback on various drafts of this paper.