

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* ix 9 on Why the Happy Person Needs Friends

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Abstract: *Nicomachean Ethics* ix 9 addresses the question of why the happy person needs friends. Contrary to most commentators, I argue that ix 9 makes sense only if we understand Aristotle as giving an instrumental answer: the happy person needs friends to facilitate her own happiness, specifically to engage in the self-contemplation that she cannot do by herself.

In Book ix, Chapter 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* [NE], Aristotle answers the question of why the happy person needs friends.¹ Largely overlooked for thousands of years, NE's account of friendship and in particular ix 9 started to receive significant scholarly attention in the 1970s; commentators have recognized that ix 9's answer to the question of why the happy person needs friends has implications for whether or not Aristotle's ethics has room for disinterested concern for others. The fact that disinterested concern for others is assumed to be a prerequisite for modern ethics perhaps explains why the majority of commentators have tried to establish as much as possible that ix 9 argues that friends are non-instrumentally valuable, or to put it in Aristotle's language, choiceworthy (αἰρετός) for their own sake rather than for how they facilitate one's own happiness or living well (εὐδαιμονία); this majority includes Annas 1977, 543-4, Carreras 2012, 327-9, Cooper 1999, 353, Kahn 1981, 30-39, McKerlie 1991, 95-100, Pakaluk 1998, 215-16, Walker 2014, Whiting 1991, 17-19, and Whiting 2006, 294-302.

¹ My main analysis omits the parallel passages in the *Eudemean Ethics* [EE] (vii 6) and the *Magna Moralia* [MM] (ii 11); MM's status as a genuine work of Aristotle's is widely disputed and EE's parallel is in major textual disarray. I utilize the OCT and my own translations. I use "friendship" as a translation for φιλία, "friend" for φίλος, and "love" for φιλεῖν. "Friendship" is a common translation, although it is somewhat misleading; in English, "friendship" usually refers to elective and intimate relationships, whereas the Greek φιλία can refer to non-elective relationships (e.g. kinship) and non-intimate relationships (e.g. one's relationship with any of one's fellow citizens).

However, it is unclear what is so problematic about valuing friends at least partially for one's own happiness. Aristotle clearly values virtue for itself *and* for one's own happiness (*NE* 1097a30-1097b6); virtue is choiceworthy for the sake of its expression, the virtuous activity (*ἐνέργεια*) (abbreviated "activity") that is at least the most important part of Aristotelian happiness (1095b30-1096a2, 1097b31-1099a7, 1102b1-8). Hardly anyone takes issue with this axiological duality. Yet with friendship, many seemingly want Aristotle to abandon a basic assumption of Plato's aporetic dialogue on the topic, the *Lysis*, that one needs friends because of the ultimate "dear" (*φίλον*), one's own happiness (219c5-d2); but there may be enough room for disinterested concern if Aristotle retains this assumption while adding the fact that we value friends for their own sakes (*NE* 1155b31, 1156b10, 1157b32, 1159a10, 1166a4, 1168b3).

Therefore, it may be philosophically unproblematic for *NE* ix 9 to argue for the instrumental value of friends, as facilitators of one's own activity. And in this paper, I will argue that *interpretatively*, we must understand ix 9 in instrumental terms. I begin with ix 9's opening sections, arguing that Aristotle understands the question of why the happy person needs friends, and his answer, in instrumental terms (§1). Aristotle's first major argument suggests that the instrumental role friends play has to do with one's own activity, specifically self-contemplation (§2). This argument, however, does not clearly show why friends over and above just any other people are needed. To address this, I attend to *NE*'s longest sustained argument and show that it makes headway on this question, and in a way that again presents an instrumental account for why the happy person needs friends: facilitation of one's own activity (§3).

Before proceeding, I will clarify what I mean by "instrumental." It is important not to conflate instrumentality with utility, as seen in Pangle 2003, 51, Schroeder 1992, 204, and Walker 2014, 161. Such conflation would entail that *NE* ix 9 could hardly be giving an

instrumental account of the value of friends, given its dismissiveness of the *useful* (χρήσιμον) in its answer of why happy people need friends (1169b23-7). But this renders ix 9 less comprehensible, as I will show. Further, Aristotle clearly distinguishes between utility and instrumentality. After explicitly concluding its discussions of dissolutions of pleasure friendship and utility friendship (1165a36-b8), ix 3 turns to the last main category of friendship, virtue friendship. 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 ix 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). Again, Aristotle sets aside utility yet discusses the instrumental facilitation of activity. In speaking of Aristotle's "instrumental account of friends," then, I am not referring to utility, which is usually elaborated upon in terms of wealth; rather, I am referring to the facilitation of activity.

1: Understanding the Question "Why Does the Happy Person Δεῖν Friends?"

In this section, I will assess *NE* ix 9's introductory remarks. This is an important task, for one's interpretation of ix 9's solutions depends on one's interpretation of what problems the chapter's introduction sets out to resolve. Let us consider the opening of the chapter:

(1) And it is disputed concerning the happy person, whether there will be need of friends or not. (2) For they say that there is no need of friends for blessed and self-sufficient people; (3) for [all] the goods obtain in their case; (4) therefore since being self-sufficient, [these people] need nothing added in addition, (5) but

a friend, since being another self (ἕτερον αὐτὸν ὄντα), supplies things which by oneself one is unable [to supply]; (6) whence [the saying] “When the god gives well, why is there need of friends?” (1169b3-8)

Aristotle presents a view that says one does not need friends if one is happy or blessed (1). In such a case one does not need friends (2) because, as being self-sufficient (αὐτάρκεις), the happy or blessed person has *all* the goods (3, 4) and a friend is understood as one who supplies another person who *cannot* obtain all the goods (5).² Thus the parable (6) fits into the reasoning like so: if a friend is just one who supplies goods one cannot supply for oneself (5), but god supplies all the goods (6) and thereby makes one happy (3, 4), why does this happy person need friends (2)?

I will now answer two related questions. First, what does the notion of other selfhood in (5) amount to and is it Aristotle’s? Second, what exactly is the question under dispute in (1)?

While Aristotle clearly rejects the conclusion of the common opinion that happy people do not need friends (2, 6), less clear is Aristotle’s stance towards the notion of another self used in (5). (5) takes the other self as someone numerically distinct from oneself who supplies (πορίζειν) what one cannot obtain by oneself. That is an instrumental account of other selfhood; but Aristotle might be citing just a common account and not his own.

Whether or not Aristotle understands other selfhood in instrumental terms depends on how we understand the question he raises in (1), which brings us to the second issue, of what exactly is being disputed. The answer is not straightforward. First, there might be some confusion about the subject: is the dispute about friends or other selves? I take it that Aristotle is ultimately interested in the more specific notion of other selves; like the rest of *NE* ix, this passage shifts from asking about friends (1, 2) to answering in terms of other selves (5). This

² One might question my inserting “all” in (3), given the lack of the corresponding Greek word (e.g. πάντα). (4)’s point about the happy person needing *nothing* added follows from (3), which claims that they “have goods.” This “having goods” then must entail that the person in question has *all* the relevant goods. This echoes *NE* i 7’s discussion of the criteria for happiness; one criterion is self-sufficiency, mentioned in (2) and (4), whereby anyone who is happy needs nothing added, implying that such a person has *all* the relevant goods (1097b16-20).

means that the question about friends is really a question about other selves (for economy and in accordance with Aristotle's usage, I will predominantly use "friends" instead of "other selves").

Given that the dispute is ultimately about other selves, there is then a question about what it is about other selves that is being disputed. Aristotle is asking why happy people δεῖν friends. I have translated δεῖν as "to need," and so the question is: "why do happy people *need* friends?" I follow most commentators in assuming that this translation clearly entails the idea that friends are choiceworthy for *instrumental* reasons, as necessary facilitators of happiness.³ This "need" translation fits well with (5)'s notion of other selves as *suppliers*. Another translation of δεῖν yields another interpretation of the disputed issue: "why *should* happy people *have* friends?" This leaves open (but, per §2, does not entail) a popular non-instrumental reading that makes way for the following understanding of the later arguments of *NE* ix 9: virtuous friends are pleasant objects of admiration (in the same or similar way as one takes one's own virtuous existence to be pleasant) and this is why virtuous people *should have* friends (Joachim 1951, 259-60; Mansini 1998, 413-16; Pakaluk 1998, 209-10, 216; Price 2001, 222-3; Price 2010, 196; Whiting 2006, 294-7). Even though this virtue-centered pleasure is an optional enhancer of one's own happiness, it is the friend's virtue and not the enhancement of one's own happiness that the argument appeals to for the conclusion that the happy person should have friends.

Which interpretation of δεῖν is correct? If we accept the attenuated reading ("should have"), it is unclear how the dialectic works. The passage imagines that we have *all* the other resources, so the question cannot be merely why *should* we have friends. Rather, the passage is

³ As suggested by Pangle 2003, 50, and Reeve 1992, 183. Whiting agrees that a stronger reading of δεῖν entails an instrumental reading, but rejects the latter (2006, 297). Note that a weaker reading does *not* entail a *non-instrumental* reading; see §2 for an interpretation that holds that we merely *should have* friends, but for *instrumental* reasons.

asking, “*despite* having all the other resources, why do we *need* friends?” So if Aristotle gives his answer using “should have” for δεῖν, he talks past his interlocutors, who use “need” for δεῖν.

This is a point about the immediate dialectic, but we can expand the scope to the entirety of *NE* ix 9. If the question is about why the person who has all other goods *needs* friends, then it is understandable why Aristotle musters up what are probably *NE*’s most complicated arguments in response. But if the question is about why the person who has all other goods *should have* friends, only a sentence is required: happy people obviously *should have* friends, because these friends are choiceworthy and as such improve life as an optional surplus, even a life supplied with all the other resources.⁴ I think therefore that we must go with a stronger reading of δεῖν to the effect that happy people *need* friends, which entails an instrumental reading. What this in turn entails is that Aristotle accepts the instrumental notion of other selves in (5), as “suppliers” (following Hitz 2011, 11; Kenny 1992, 51); this answers our first question, about what other selfhood amounts to here and whether or not Aristotle accepts the account.⁵

So Aristotle is asking why the happy person *needs* friends. Is Aristotle asking why people who are *already* happy need friends or why people who are *not* already happy need friends *to become* happy? At first glance, *NE* 1169b3-8’s language suggests the former, driving us to the problematic “should have” translation of δεῖν; it is unclear why an *already* happy person *needs* friends, while it is clear why an *already* happy person *should have* friends.

⁴ This does not violate *NE* i 7’s criterion for happiness of being self-sufficient, by itself making life lack nothing (1097b16-21). On this reading, the way that friends “improve life” is not by filling something that happiness lacks but by enhancing something that happiness already has.

⁵ *NE* viii 3.1156a10-21 does set aside utility and pleasure friendships as accidental friendships, on the grounds that friends here do not love one another for who they are, but for supplying (πορίζουσιν, 1156a18) something good or pleasant. This does not mean that virtue friendship, the last of Aristotle’s trichotomy, is *not* important for what it supplies; just as one’s own virtue (“who one is”) facilitates one’s own activity (per i 7), so too does the other’s virtue, and it is virtue friendship’s supplying in *this* regard that sets it apart from the accidental friendships.

It is important to note that “happy person” in this opening text is understood in terms of colloquial happiness. Aristotle agrees with common opinion that the happy person, as self-sufficient, has all the goods (3, 4). But what this self-sufficient having of all the goods entails depends on one’s conception of happiness. And this is where Aristotle differs from common opinion. *NE* 1169b23-7 suggests that a person who has “all the goods” (according to common opinion) will not need useful friends, “since the goods obtain in his case.” Nor will the person with all the goods need pleasure friends, “for [his] life, since being [in itself] pleasant, is in need of no externally adorning pleasure (ἐπεισάκτου ἡδονῆς).”⁶ Common opinion would suggest that this person is *already* happy and thus does not need friends. But Aristotle suggests that this *colloquially* happy person is *not yet actually* happy and thus *does* need friends—not pleasure or utility friends, but virtue friends. Having all the goods of fortune suffices for colloquial-happiness but not the activity that is up to not just fortune but also one’s agency and that is required for Aristotelian happiness; and for this activity, virtue friends are needed. The dispute between Aristotle and common opinion about why friends are needed thus boils down to a dispute about happiness; indeed, Aristotle opens his first major argument for why happy people need friends by appealing to his conception of happiness as activity. *NE* ix 9 then is preoccupied with the question of why friends are needed by the person who is already happy in a colloquial sense but not yet happy in an Aristotelian sense (per Cooper 1999, 337, *pace* Kosman 2004, 135); I will argue in §3.1, however, that Aristotle’s answer also applies to the question of why the person who is *already* happy in an Aristotelian sense has an *ongoing* need of friends.

⁶ Note that these comments about utility and pleasure friends do not mesh well with the “should have” translation of δεῖν. On that interpretation, happy people *should* not *have* utility and pleasure friends because they already have the relevant goods and internally pleasant lives, respectively. But the point then is unclear; happy people might already have these things, but why should they not add more goods or external pleasures? These comments about utility and pleasure friends make sense only if we adopt the “need” translation of δεῖν; happy people do not *need* utility and pleasure friends because they already have the relevant goods and internally pleasant lives, respectively.

2: The First Argument

In §1, I assessed a common opinion presented at the opening of *NE* ix 9: the happy person does not need friends because friends, as other selves, supply the goods of happiness—which the *happy* person already has. I have argued that Aristotle accepts the instrumental terms of the debate; he accepts that the question is why the happy person *needs* friends or other selves and will go on to answer accordingly. Further, Aristotle accepts the instrumental notion of another self as a supplier, but disagrees with common opinion about what happiness is, and therefore what needs other selves supply. To achieve Aristotelian happiness, one cannot stop at colloquial-happiness, but must strive for activity; and we will see that for this, one needs other selves.

But *why* does happiness need friends? After giving brief, seemingly instrumental solutions (*NE* 1169b8-22), Aristotle gives a more substantial answer in the topic of §2, what I will call his “First (Major) Argument.” In short, the First Argument suggests that happiness requires contemplating the actions that constitute it; this in turn requires friends; so happiness requires friends. Now, Aristotle implies that this conclusion is provisional; as we will see, the First Argument leaves open a number of issues, and these issues are addressed by later arguments making the very same conclusion, that the happy person needs friends.

Let us consider the First Argument:

- 1) Happiness is some activity
- 2) Activity comes into being, as opposed to just belonging (as in the case of possessions)
- 3) If (εἰ)
 - a. Being happy is in living and being active
 - b. And the activity of the good person is excellent and pleasant on account of itself
 - c. And the οἰκεῖον is of the pleasant things
 - d. And we are able to contemplate neighbors rather than ourselves, and the actions of those [neighbors] rather than οἰκεῖα actions
 - e. i) And the actions of excellent friends are pleasant to the good people, for (γὰρ) ii) they have both the pleasant by nature things
- 4) Then (δὴ) the blessed person will need such friends if (εἴπερ)
 - a. The blessed person decides to contemplate actions decent and οἰκεῖα
 - b. And the actions of the good friend are such as these. (*NE* 1169b30-1170a4)

Before assessing the argument, it is important to clarify its terms. The First Argument alternates between “good,” “decent,” and “excellent” for the sake of variety; instead of using “good” twice, (3b) labels the agent as “good” and his action as “excellent,” (3ei) labels the agent as “excellent” and the observer as “good,” and (4a) and (4b) label the action “decent” and the agent “good.” I will utilize just “good” for the sake of clarity. Next, the “blessed” person in (4) is assumed to be good. Further, the “blessed” (μακάριος) person is interchangeable with the “happy” (εὐδαίμων) person, at least in context; before the arrival of the blessed person in (4), happiness is discussed earlier in the argument (3a) and the happy person is discussed in the introductory remarks. A third terminological issue involves οἰκεῖον in (3c), (3d), and (4a). Some commentators (e.g. Pakaluk 1998, 206-7) have argued that Aristotle uses the term differently across the premises, appealing to a normative use (“fitting”) and a descriptive use (“one’s own”).⁷ This commits Aristotle to equivocation without warning, and without any introduction of the technical normative use (which is introduced in *NE* x.1175a21-1176a5). As I will suggest below, we can understand Aristotle as not equivocating but using only the descriptive use (following Kahn 1981, 33-4; Price 2001, 222; Reeve 1992, 180-1). Finally, there is “to contemplate” (θεωρεῖν). As we will discuss in later sections, self-contemplation involves two sorts of cognition, (sense) perception and thought (it involves only thought for gods, per Footnote 15).

Having clarified the terminology, we can render the argument. (1) and (2) elucidate the first of five protases, (3a); (1) takes happiness to be an activity and (2) distinguishes activity from state, and (3a) then takes being happy as being active.⁸ The next three protases are bare

⁷ For a clear and relevant example of the descriptive use of οἰκεῖον, see *Politics* 1280a14-16, which slides between “judgment about themselves” (περὶ αὐτῶν ἡ κρίσις) and judgment “about their own” (περὶ τῶν οἰκείων). Aristotle here claims that people are poor judges of what is their own; for reasons given in Footnote 19, I think that this passage is best applied to *EE*’s arguments and not the present argument.

⁸ “State” normally translates ἔξις. (2) features instead κτήμα (“possessions”), but like ἔξις it connotes “having.” This contrasts with “using,” which is associated with activity (*NE* 1098b32). I will discuss this contrast shortly.

premises. (3b) takes the activity of the good person to be good and pleasant on account of itself. (3c) posits what is one's own as pleasant, as does *Politics* 1262b22-3. (3d) suggests that we are able to contemplate neighbors and their actions rather than ourselves and our own actions. This last premise both clarifies (3c) and makes it puzzling. Whereas *Politics* 1262b22-3's declaration, that what is one's own is pleasant, seems to apply to a broad range of goods, (3c)'s claim applies specifically to activity, as clarified by the surrounding premises; (3d) talks about one's own *actions* in comparison to others' *actions*, and (3b) talks about the *activity* of the good person. Yet while (3d) clarifies (3c)'s scope in this way, it is puzzling that (3d) should say we are able to contemplate another's actions *rather than our own*, right after (3c) has claimed that what is one's own is pleasant. It is presumably this that has led some to infer the equivocation of οἰκεῖον. These take (3c) to suggest that *the fitting* is pleasant, and (3d) to suggest that one is in a better position to contemplate another's (fitting) actions than *one's own*; it follows then that to contemplate *fitting* actions (4a), one will contemplate others' (4). As I will elaborate, there is a reasonable way to understand (3c) and (3d) without committing them to equivocation. *One's own* is pleasant (3c) but one cannot contemplate *one's own* actions by oneself (3d); so to contemplate *one's own* actions (4a), one must contemplate others' actions that are in a way one's own (4).

Moving on from the actions of “neighbors” in (3d), the First Argument specifies a particular group of neighbors whom we are able to contemplate rather than ourselves: good friends. (3ei) says that the actions of good friends are pleasant to the good for the reason given in (3eii), that they have both the pleasant by nature things, which I follow most commentators as referring to the good on account of itself mentioned in (3b) and οἰκεῖον mentioned in (3c).⁹

⁹ Broadie 2002, 426; Burnet 1900, 426; Grant 1885, 303; Irwin 1999, 149; Reeve 2014, 335; Stewart 1892, 386. These commentators appeal to the οἰκεῖον, though with some disagreements about the word's exact sense; I would contend that its being paired with “the good on account of itself” suggests against the normative sense, given the resulting overdetermination of the pair. One might think that I have illicitly dropped out “the *pleasant* on account of

So far, we have seen that (1) and (2) contribute to (3a), and (3b) and (3c) contribute to (3e). The rest of the argument, a two-protasis conditional (4), follows relatively smoothly: if (4a) the happy person decides to contemplate actions that are good and one's own and (4b) the actions of the good friend are such, then (4) the happy person needs such friends. (3e) gives us (4b), the idea that the actions of good friends are such as the ones mentioned in (4a), that is, good and one's own; as just suggested, the both pleasant by nature things that the actions of good friends have are the good on account of itself and being one's own. As for (4a), that the happy person will decide to *contemplate* actions that are good and one's own, we must appeal to (3d), the other place in the argument where "to contemplate" occurs. (3d)'s point about being able to contemplate the actions of *others rather than our own* is what presumably gets us the *needing* of other people, specifically friends, mentioned in (4). One decides to contemplate actions that are good and one's own (4a) and such are the actions of the good friend (4b), but we might very well wonder why one should not stop at just one's own good actions. It is only with (3d)'s idea that we are able to contemplate *others rather than ourselves* that we go from here to (4)'s conclusion, that we need to go beyond our own actions to the friend's actions (Pakaluk 1998, 207), which are yet in a way one's own. In what way, and why a virtuous friend rather than just any virtuous person is required, are substantial questions left to the upcoming Long Argument.

Let us sum up the First Argument before assessing some problems with it. Happiness is an activity and the happy person will decide to contemplate the actions that constitute this activity (Aristotle apparently thinks that happiness requires such reflexive contemplation over and above unreflectively moving on from one action to the next). But we are able to contemplate

itself," which was conjoined to "excellence" in (3b). However, I do not think that by "both pleasant by nature things" Aristotle is referring to pleasantness on account of itself (*pace* Stern-Gillet 1995, 135), along with goodness or οἰκεῖον-ness; Aristotle would be tautologously saying that the pleasant by nature includes in its set the pleasant on account of itself, when the pleasant by nature is by definition pleasant on account of itself (NE 1099a14-15).

such actions in the case of others' actions rather than our own. And as it is virtuous friends who engage in such actions, the happy person will need virtuous friends.

Even before the question of why a virtuous friend or any virtuous person is required, we might ask of the First Argument why another person of *any* sort is required. That is, why does the First Argument say that one is able to contemplate another's actions *rather than* one's own actions, that one cannot self-contemplate by oneself? To put it in the language of the introductory remarks explored in the previous section, why is self-contemplation a thing "which by oneself one is unable [to supply]?" In fact, modern translations (Crisp 2014, Irwin 1999, Pakaluk 1998, Reeve 2014, Rowe 2002) bypass this problem by translating "θεωρεῖν δὲ μᾶλλον τοὺς πέλας δυνάμεθα ἢ ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τὰς ἐκείνων πράξεις ἢ τὰς οἰκείας" (1169b33-5) as "we are more able to contemplate neighbors than ourselves and the actions of these ones than our own." This gives us the Cartesian thesis that we *are* able to contemplate (i.e. think about and perceive) ourselves and our own actions by ourselves.¹⁰ The only limitation is that we are *less* able than when contemplation involves others, neighbors and their actions.¹¹ This Cartesian thesis allows that *NE* ix 9 gives an instrumental account of the value of friends; but with the *non*-instrumental interpretation explored in §1, proponents of the Cartesian thesis argue that "need" of friends, which entails an instrumental account, is not at stake, whereas "should have," which leaves open both non-instrumental and instrumental accounts, *is*.¹² For just as we can imagine why x 6-8 do

¹⁰ By "Cartesianism" I refer to what is at least inspired by the historical Descartes: a tradition of cognitive atomism that implies that you can cognize yourself by yourself. As Osborne notes in a caveat very similar to this footnote's (2009, 350n6), this "view of introspective transparency" may not have been actually held by the historical Descartes.

¹¹ That we are *not* able is suggested by *MM* 1213a13-26; *EE* 1245b14-19; Michael of Ephesus 512.5-17, 515.7-16. In modernity, the only followers are Stern-Gillet 1995, 134-5; Price 1989, 121-2 (but see next footnote); Walker 2014, 158-9. Annas labels what she thinks is Aristotle's idea, that we are *better* able to contemplate others than ourselves, as "counter-Cartesian" (1977, 550-1); however, I count Annas as attributing Cartesianism to Aristotle, since she follows the modern translations, whereby Aristotle thinks that one *can* contemplate oneself by oneself.

¹² For two influential figures on Aristotelian friendship whose interpretations assume a Cartesianism that undercuts (at least) the need for friends, see Cooper 1999, 339-41, and Price 2001, 222.

not argue that people need partners for contemplation since the relevant activity is facilitated by but does not require partners (1177a32-b1), we might think that ix 9 does not argue that the happy person needs friends since the relevant activity is enhanced by but does not require friends. On this reading, friends *enhance* self-contemplation, so ix 9 is arguing that we *should have* friends; friends are not *required* for self-contemplation, so §1 cannot be right in its suggestion that ix 9 argues that we *need* friends.

§1 has already delineated the costs of understanding ix 9 in terms of “should have” rather than “need,” but I will now make a direct counter by showing why and therefore that self-contemplation needs others. Relevant here is a small shred of argument that comes immediately after and appears to supplement the First Argument, what I will call “the Continuity Appendix”: “(1) It is necessary for the happy person to live pleasantly. (2) Therefore (οὖν) life by oneself is difficult; (3) for it is not easy to be active continuously by oneself (οὐ γὰρ ῥᾴδιον καθ’ αὐτὸν ἐνεργεῖν συνεχῶς), but it is easier with others and in relation to others” (*NE* 1170a5-6). There are several assumptions here. First, we must recall ix 9’s constant assertion that happiness is an activity. Second, we must keep in mind Aristotle’s assertions both before and after ix that pain (1100b28-1101a8, 1174b14-33), the negation of pleasure, impedes what x 4 says pleasure completes, activity. Third, we must take Aristotle as connecting difficulty of activity with pain; this is clear from (1)’s contrasting living pleasantly with (2)’s living difficultly.¹³

Working the argument backwards with these assumptions, we get: being active continuously is difficult by oneself (3), therefore living by oneself is difficult (2), and as the happy person, as active (assumption 1), must live pleasantly (1) and therefore not painfully

¹³ Difficulty as connoting frustration and pain should not be conflated with difficulty as connoting effort (*Topics* 117b29-31, *NE* 1168b21-7, *EE* 1241b6-9); activity implies effort (for mortals, at least), and if difficulty is coextensive or even cointensive with effort, then activity is paradoxically opposed to effort.

(assumption 2), that is, not difficultly (assumption 3), the happy person must live or be active with others.¹⁴ This conclusion derives from the starting point that being active continuously is difficult by oneself (3); what in turn is the reason for this? It is human fatigue (*NE* 1175a3-6). Instead of burning out by contemplating oneself by oneself, one can recruit partners; these help by spreading the levels of fatigue across more parties in mutual contemplation.

Recall my contention that the First Argument concludes that the happy person *needs* friends. On my reading, this need is predicated on the non-Cartesian principle that we are able to contemplate others' actions *rather* than our own; contemplation of oneself and one's own actions is necessarily a shared enterprise, one that involves other selves and their actions that are in a way one's own. An alternative interpretation of the First Argument's conclusion is that the happy person *should have* friends; this supposedly follows from the Cartesian claim that we are *merely better* able to contemplate others' actions than our own actions, which leaves open that we *are* able to contemplate our own actions by ourselves. We might think that the argument that follows the First Argument helps this Cartesian thesis lead to the First Argument's conclusion that we *should have* others to contemplate our own actions despite the fact that we *are* able to contemplate our own actions by ourselves. That is, while one *can by oneself* contemplate one's own actions, to do so by oneself is difficult or painful, and perhaps not continuous as a result. This is not preferable. Therefore, we *should have* others to achieve a *preferable* level of contemplating actions; but we do not *need* others for contemplating actions.

This Cartesian line presupposes a distinction between being able to contemplate and being able to contemplate *continuously*; we *can* do the former by ourselves but doing the latter is *difficult* by ourselves, therefore we *should have* friends. I think, however, that Aristotle would

¹⁴ *NE* shifts between "living" and "activity" in (5) and (6.1) of the upcoming Long Argument and 1175a18-21.

deny that being able to contemplate without being able to contemplate continuously is meaningful. We can see this by attending to the fact that continuity plays a crucial but often overlooked role in Aristotle's distinction between state (ἕξις) and its expression, activity (ἐνέργεια). When discussing candidates for happiness, Aristotle denies that the state of virtue, mere virtuous character, is sufficient for happiness. The reason for this is that if state *were* sufficient, this would be compatible with a happy person being asleep for eternity or suffering extreme pain (NE 1095b32-1096a2). We have seen that the latter impedes activity and thus contrasts with sleep which does not so much impede activity as it simply is the absence of activity, an absence Aristotle says leads to the virtuous being indistinguishable from the vicious (1102b2-11, 1178a32-4). So happiness requires activity, and it seems that Aristotle's later qualification that happiness is activity *in a complete life* (1098a18, 1100a5-9, 1101a16) is not some independent criterion for happiness, as almost all readers tacitly assume, but something that follows directly from Aristotle's idea that happiness requires activity. If we attribute to state in the absence of activity value that is substantial (Plato) or sufficient (the Stoics), there is no need to insist on the importance of a complete life or continuity. Once one has achieved the state of virtue, it is unclear what really matters *after* that; one sticks around so as not to let down one's community but continuing to live in and of itself does not matter. But if engaging in virtuous activity beyond the achievement of virtue is what matters, continuity matters so as to engage in ever more tokens of activity. Continuity is what distinguishes activity from state, which is compatible with the severe impediment of activity and with its absence.

So in suggesting that we cannot contemplate our own actions *continuously* without others, the Continuity Appendix is suggesting that we cannot contemplate our own actions *simpliciter* without others, at least not in a meaningful way. This understanding of the Continuity

Appendix undercuts the idea that we can self-contemplate *simpliciter* by ourselves but not continuously and so merely *should* have friends for *continuous* self-contemplation; accordingly, this understanding of the Continuity Appendix as not distinguishing between self-contemplation *simpliciter* and continuous self-contemplation preserves my reading of what has preceded in *NE* ix 9, that we *need* friends, which entails an instrumental account.¹⁵ Note that the idea that we cannot contemplate our own actions *simpliciter* is not the strong claim that a necessary condition of any stretch of reflexive cognition is shared cognition; for at a particular moment, one *can* cognize oneself by oneself. But Aristotle is not interested in short bursts of activity that are inadequately distinct from mere state and so do not meaningfully count as activity. Instead, Aristotle is suggesting this: happiness needs activity, the only interesting sense of “activity” refers to continuous activity, continuous activity needs friends, so happiness needs friends.

3: The Long Argument

In §2, I assessed *NE* ix 9’s First Argument. Aristotle argues that happiness requires contemplation of one’s own actions, that we cannot do this by ourselves, and that we therefore need others. Most commentators and translators imply that Aristotle accepts Cartesianism and

¹⁵ If Aristotle thinks that a human can contemplate her own actions by herself in a meaningful way, two distinctions collapse. The first is that between human and divine self-contemplation. *De Anima* 429a29-b5 argues that one’s ability to perceive is undercut precisely to the extent that the object of perception is intense; this contrasts with thought, where one is able to think to a *greater* degree the more intense the object. The reason for this difference is that perception essentially involves body and thought does not. So human self-contemplation, which includes self-cognition in terms of perception (and self-cognition in terms of thought), is more fatiguing precisely to the extent that it is intense and therefore needs partners. Contrast this with god, whose self-contemplation is purely self-cognition in terms of thought and who is able to continuously contemplate his own activity by himself (*Metaphysics* xii 7). It is unclear how this contrast is consistent with the idea that Aristotle proposes that humans can, in a meaningful way, contemplate their own actions in isolation. This idea also collapses the distinction between theoretical contemplation and any activity involving action, including contemplation of it. *NE* 1177a27-35 says that the wise person can theorize by himself but will theorize better with others, whereas with moral action one does not merely engage in the relevant activity (including contemplation of action) better with others but *needs* others. There is little to the aforementioned contrast if we *are* able to engage in self-contemplation in a meaningful sense without others; but Aristotle says we need friends precisely because we are *not*.

instead thinks that we *can* contemplate our own actions by ourselves (but can do this better with others); contra §1, we therefore do not *need* friends and at most *should have* them for self-contemplation. But the Continuity Appendix denies this with its suggestion that we cannot contemplate ourselves by ourselves, at least not in a sense where we can meaningfully speak of contemplation as “activity” as opposed to “state.” As we cannot contemplate our own actions by ourselves, as happiness requires, Aristotle then is after all arguing that we *need* others to contemplate their actions which are in a way one’s own; this entails an instrumental reading.

Now, the First Argument does not conclude that happiness requires merely *others*, but *friends*. However, it does not adequately show (1) in what way friends’ actions are one’s own and (2) why a friend over and above just any other person is needed. Aristotle implies that we must read on for the more specific conclusion about friends, as a later argument with that very conclusion addresses this, what I will label “the Long Argument.” I will now render the argument and suggest in §3.1 that it must be understood as giving an instrumental account of the value of friends. In §3.2, I will show how this argument addresses questions (1) and (2) above.

Below, I break the Long Argument into premises. Some of these premises repeat, as with (1) (the first instance I label “1.1,” the second, “1.2”); sometimes these repetitions are highly compressed, as when (12-16.1) seems to repeat the reasoning of premises (12)-(16).

(1.1) The excellent friend is choiceworthy by nature to the excellent person. (2) For it was said that the good by nature is to the excellent person good and pleasant on account of itself. (3) And living is defined for animals by the capacity of perception-1, and for humans, of perception-1 or thought; (4) and the capacity is led up into the activity, (5) and the full thing is in the activity. (6.1) Therefore it seems that living is, fully, perceiving-1 or thinking (τὸ ζῆν εἶναι κυρίως τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι ἢ νοεῖν). (7.1) And living is of the things on account of itself good and pleasant, (8) for it is definite, and the definite is of the nature of the good. (9) And the good by nature is also [good] for the decent person; that is why it would seem to everyone to be pleasant; (Interlude 1) and it is necessary not to consider the life vicious and corrupted, nor the one in pains; for such [a life] is indefinite, just as the things belonging in it. And it will be more apparent in the following sections concerning pain. And (7.2) if living itself is good and pleasant (and this would seem to be the case from the fact that everyone desires it, and most of all the decent and blessed, for life is most choiceworthy for these ones, and the living of these ones is most blessed), and (10) if the one seeing perceives-2 that he sees and the one hearing that he hears and the one walking that he walks and likewise in all the other cases there is some perceiving-2 that we are active, with the result that [when] we perceive-1, [we perceive-2] that we perceive-1 and [when] we think, [we perceive-2] that we think, and

(11) if [perceiving-2] that we think or perceive-1 [is to perceive-2] that we exist, (6.2) (for it was [earlier proposed] that existence is perceiving-1 or thinking) (τὸ γὰρ εἶναι ἢν αἰσθάνεσθαι ἢ νοεῖν), and (12) if perceiving-2 that one lives is of the things pleasant on account of itself (13) (for living is by nature good, and perceiving-2 good inhering in oneself is pleasant), and (14) if living is choiceworthy and most of all to the good people, (15) because existence is good for them and pleasant (16) (for the ones perceiving-2 together are pleased by the good on account of itself), and (17) if just as the excellent person bears himself towards himself he also bears himself towards the friend (ὡς δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἔχει ὁ σπουδαῖος, καὶ πρὸς τὸν φίλον) (18) (for the friend is another self) (ἕτερος γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ φίλος ἐστίν); (19) then just as existence itself is choiceworthy to each, thus also or approximately the friend's existence. And it was [earlier proposed] (12-16.1) that existence is choiceworthy because of perceiving-2 one's self being good, and such perception-2 is pleasant on account of itself.¹⁶ (20) Therefore it is necessary also to perceive-2 together the friend that he exists, (Interlude 2) and this would seem to arise in living together and communing in words and thoughts, for it seems that living together is thus spoken of in the case of humans, and not just grazing in the same place, as is in the case of pasture animals. (12-16.2) Therefore if existence is choiceworthy on account of itself to the blessed person (since being good by nature and pleasant) (17-19) and approximate also is the existence of the friend, (1.2) then the friend is of the choiceworthy things. (21) But that which is choiceworthy for [the blessed], it is necessary for it to obtain for him, or he will be lacking in some way. (22) Therefore there will be need, for the person about to be happy, of excellent friends. (1170a13-b19)

Before rendering the argument, I will make three terminological remarks. First, for the argument to go through, Aristotle must take the “blessed,” “decent,” “excellent,” and “good” person talked about to refer to the same person. The collection of predications here makes it most probable that the person to which they are all applied is virtuous.¹⁷ Since the *virtuous* are at issue, we can secure that the picture here is justificatory, not explanatory in a bare, non-normative sense.

Now, it is most probable that this person already has self-knowledge, and that the point of the argument is not about the friend's role in one's own knowledge, but in something else; this brings us to the second terminological point. Whereas *EE*'s parallel speaks of perceiving (αἰσθάνεσθαι) and knowing (γνωρίζειν) (e.g. 1244b24-6), *NE*'s argument speaks of perceiving and, instead of knowing, thinking (νοεῖν). This terminological difference is important and not always recognized, as we can see with commentators who analyze *NE*'s argument as if it

¹⁶ *EE* also takes living as choiceworthy because some kind of cognition of it is choiceworthy (1244b26-9). *EE* also echoes *NE*'s sentiment in emphasizing that one's own existence, the existence that is being perceived, is good (1244b34-1245a1). See Footnotes 19 and 25 for divergences between these parallel arguments.

¹⁷ Relatedly, while Aristotle speaks of “*virtuous* friends” he implies that “*virtue* friends” are at stake. The former picks out a quality of the person (she is virtuous), the latter the type of friend the person is (she is my virtue friend). Aristotle is clearly arguing that the happy person needs not only a virtuous friend but a virtue friend. For the Long Argument is preoccupied with the question of why the happy person needs friends, but Aristotle denies before the Long Argument that the happy person needs pleasure or utility friends (1169b23-7), leaving only virtue friends.

concerns the knowledge of the virtuous person, knowledge of self or what is truly choiceworthy (Arreguin 2010, 118-24; Biss 2011, 126-8; Cooper 1999, 347-8; Liu 2010, 591-2).¹⁸ This acquisition of virtue is the purpose not of friendship but of moral education.¹⁹ Moral education is more passive than it is active (it is more about being shaped), whereas *NE* says that friendship is more active than it is passive (1159a27-33). Further, the opening of x 9 explicitly says that the friendship discussion has been completed, *before introducing* a new topic, moral education.²⁰

Finally, here is a remark about the combination of αἰσθάνεσθαι and ὅτι, which Shields notes is rare in the corpus; he cites only *De Anima* 425b12, 426b14, and *NE* 1142a28, seemingly missing the instances here in ix 9 (2016, 265). As Shields also notes, there is some controversy as to whether in these combinations, Aristotle uses αἰσθάνεσθαι univocally or not. At least in the present case, he does not. (10) opens with the idea that if one sees, he perceives that he sees, and if one hears, he perceives that he hears. This might make sense with the idea that “perceive” refers univocally to the form of cognition that is lower than thinking, sense-perceiving: if one

¹⁸ The problems associated with understanding the Long Argument to be about self-knowledge are very clear in Biss; her understanding the Long Argument in this way in fact drives her away from *NE*'s account towards the parallel account in *EE*. As we will see, the Long Argument predicates self-contemplation on the similarity of the friend. Biss wonders why similarity and not contrast should promote self-contemplation, understood in terms of figuring out things about oneself. If one understands self-contemplation in this way, there is indeed no adequate answer here (as also contested by Price 2010, 196) and one should abandon the demand for similarity and shift, as Sherman does, to difference (1987, 609-11). But Aristotle does not understand self-contemplation in this way; per the First Argument, it is about observing and thinking about one's activities, not figuring oneself out, and one contemplates oneself through contemplating another to the extent that this other is similar to oneself (see §3.2).

¹⁹ *EE*'s parallel to *NE*'s Long Argument *does* seem to describe the purpose of (some) friendship as the acquisition of virtue and self-knowledge (see Footnote 25). However, *EE* immediately afterwards denies education to ideal, “self-sufficient” friendship on the grounds that learning and, what implies it, teaching, entail deficiency on the part of the one learning (1245a16-18). I would suggest that *NE*'s Long Argument starts where *EE*'s parallel ends, focusing on what *EE* calls “self-sufficient” friendship. I would also suggest that *Politics* 1280a15-16's idea that most people are poor judges of what are their own applies to *EE*'s arguments about needing friends to know oneself and not to *NE*'s arguments of already virtuous people needing friends to contemplate themselves.

²⁰ It is true that *NE* 1170a11-12 lists as one reason for needing virtue friends that “some *exercise* of virtue (ἄσκησις τις τῆς ἀρετῆς) occurs from living together with good people.” However, there is no reason to take “exercise” as referring to learning rather than the exercise of what has already been learned. Indeed, i 9 explicitly contrasts learning with exercise. Aristotle begins with the question of whether virtue “is learned (μαθητόν) or habituated or exercised in some other way (ἄλλως πως ἀσκητόν)” and suggests that “even if [happiness] is not god-sent but occurs through virtue and some process of learning or exercise (τινα μάθησιν ἢ ἄσκησιν), it is one of the most divine things” (1099b9-11, 14-16). “Exercise *in some other way*” distinguishes “exercise” from “learning.”

sees, he *sees* that he sees, and if one hears, he *hears* that he hears. But then Aristotle says that if one walks, he perceives that he walks and *likewise* in all the other cases of activity, including thinking. If the pattern in “perceiving that one sees” and “perceiving that one hears” applies “likewise” to “perceiving that one *walks*,” “perceiving” cannot be taken to refer to a particular sense perception; the pattern of “x’ing that one x’s” would apply only to seeing and hearing and *not* “likewise” to walking. Indeed, “perceiving” in “perceiving that one thinks” cannot be taken to refer to sense perception at all. Rather, “perception” is equivalent to the First Argument’s “contemplation”; (Interlude 2) for example elaborates on (20)’s “shared perception” as sharing in words and thoughts, which includes but goes beyond the sense perception involved in contemplation of action to the thought that is also involved in contemplation of action.²¹ Now, Aristotle switches from this inclusive use of “perceive” in what immediately follows: the result of the idea that when we are active in any way, we perceive that we are active, is “that [when] we perceive-1, [we perceive-2] that we perceive-1 and [when] we think, [we perceive-2] that we think.” “Perceive-1” refers to a particular sense perception (e.g. seeing), whereas “perceive-2” and the instances of “perceive” preceding this part of (10) refer to contemplation, which includes sense perception *and* thought. I have marked the different uses of “perceive” accordingly.

With these terms in hand, let us work the argument backwards. The conclusion of this argument is that the happy person will need (δεήσει) excellent friends (22). This is because the happy person must possess what is *choiceworthy* for him, so as to fulfill the self-sufficiency criterion for happiness of lacking nothing (21). Now, the excellent friend is *choiceworthy* (1.2) on two grounds.²² Namely, being or existence (τὸ εἶναι) is choiceworthy on account of itself for

²¹ For this more general sense of perception, commentators also use “awareness” or “consciousness”; see Cooper 1999, Hitz 2011, Kosman 2004, Liu 2010, and Walker 2014.

²² To connect this to (21)’s claim about choiceworthiness for the happy person, we must secure that choiceworthiness *for the happy/blessed person* is at stake in (1.2). The context implies that the excellent friend is

the happy person (12-16.2) *and* the friend's existence is similar to the happy person's existence, where this last claim is grounded on the claim that the friend is another self (17-19).

So the happy person needs friends because the friend's existence is similar to his own, and his own existence is choiceworthy on account of itself. Why is existence choiceworthy on account of itself to the happy person? Note first that (3)-(6.1) define *living* in terms of perception or thought. (6.2) then says *existence* is perception or thought; it also says that this was proposed earlier, presumably at (3)-(6.1).²³ So we may take "living" and "existence" as interchangeable. (15) tells us that living/existence is choiceworthy for the good person because it is good and pleasant for the good person (15), and it is good and pleasant for him because it is good and pleasant on account of itself (16).²⁴ (7.1) explains that living/existence is good and pleasant on account of itself because it is *definite*, which is of the nature of the good (8).²⁵ Now for Aristotle, it is the end (τέλος) that *defines*. This is most clearly stated at *NE* 1115b22: we can infer from bravery's being fine that the end of bravery is fine, since every *x* is defined (ὀρίζεται) by its end.²⁶ As definiteness is explicated in terms of ends, we might say that in seeking definiteness,

choiceworthy *for the good person*, since the immediately preceding and following premises talk about the good person. As "good person" is interchangeable with "happy person" here, the connection is secure. I believe that such specification of all the argument's axiological terms to Aristotelian happiness is implied (e.g. choiceworthy *for the happy person as such*). Their application is otherwise too wide; an indefinite amount of goods can be construed as choiceworthy for their own sakes. The axiological specification here argued for allows the Long Argument to go through without attributing, as Hitz does (2011, 18-23), a separate class of "integrated goods" to Aristotle.

²³ One might think that τὸ εἶναι refers not to existence but to the essence of soul as understood in terms of various capacities, per *De Anima* ii (see Miller 2014, 341-2). From (15) on, the instances of τὸ εἶναι clearly refer to existence, as they do in *NE* ix 7 (see §3.1); but even if there is equivocation, it does not affect the argument, since (3)-(6.1) define existence by the actualization of capacities of the soul.

²⁴ Strictly, they are "pleased" by the good on account of itself. However, I take (16) to also make a claim about what is *pleasant* on account of itself, with the idea expressed by "x is *pleased* by the good on account of itself" being that the good on account of itself is *pleasant* on account of itself to x. This reading of the good and pleasant as running parallel (which nevertheless takes the good as explanatorily prior to the pleasant) better fits the fact that (16) explains (15), which straightforwardly takes the good and pleasant as running parallel.

²⁵ The parallel *EE* 1245a2-10 makes a similar but crucially different argument. The text and therefore translation are difficult, but I think that the idea is this: we desire living because we desire knowing ourselves, because we want to become knowable, because we want to become definite. The pathway to definiteness seems to be in a state of knowability, rather than in an activity of cognition as in *NE*.

²⁶ From ὀρίζειν, the same word of which ὀρισμένον in (8) and ὀρίζεται in (3) are forms.

an organism is seeking its end. In the case of humans, this would seem to be nothing other than seeking the rational activity that is constitutive of one's own realization or actuality.²⁷

We can thus condense the Long Argument as follows. The happy person needs virtuous friends because (A) virtuous friends are choiceworthy. (B) Virtuous friends are choiceworthy because their existences are similar to one's own existence (since they are other selves).²⁸ And (C) one's own existence is choiceworthy because it is definite, that is, actualized.

3.1: Challenges for the Non-Instrumental Interpretation

I will now point out three challenges that the Long Argument poses for non-instrumental interpretations. First, it is unclear how a non-instrumental interpretation can be made consistent with the overall form of the Long Argument. If the argument were pushing forward a non-instrumental point, we should expect it to consist solely of (A), that virtue friends are choiceworthy, namely, for their virtue that we enjoy. It would be unclear why an appeal to similarity to *one's own* virtue (B) is necessary as a mediator to make the friend choiceworthy to oneself, if all that matters is virtue; and it would be even more unclear why an appeal to one's own actualization (C) is necessary. Indeed, if non-instrumental valuation of the friend's virtue is at stake, one's own existence and the other's existence should be equally valuable, as both are virtuous. But hesitantly in (19) and then firmly in (17-19), Aristotle says the friend's existence is

²⁷ Broadie 2002, 427; Burnet 1900, 428; Hitz 2011, 21-2; Pakaluk 1998, 210-11; Pangle 2003, 190. We can get this understanding of the definite by putting (Interlude 1) and the Continuity Appendix together. (Interlude 1) suggests that we should not consider the life in pain, for such a life is *indefinite*. The Continuity Appendix suggests that pain *impedes activity*, where Aristotle often shifts between "life" and "activity" in the later books of *NE* ix (see Footnote 14). This suggests that indefiniteness is understood in terms of inactivity, definiteness in terms of activity.

²⁸ One might think I have equivocated between "choiceworthy" in (A) and "choiceworthy" in (B). The former expands to "choiceworthy on account of itself for the happy person" (12-16.2), whereas the latter expands merely to "choiceworthy for the good person" (14). Note though, that (12-16.2) is a compression of premises including (14); its double predication of something being choiceworthy on account of itself to the happy person reflects the fact that both "choiceworthy on account of itself" and "choiceworthy to the happy person" occur in (12)-(16). In any case, (14)'s mention just of what is choiceworthy to the good person implicitly refers to the choiceworthy on account of itself; (16) suggests that living is choiceworthy for the good person *because* it is choiceworthy on account of itself.

choiceworthy only *approximately* to one's own. The Long Argument's form then suggests an instrumental point; Aristotle argues for the choiceworthiness of the friend by appeal to the choiceworthiness of *one's own* existence, which suggests that *self*-cognition is of the utmost concern, with cognition of the friend who is sufficiently similar to oneself facilitating this.²⁹

Second, it is unclear that the non-instrumental interpretation can accommodate the temporal orientation of the Long Argument. Consider again its concluding section: “(21) But that which is choiceworthy for [the blessed], it is necessary for it to obtain for him, or he will be (ἔσται) lacking in some way. (22) Therefore there will be need (δεήσει), for the person about to be happy (εὐδαιμονήσονται), of excellent friends.” Why does Aristotle use the future tense? We have already seen why in our assessment of the introduction to *NE* ix 9; Aristotle understands the question and answer in terms of why a person needs friends *in order to become happy* (in more than a colloquial sense). The entire framework of the Long Argument is then instrumental.

Aristotle foreshadows this in the immediately preceding Continuity Appendix (explored in §2). The basic argument of the Long Argument is that the happy person needs friends because the existence of a friend, as being another self, is similar to one's own existence, where one's own existence is choiceworthy for the happy person and thus needed by him because it is definite. If we understand this claim retrospectively, this gives the impression that a happy person needs a friend at t because one's own existence was definite at a certain point in time $t-1$; the need is posited in *response* to a fact about one's own existence. But Aristotle's emphasis on continuity suggests that we should read the claim in (at least) a prospective way; one needs a friend at t because one values one's own existence as definite and a friend facilitates, from t

²⁹ Pace Mansini 1998, 413. Similarly, see interpretations whereby self-concern and other-concern are on par, as in McKerlie 1991, 95-100; McKerlie 1998, 547; Pakaluk Unpublished, 5; Whiting 1991.

onward, the activity required for this.³⁰ Now, given that the Continuity Appendix and Long Argument are (at least) prospectively inclined and given that only final causation of Aristotle's four causes deals with the prospective, we can conclude this: the claim is at least final causal ("we need friends *for the sake of* perceiving our being definite") and not (merely) efficient causal ("we need friends *because* our being already is/was definite to perceive").³¹ It is the importance of this continuity, raised in the Continuity Appendix, that explains why an already happy person should have an *ongoing* need of friends; happiness requires *continuous* activity. This shows that facilitation of activity is the grounds not only for entering friendship, but also for maintaining it. Given the normative context (Aristotle is discussing virtuous people in virtue friendships), these grounds are at least justificatory; whether or not they also capture the motivation of virtuous people in virtue friendships is a question I leave to the reader.

Finally, it is unclear that the non-instrumental interpretation can accommodate (B)'s point about other selves. We are told at (17)-(18) that we treat friends as we do ourselves because these friends are other selves. This same formula repeats from the first two explicit instances of "other selfhood" in *NE*. Ix 4 delineates various features of friendship, like wishing goods, and suggests that we display these to our friends just as to ourselves because the friends are other selves (1166a30-2); equality of treatment, displaying the features of friendship, is explained by the

³⁰ Michael of Ephesus recognized this, claiming that Aristotle's conclusion that one needs a friend because the friend's existence is like one's own, which is choiceworthy, unclearly follows; one needs the premise that the activity in question is continuous, and it is for this continuity that a friend is required (514.34-515.7, 516.6-10). Millgram disagrees with Michael and me, construing other selfhood retrospectively, rather than prospectively. While he recognizes, as we do, the importance of one's own activity in regard to other selfhood, he suggests that this is not an instrumental relationship; rather, x values y as another self because of *past* causation of x's existence (1987, 368-72). But it is unclear how this retrospective model respects the demand for activity that *continues into the future*.

³¹ The efficient cause is what Aristotle takes to set things into motion. For example, when billiard ball x bumps into billiard ball y and sends y rolling across the table, x is the efficient cause of y's motion. The reason why one should describe this dynamic as "retrospective" is that y's motion at t *responds* to x's contact at t or t-1. There are no prospective concerns here. Similar comments apply to the formal and material causes; for example, 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. If one turns to the final cause, there *are* prospective concerns; if x loves y *for the sake of* utility, for example, x's loving y at t *is* contingent on y's granting x utility at t+1. For more discussion, see Kim Forthcoming.

relation of other selfhood. Ix 4's instance in turn repeats the formula from the first instance of "other selfhood," in viii 12.1161b27-9: "parents love children as they do themselves (φιλοῦσιν ὡς ἑαυτούς), because the things from them are as other selves, [other] in respect to having been separated (τὰ γὰρ ἐξ αὐτῶν οἶον ἕτεροι αὐτοὶ τῷ κεχωρίσθαι)." To show that parents love children as they do *themselves*, Aristotle relates children to the parents *themselves* by labeling the children as other *selves*. And what justifies labeling children as other selves of the parents is the fact that they are *from* the parents, a fact that is repeated again and again in viii 12 (1161b18-28). Now this "being from" relation obviously encapsulates a productive relation between children and parents. And according to ix 7.1168a5-8, what makes producers love their products (where Aristotle gives parents and children as examples), and indeed what makes producers love their products *more than vice versa*, is as follows: (1) existence is choiceworthy, (2) one accesses one's own existence in one's own activity, and (3) a product counts as the producer's activity (the product is *identified* with the producer, we might say, is an other *self* of the producer, where this identification is cashed out in terms of activity; see Kim 2020, 677-8 for analysis). Going beyond *NE* viii 12's point that one treats other selves as one treats oneself because these are products of oneself, ix 7 suggests that what makes these products valuable is facilitation of one's own activity, a further step of realizing or making definite one's own existence.³²

The Long Argument assumes this instrumental idea behind other selfhood with its repetition not only of *NE* viii 12's and ix 4's formula (17-18) but also of ix 7's structure; like ix

³² Can we numerically distinguish between the activity of another self and the activity of oneself? *Physics* iii 3 claims that the activity of both mover and moved are "not different" (οὐκ ἄλλη) (202a15). This might seem to negate an instrumental understanding of other selfhood, as an instrumental understanding would take the activities of the other self (i.e. the moved) and oneself (i.e. the mover) to be distinct *relata* in an instrumental relationship. However, *Physics* iii 3 also says that while the activity of both mover and moved "are one, [their] essence is however not one (ὁ μὲντοι λόγος οὐχ εἶς)" (202a20). So even if there is numerical identity of activity, it is clear that there are differences in essence or account (λόγος, 202b14-16), and that it is this difference that *NE* ix 7 highlights; Aristotle says that the producer values the product *as the producer's* activity, even if the product's activity and the producer's activity are "not different" but "one." This allows for the distinct *relata* required for an instrumental relation.

7, the Long Argument suggests that existence is choiceworthy (7, 13-15), that one exists in activity (5-6), and that the friend's existence approximates one's own as another self's (17-19). There is more evidence that viii 12's and ix 7's ideas are operating in Aristotle's descriptions of ideal friendship and the attendant living together in ix 9 and following: ix 12 describes the living together of other selves (again using the formula of loving another as one loves oneself) in terms of mutual production, shaping one another. We will explore this chapter in the next section.

3.2: Other Selves and Living Together

Along with its overall form and future-oriented framework, then, the Long Argument's point about other selfhood challenges non-instrumental interpretations of *NE* ix 9. In §3.2, I will show how this point about other selfhood resolves some problems from the First Argument, and in a way that reinforces the instrumental interpretation. The First Argument states that while one would like to contemplate one's own activity, as happiness requires, we can contemplate others rather than ourselves; the Long Argument elaborates on this with its suggestion that in order to contemplate one's own activity (C), one must contemplate another self's activity that approximates one's own (B). It is then in this sense of approximation that the friend's action is "one's own" and facilitates contemplation of one's own actions. So the Long Argument fills in the notion of "one's own" in the First Argument, but this still leaves us another issue from the First Argument. Does an action that approximates one's own, in the relevant case of the happy, virtuous person, simply amount to any virtuous action? If so, will not any virtuous person's approximation to oneself do, or even vicious aping of virtuous action? Why does the First Argument appeal specifically to a virtuous *friend's* action as needed to contemplate one's own?

Aristotle answers these questions by appealing to what we do with other selves, namely, living together; these answers again orient Aristotle's closing account of friendship in an instrumental direction. Recall (20) and (Interlude 2) of the Long Argument: "it is necessary also to perceive-2 together the friend that he exists, and this [shared perception-2] would seem to arise in living together and communing in words and thoughts (συναισθάνεσθαι... γίνονται ἄν ἐν τῷ συζῆν καὶ κοινωνεῖν λόγων καὶ διανοίας)." Aristotle goes on to contrast shared living among humans with shared living among pasture animals, which consists just in grazing together; communing in words and thoughts is what distinguishes human shared living.

So the Long Argument points us to living together as what we do with a virtuous friend over and above any executor of virtuous actions, but for more on living together we will have to depart *NE* ix 9. Ix 10 does not elaborate much on living together, but at least reveals that it is not something one can do with many (1170b33-1171a4, 8-10). Ix 12 provides more elaboration:

(1) Thus also is living together most choiceworthy to friends; (2) for friendship is community, and as one bears himself towards himself, thus also towards the friend (καὶ ὡς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἔχει, οὕτω καὶ πρὸς τὸν φίλον)... (3) The friendship of the base becomes vicious (for they share in base things, being unstable, and since becoming similar [ὁμοιούμενοι] to one another they become vicious), (4) but the friendship of the decent becomes decent, since increasing together by means of interactions; and they seem to become better since being active (ἐνεργοῦντες) and correcting one another; (5) for they shape (ἀπομάττονται) one another in ways that please them, whence [the saying] "noble from noble things." (1171b32-4, 1172a8-14)

(1) and (2) identify living together as the characteristic activity of other selves. That is, Aristotle argues that (1) living together is most choiceworthy for friends qua friends, since (2) friendship just is communing together, where this involves bearing oneself towards the friend as towards oneself; this last formula echoes the instances of other selfhood at *NE* viii 12.1161b28, ix 4.1166a32, and (17)-(18) of ix 9's Long Argument. The part of the passage I omit then elaborates on living together as sharing the activities that define life; this also echoes preceding material, about sharing activity (explicitly, perception of oneself mentioned in earlier arguments). But

beyond sharing activity, living together involves mutual shaping.³³ (3) and (5) suggest that in sharing activity friends become “similar” and “shape one another.” This “becoming similar” implies other selfhood; x shapes y and in this way y is a product, another self involved in x’s activity.³⁴ Now, this is not the first time that Aristotle has invoked mutual shaping. 1165b13-17 suggests that one should not love and be a friend to someone who becomes vicious, because one becomes similar to what one loves.³⁵ In friendship then, one becomes similar to the other.

In the normative cases of interest to *NE* ix 9 and 12, this becoming similar is not about *acquiring* virtue. At stake rather is becoming more virtuous, which (4) unpacks in terms of “activity.” (4) explicitly says that the parties become “better,” and it is unclear how the process of becoming similar could result in the parties becoming better unless there was already virtuous character there to become similar to. However, while Aristotle understands two friends’ becoming similar to one another as their becoming more virtuous, he evidently does not reduce the former to the latter. Herein lies the key to ix 12’s completion of ix 9’s discussion; ix 12 gives us reasons for why contemplation of action requires friends in particular. It is the aforementioned mutual shaping of other selves in living together that sets apart virtuous *friends* from virtuous *strangers* (and *vicious* imitators of the virtuous); it is not just any involvement in one’s own activity that makes for other selfhood. Becoming one’s own (in the First Argument’s language) in the sense of approximation (in the Long Argument’s language) or similarity (in ix 12’s language) is not just a matter of exercising virtue in a way that is universal across all virtuous people; it

³³ Some stop their accounts of living together with sharing activity (e.g. Hitz 2011, 11-14). But this leaves the previous arguments’ problems; we might just be continuously active with random virtuous people (Kraut 2017, §9). This suggests that Aristotle has in mind something more specific than extending the scope and range of one’s own activities (*pace* Cooper 1999, 349; Irwin 1990, 92, 94; Irwin 1999, 299). For we might think that we can maximally extend the scope and range of our activities by maximizing our relationships with random virtuous people.

³⁴ See Carreras for arguments linking other selfhood to reciprocal shaping (2012, 325-9).

³⁵ Living together can involve negative shaping, but Aristotle clearly has a normative notion of living together, per the Long Argument’s (Interlude 2); living together for humans is not just grazing together. It is normative living together and its constitutive shaping that ground Aristotle’s arguments for why the happy person needs friends.

involves developing a “chemistry” as is spoken of in labs and sports teams, an adoption of a particular mode of operation that is disrupted and not continuous if one cycles in random but equally well-qualified lab partners and teammates.³⁶

That Aristotle would take such chemistry to apply to virtuous activity is evident from his idea that friends in the ideal virtue friendship that is complete friendship “need to acquire experience [of one another] and to become familiar [with one another], which is very difficult” (1158a14-15). The effortful requirements of experience and familiarity are superfluous if just any virtuous person would suffice; if just any virtuous person would suffice, all that is at stake is mere similarity in virtue, a disinterested object of admiration, rather than *becoming* similar in virtue. However, experience and familiarity are necessary, for it is not just any virtuous person that is needed but another self, a distinct product of one’s own shaping with whom one can share one’s life.³⁷ It is this unique relationship that facilitates an epistemic advantage for activity.³⁸

I will now sum up the paper, where I have explored *NE* ix 9’s answer to the question of why the happy person needs friends. I first assessed Aristotle’s introduction of the question, concluding that Aristotle understands friends as an instrumental need for happiness (§1). The

³⁶ This seems to be the idea behind *Politics* ii.2-5’s criticism of Plato’s system of interchangeable relationships. It also answers a question from Biss 2011, 126-8, and Cooper 1999, 347-8: in contemplating oneself by contemplating friends, how can we trust the intuited similarity of the other to oneself that grounds the fact that by contemplating friends one is contemplating oneself? Aristotle is resting his case not on friends *intuitively recognizing* some similarity that is symmetrical between them and transitive with any other virtuous person (*pace* Pakaluk 1998, 209), but on friends *creating* a similar mode of operation that is only symmetrical between them and not transitive with just any other virtuous person.

³⁷ Millgram 1987, 366-72, and Sherman 1987, 602, make a similar argument, that other selfhood goes beyond merely sharing virtuous character. They thus contradict the majority interpretation of other selfhood; see Annas 1977, 539-51, Kahn 1981, 34-9, Kraut 1989, 142, McKerlie 1991, Pakaluk Unpublished, Price 1989, 106 (but see 124), Schroeder 1992, and Whiting 1991. This majority interpretation of other selfhood fails to explain why happy people need virtuous *friends*; if friends are other selves and other selves are simply virtuous people (as insinuated by *MM* 1213a10-26 and *EE* 1245a30-5), it is unclear why Aristotle does not just say that we need virtuous people.

³⁸ One might appeal to trust, mentioned at *NE* 1156b25-32 and 1157a20-5, instead of chemistry. However, the present issue concerns a friendship that has already been formed, while Aristotle appeals to trust as a necessary condition for (at least virtue) friendship’s formation. Further, the criterion of trust does not make distinctions between virtuous people, as it is aimed at verifying that a would-be virtue friend is actually virtuous.

First Argument suggested that we need friends specifically for self-contemplation (§2). Some commentators have suggested that Aristotle is a proto-Cartesian; he thinks that we *can* contemplate ourselves by ourselves, so he cannot be arguing that we *need* others to contemplate ourselves. I argued that Aristotle does not accept the Cartesian starting point that would threaten the “need” interpretation. I then expounded upon the Long Argument (§3) and showed that it must be understood as giving an instrumental account of why friends are needed (§3.1). The value of friends is justified by their being other selves, and the value of other selves is justified by their connection to one’s own existence, and one’s own existence is valuable to the extent that it is actualized. Aristotle’s account of living together illuminated what is at stake with this connection that other selves have with one’s own existence: their actions are one’s own and approximate one’s own in that there is a special mode of operation unique to the friendship in question (§3.2). This is why friends in particular are needed for self-contemplation.

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