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Metaphysics Of Friendship

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Metaphysics of Friendship

Alexis Elder, PhD

University of Connecticut, 2013

I defend the claim that friendships are wholes with friends as parts. Given an account of the identity between parts and wholes, friendships turn out to involve friends literally sharing identity via this whole, while remaining distinct from each other. Identity and difference are often taken to be incompatible, but metaphysical considerations have shown that this is not strictly so when considering the relationship of parts to whole. Something like Aristotle's claim that friends are 'other selves', then, turns out to be neither metaphorical nor contradictory (even though 'self' and 'other' seem prima facie incompatible) but straightforwardly descriptive. I show how a parts/whole theory of friends and friendship sheds light on several longstanding issues in the philosophy of friendship, including why and how friends value each other, ways that shared perspectives and values ground friendships, and the role virtue plays in friendship.

Metaphysics of Friendship

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B.A., Southern Connecticut State University, 2005

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Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

Metaphysics of Friendship

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Chapter 1: Ontology of Friendship

1. Introduction

Aristotle says a friend is another self.¹ Taken literally, this sounds paradoxical. If something is other, it seems impossible that it be oneself, and if something is oneself, it does not seem to be other. But both seem to be important qualities of friendship. How can these two qualities be reconciled?

Friendship is often described as a union, or explained in terms implying that friends share identity. This may suggest a way to reconcile these apparently incompatible qualities. Augustine describes himself and a friend as “one soul in two bodies.” (p 56, 1993) Gilbert explains close relationships such as marriage and friendship in terms of “fusion”. (1990a) Telfer (1970) says friendship involves a “sense of a bond” between friends (p 226). Schoeman (1985) describes friendship as “a way of being and acting in virtue of being united with another.” (p 281) Friedman (1998) describes friendship as a “federation” of individuals. White (2001) says friendship involves solidarity. Sherman (1987) says friendship involves “sameness of mind” and “extension of self”, as well as a “relaxing of boundaries” and “sense of union” (p 282). Hampton describes close relationships as ones where “there is an intimate connection between the parties—to the point where the pleasures of each are advanced when the other’s needs and desires are satisfied.” (Hampton 1993, p 158)

However, one common way to unpack this intuitive notion of unifying shared identity is in terms of similarity, and it is troubling to suppose that friendship depends upon similarity of friends.² Differing perspectives and complementary strengths are among the potential benefits of friendship, and a good theory of friendship should not rule out such differences.

¹ For example, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, at 1161b, 1166a, and 1170b.

² See Williams 1981, Cocking and Kennett 1998.

Friendship's union is also sometimes taken to involve making a friend part of oneself or part of one's life. Though this would help explain shared identity, it seems inappropriately colonizing or domineering (Whiting 1991). A good account of friendship must avoid a foundation that too closely resembles the colonizing or domineering found in abusive marriages, pushy stage parents, and other unfriendly paradigms of relationship. In general, union accounts seem counter-intuitive insofar as they fail to recognize boundaries between friends.³ To be plausible, union accounts then cannot dissolve boundaries. But it is, at first blush, hard to see how such an account could still be a union account.

This makes unifying accounts less appealing. Some authors qualify their claims by rejecting *literal* or metaphysical union, as when Sherman (1993) says in a footnote that "In making these remarks [about friendship as union], I hope to be steering clear of the thicket of metaphysical issues having to do with personal identity and the constitution of the self." (p 282) But this leaves it mysterious just what this union is, and why it has such widespread appeal.

Taking friendship to be a unity seems to be an attractive idea, but also seems to threaten individuality and differences between friends. Aristotle seems to avoid this by saying that friends are "other selves", but this just sounds contradictory upon reflection and so is unhelpful in resolving the tension. One could bite the bullet and say that our intuitions mislead us; friendship is not genuine unification. But it would be preferable to explain how and why it seems to unify, and desirable to resolve the tension so that Aristotle's term is literally true.

³ Bennett Helm, for example, criticizes union accounts of love and friendship on the grounds that "'appeal to union seems excessive in that (a) it questionably undermines one's autonomy and distinctness from one's beloved and (b) it unsatisfactorily construes intimacy in egocentric terms and thereby fails to make sense of the idea that in love we have a concern for our beloved for *his* sake.'" Although not everyone is comfortable parsing valuing of friends as love, the criticisms seem compelling even when reconstrued: appeal to friendship as union undermines distinctness between friends and seems contrary to the idea that friendship involves concern for the friend, for the friend's sake. (Helm 2010, 147)

By looking clearly and carefully at issues of identity involved in unifying parts into a whole, we can shed new light on this very old intuition that friends are somehow unified, while avoiding the above problems.

I argue that we can reconcile unification with difference in friendship by taking people who are friends with each other to be parts of a whole, a friendship, and thus to share identity via this whole.⁴ It is no accident, I argue, that Aristotle called such friends “other selves”: considerations of identity can explain how such friends care for each other. Such identity is often left at the level of metaphor, but the deep intuitive appeal of friends’ shared identity deserves deeper exploration. Investigation of identity between parts and the wholes they compose captures these intuitions and reveals connections between important features of friendship.

I first consider arguments for taking friendship to involve unity. In the first two sections, I explore reasons to think a unifying account of friendship is accurate: it reconciles potentially conflicting desiderata for a theory of friendship, it is consistent with our usual reasons for thinking objects are parts of composite wholes, and we seem to relate to our own concerns and interests, and those of our friends, in similar ways. I then appeal to Baxter’s ‘many-one’ theory of identity to explain how parts of a whole can be at once the same thing, and yet differ from each other. I show how this theory resolves the apparently contradictory claim that friends are ‘other selves.’ This metaphysical account captures reasons for thinking friendship unifies, without threatening difference between individuals. It explains the value of differences among friends in terms of different strengths which contribute to the flourishing of a friendship, an entity that encompasses both friends.

One might worry that explaining friendship via metaphysics seems so odd or counterintuitive that any theoretical benefits would be outweighed by the costs of appealing

⁴ By ‘friends’ I mean roughly what Aristotle seems to have meant by ‘virtue friends’: people who value each other intrinsically, and wish well for each other. There are many other senses of friendship, but I follow Aristotle in taking this to be the deepest and fullest form, and so a good place to start an inquiry.

to metaphysics in the first place. But while I will be using a theory of identity to explain friendship, I will not insist that we become metaphysical realists of any particular sort in order to accept it. If theoretical commitments or intuitions preclude adopting what I advocate as a precise and literal description of what there is, I believe that this approach also works as a helpful exploration of a commonly invoked metaphor about friendship.

While I think taking friendships to be entities in one's social ontology, on a par with teams, governments, or corporations, helps us understand them, on its own this is insufficient for explaining the nature of close friendship. Friends' interests are interrelated more deeply and over a wider range than is characteristic of many other social entities. The interweaving of interests characteristic of friendship both motivates a unifying account, and poses a problem for such an approach. It is thus in need of some special explanation, which at least one account of identity provides, over and above more general questions about social ontologies.

2. Explanatory Advantages of Taking Friendships to be Unities

A good theory of friendship seems to have incompatible desiderata: partiality, reciprocity, and intrinsic value. Friendship is paradigmatically partial.⁵ Friendship also seems to involve valuing or caring about a friend intrinsically, not merely for how she stands to a person or what she can do for me – not merely for instrumental reasons.⁶ But friendship also requires that one's care be reciprocated.⁷ Unrequited love is a well known concept, but not unrequited friendship.

But combined requirements of reciprocity and partiality conflict with a requirement that friends be valued intrinsically. If a friend's care is necessarily reciprocated and friendly

⁵ We are not friends with everyone, or everyone we like, know, love, or admire. We can even think that someone is a good potential friend, and yet not be friends with them. See Jollimore 2000 for an especially thorough discussion of the importance of partiality to friendship.

⁶ However, of course friends can be useful and pleasant and helpful to each other.

⁷ Ideally, in both kind and degree.

attachment implies partiality, then friendship seems to be partly dependent on how my friend relates to me. But finding another to be intrinsically valuable does not seem to be susceptible to the relational properties that characterize friendship.

One might think friendship involves friends' taking each other to be intrinsically valuable (even without reciprocation), plus some reciprocal partiality. Perhaps it consists of an agreement between people who already consider all people intrinsically valuable, but agree to promote each other's interests to their mutual benefit. Or perhaps it is a particularly efficient way for people to promote each other's good: by forming close relationships with each other, friends are thereby especially well-positioned to look out for each other's well-being, as compared to others who are equally well-deserving but less familiar.⁸ This leaves the institution of friendship merely instrumentally valuable, as it would consist of having an arrangement with someone whom one would value intrinsically, just as much, regardless of relationship. But this seems inaccurate as a characterization of close friendship. While I may value all people intrinsically, my partiality toward my friends seems to require that I find them especially valuable, and not merely especially *instrumentally* valuable. Although one could say that a person's valuing a friend intrinsically is independently justified, in the end, on instrumental grounds (because such valuing efficiently promotes people's wellbeing, for example), it would be preferable to avoid positing that friendship rests on an error in evaluation, ascribing special intrinsic value to friends where no such value exists.

The apparent conflict between instrumental and intrinsic value might be a tension between egoistic concerns, which could explain why partiality is paired with reciprocity, especially on mutual-benefit accounts of friendship, and altruistic concerns, which may explain valuing a friend intrinsically. An egoistic account of friendship is intuitively unpalatable, because it seems to make a friend merely instrumentally valuable. At best, it

⁸ Railton 1984, but see Jollimore 2000 and Jeske 2008 for some recent challenges to this strategy.

makes the friend *as friend* of merely instrumental value, even when paired with the qualification that friendships are best between people who value others intrinsically.

Altruism, however, cannot on its own explain why reciprocity matters to friendship, and seems to endorse more selflessness than seems healthy in a friendship. In an explanation of friendship as unification, by contrast, we care about the people with whom we are united by reciprocal care and concerns, while avoiding the implication that we do so for instrumental reasons. If we are identical with our friends, then we care for them for the same reasons we care for ourselves, because they *are* us.⁹ If shared identity can be unpacked in a way that preserves difference, we will have a natural explanation for the combination of partiality, reciprocity and distinctive intrinsic value that otherwise seems puzzling.

3. Friendships Meet Criteria for Parthood

In addition to the theoretical advantage sketched out above, several features of friendship seem to meet conditions under which one might reasonably take many things to compose a whole. This lends additional support to the thesis that friendship involves unity.

Different items seem like parts of the same whole when they are mutually responsive to changes in each other's condition, especially across a wide range of circumstances. For example, different organs in the human body are mutually responsive to changes in each other's states, and this might seem to partially underwrite their composing a whole human being. Additionally, different items often seem to be parts of the same whole when they seem to work together and to collectively engage in some shared activity. Parts of a car, for example, work together to make the car drive down the road. Finally, different things can seem to make up a unified whole when they are not just mutually responsive to changes, but

⁹ While the reasons to care for friends will then be of the same sort as the reasons we care for ourselves, we do not automatically care for ourselves. Phenomena such as self-abnegation and self-loathing demonstrate that it would be wrong to conclude that recognizing something is a feature of oneself always gives reason to value or care about it.

actually shape each other's development. Each of these can independently give one reason to believe that one is confronted by parts which together compose a whole. Collectively, they provide stronger reason to believe this. Things which are mutually responsive to each other, *and* work together, *and* mutually shape each other, especially over extended periods of time and across a wide range of circumstances, seem especially good candidates for parthood.

Each of these three features seems, plausibly, to be found in friendship. Furthermore, each has been argued to be characteristic of friendship, and made central to a variety of theories about friendship. Supposing the previously cited intuitions and theorists are on to something, these would then give us good reason to think friendships are wholes with friends as parts. This will go some way toward explaining the appeal of union accounts of friendship, without thereby implying that friends are mirror images of each other, or that friendship erases difference between friends.

First, consider mutual responsiveness. Friends care about and value each other and, furthermore, value being in this reciprocal state of valuing: they value their friendship. Thus, they are mutually responsive to each other's interests and values. Suppose Alfred and Bruce are friends. If Bruce cares about vintage Corvettes, Alfred has some reason to care about them too, simply in virtue of Bruce's interest in them. This need not lead Alfred to acquire his own vintage car, but it does mean that seeing one on the street will remind him of Bruce, it might prompt him to point it out to his friend, and he should express and experience delight at Bruce's new purchase, or sadness or unhappiness if something happens to Bruce's beloved vehicle. When each includes these as background assumptions in their own sets of values and interests, the two friends end up with coordinated interests at any given moment, as well as interests that remain coordinated over time. This feature of friendship has struck some as so important that they think it distinguishes friendship from more disinterested instances of care. Michael Stocker (1981) argues that friends make each others' values and interests part of

their background concerns out of which their own activities flow. This helps distinguish friendship from disinterested concern for acquaintances and strangers.

In becoming friends, people retain their own interests and values, but take on new ones as well, in virtue of the friendship. Their interests and values end up being coordinated via their mutual responsiveness to each others' concerns. This systematic coordination partially explains the intuition that friends unite or together compose a whole.

Next, consider shared activity, another potential indicator of parthood. Friends paradigmatically value doing things together; sharing pursuits and projects: restoring old bikes, working out together, sharing meals and movies, and so forth. Aristotle observed that

Whatever someone [regards as] his being, or the end for which he chooses to be alive, that is the activity he wishes to pursue in his friend's company. Hence some friends drink together, others play dice, while others do gymnastics and go hunting, or do philosophy. They spend their days together on whichever pursuit in life they like most; for since they want to live with their friends, they share the actions in which they find their common life. (NE 1172A)

This might superficially seem to imply that friendship simply consists in acting together, but we share activities with co-workers, fellow committee members, and so on, without thereby becoming friends. What helps set friendship apart is that in friendship, not merely the activity but the sharing itself is valued. I may work together with a co-worker, even one I don't like much, because I want to get the project done and this person is a means to that end. But with my friends, it matters that this particular person share the activity with me, and in many cases, it matters more that we share *some* activity or other than that it be any particular pursuit (we may be equally content to go for a hike or to cook a meal together). If bike restoration is a component of our friendships, then we value fixing bikes with our friends. Fixing bikes, for close friends, would not merely be about working on a valuable project with convenient allies.¹⁰

¹⁰ Shared pursuit is not sufficient, all on its own, to exemplify friendship. As Sherman (1993) has argued, activities can be shared on a much smaller scale, from long-term projects such as raising a child to short-term

Furthermore, sharing pursuits dovetails with the previously discussed feature of mutual responsiveness: valuing an activity in virtue of its being shared necessitates that one remain essentially open to the other's input, that one's vision of the output be determined in part by the other's contributions. At the level of particular projects as well as long-term values, many of friends' goals and activities are shared and interdependent, and friends have a shared and standing interest in sharing such joint projects and pursuits. Since joint participation in a shared goal gives one some reason to think the participants are parts of a whole, and shared activity is characteristic of friendship, we have further reason to think friends are parts of a composite whole: a friendship.

Finally, consider mutual shaping of character and self-image. If my friend finds my sense of humor bitingly funny, I may start thinking of myself as someone who possesses this kind of wit, will be more likely to display it in future, and it will start to play a role in how I understand myself. Friends may also contribute to each other's growth and development by highlighting and drawing out potential for change. Friends not only respond to each other's interests and values, but also systematically influence each other's development.¹¹

Some recent literature on friendship and self-knowledge (Osborne 2009, Biss 2011) introduces additional reasons to think that friends are co-participants in learning about and knowing ourselves, not merely as passive reflectors-back of traits we already possess, nor simply as foils against which to compare ourselves¹². Biss (2011) points out that friendships give us opportunities to exercise and display characteristics such as wit, by jointly engaging with friends in such paradigmatically friendly shared activities as joking around and bantering, giving us the opportunity to witness these features in ourselves directly, while

activities like conversations. But it seems no accident that these sorts of activities are characteristically found among friends.

¹¹ See Cocking and Kennett (1998) and Badhwar (2005) for varying discussions of how friends can shape each others' self-image.

¹² Both positions commonly ascribed to Aristotle, though as Osborne 2009 argues, this may be an unfair and inaccurate attribution.

simultaneously developing and strengthening them. The role friends play in shaping and reinforcing character traits and self-image gives us an additional reason to think friends are parts collectively composing friendships.

Mutual responsiveness and interdependence on a number of fronts, from values and interests to activities and projects, to one's own conception of oneself and the directions in which one develops, have been identified as key components of friendship by a number of theorists, and furthermore have intuitive plausibility. Separately and together, this supports the conclusion that friendships are unities. Being a friend means some of the person's interests, activities, and the shape of his character, are partially determined by his friends. Thus, taking friendships to be wholes offers distinctive explanatory advantages in understanding characteristic features of friends as those of parts. Friends' sensitivity to each other, reciprocal mutual concern, and valuing of shared activities and pursuits, bind them together into a unified whole.

Note how this account differs from other sorts of personal relationships, especially those that are intuitively unfriendly. While, in a certain sense, enemies may end up with coordinated interests (if Moriarty values something, that may be reason enough for Holmes to find it repugnant), enemies will not often value shared activities in virtue of their being shared, nor will they share interests and projects with each other: in fact, their relationship seems to be characteristically one in which their interests and projects are on collision courses with each other. Or, consider the domineering spouse, whose subservient partner takes on new interests, but has to set aside his or her old ones, while the domineering partner remains inflexible. Furthermore, the subservient partner's self-image ends up being shaped by the other, but not the reverse (or at least not to the same degree). These unfriendly relationships fail to evidence features of parthood to the same degree. Thus, friendships stand out from these other, less friendly relationships, for exemplifying not just some but all of the

characteristics mentioned, and to an especially high degree and across a wide range of circumstances in particularly close friendships. Furthermore, each of these features is not merely present in friendship, but paradigmatically valued by friends. Friends do not merely coordinate their values, but think it important that they do so. Friends do not merely share activities, but value this sharing. Friends do not merely change who they are in response to friends' observations, but do so because they find their friends' perspectives valuable.

4. Many-One Identity, Parts and Wholes

So far, we have seen that unification theories of friendship enjoy explanatory advantages on several fronts, partly explaining the appeal of this approach, but have yet to reconcile the apparent contradiction between “self” and “other”. Turning to metaphysics, we find a parallel concern. The apparently contradictory requirements that some things be both identical and differing have motivated a theory of identity between parts and whole that captures both their sameness and difference. Donald Baxter has argued that many apparent contradictions associated with some common theories of parts and wholes can be resolved with a new theoretical approach.¹³ Baxter's theory incorporates intuitively compelling considerations about the relationship between parts and wholes, and sameness and difference, which shed light on the nature of friendship insofar as it invokes parallel considerations and proposes a theoretical solution.

Baxter argues that some paradoxes occur in standard accounts of identity. (1988) In cases of fusion, where two things become one thing, the product of the fusion seems to be identical with the things fused, but the things fused, which should be – on any reasonable account – identical with themselves, differ from each other prior to the fusion. So if identity

¹³ For example, in Baxter 1988, 2005.

is transitive, the fused item seems to be identical with two different things, but by hypothesis the pre-fused things are not identical with each other.

Intuitively, one wants to say that in a case of fusion the two items each becomes a different *part* of the fused whole (perhaps they become different halves or regions of it) while remaining identical with themselves. If parts are not identical with the whole, then it is consistent to say the two fused items become two different parts of the whole. But now the fusion seems to be a third thing, independent of its parts. (Baxter, 1988) A parallel problem seems to hold for friendship: even if one takes friends to compose a friendship, friends then seem to be different parts of the friendship, and so such a theoretical approach only preserves difference between friends at the expense of friendship's really unifying the friends. Perhaps one could say that friends really do join or merge into a whole, but at the cost of rejecting differences between friends.

But this claim that parts are not identical with the whole is troubling. If the whole is something besides the parts, then we should be able to take the parts away and still have a whole. And, whenever we have parts, we should in addition have something else: a whole. But, points out Baxter, we do not count like this (1988, pp. 200-201). If one is dividing up a tract of land into parts, one does not sell off the portions but retain ownership of the whole tract: the tract is the parts. (1988, p 197) And if each can in a six-pack costs 50 cents, one does not pay \$3 for the six cans, then another \$3 for the six-pack. (1988, p 200) The same holds true for friendship: it would be absurd to think that a friendship still exists even without friends. To avoid this, we can suppose that the whole *is* the parts, and that many parts collectively are identical with a single whole. This would make many things (the parts) identical with one thing (the whole). This resolves some puzzles about parts and wholes, but requires a different theory of identity.

Baxter advocates that we take it as primitive that the same phenomenon can be both one unified thing, and many distinct things. Whereas what he terms the “received view” (2005, p 377) would hold that, for an object with two parts, there are really three things – the two parts plus the whole – on Baxter’s account we have two parts and one whole, but these are not distinct and so do not add up to three different things.

Baxter introduces the technical concept of a “count” to flesh this out. The number of things we can count is always, he says, relative to a given standard for counting (1988). Consider a six-pack. If a standard counts cans, there are six things there. The six-pack will not be counted, since it is not a can. If we count six-packs, there is just one. Each of the cans is not a six-pack and so it is not counted. Many of the more standard features of identity, including transitivity of identity, hold (only) within a count. But many-one identity consists of what Baxter calls “cross-count identity”: identity across counts. The six cans are cross-count identical with the six-pack just when you can count the same region of the world and get six cans, or one six-pack.¹⁴

On my account of friendship, drawing on Baxter’s theory of identity, friendships are composite objects with friends as parts. Where we count two people, and one friendship, the people counted, the friends, are cross-count identical with the friendship. There are two people there: you can still count two, using ‘person’ as your counting standard. There are two friends there, as well, though their being friends is in some sense contingent on being able to count a friendship as well. The same entity can be both a person and a friend.¹⁵ What the entity counts as depends on what is being counted.¹⁶ What many-one identity says is that two friends collectively are cross-count identical with one friendship, and the friendship with the

¹⁴ Note: this is not the same thing as making counts relative to sortals, though in some cases a count standard can be a sortal.

¹⁵ , A person can simultaneously be many other things as well: material object, protein-based life form, mammal, tax-payer, Republican, and so on, each a different aspect of the same thing (and as explained in the next section, aspects factor into this account of identity).

¹⁶ Although talk of counting makes it sound as though counts require counters, a count can be mind-independent.

friends, so the friends are the friendship, and the friendship is the friends. We can count two friends, and one friendship, but cannot add across counts to get three distinct objects, any more than we can count six cans, and then add the six-pack to get seven items.

This allows us to reconcile something's being both self and other without contradiction. Friends as parts turn out to be identical with the friendship they compose, and the friendship identical with them. Because each part is identical with the whole, the friends are identical with each other by way of being identical with the same whole, even though they are different parts of the whole.

Claiming that two different friends can be the selfsame friendship has implications for our understanding of self-interest, because we will have to be careful to specify which sense of 'self' is being invoked in any given case. On my account, the friend is both the person and the friendship, and so the sense of 'self' invoked (person, or friendship) by considerations of 'self'-interest can vary. Acting in the interest of the friendship is acting in one's self-interest, because one is a friend and one is part of the friendship, but acting in the interest of the person is also acting in one's self-interest, even when doing so is in tension with the continuation of the friendship. We might distinguish between broad and narrow selves, as Baxter does (2005), to make this discussion clearer. This account of self-interest helps to unpack what is involved with friends taking on each other's interests as background considerations¹⁷, and the ways that one's interests can be advanced or hindered by a loved one's interests being promoted or frustrated, as Hampton indicates in the quote from the introduction. Friends use both a broad and narrow sense of self in evaluating their self-interest. Unless we flesh out what is meant by 'self'-interest, it looks like taking friendship to involve adopting friends' interests and concerns will make conflict between friends, or

¹⁷ As discussed in the section, "Friends Meet Criteria for Parthood"

between one's interests and one's friend's, inexplicable. Distinguishing between broad and narrow senses of self, meanwhile, lends itself naturally to the task.

It would be silly to insist that, because one takes one's friend's interests as background considerations or because one's interests are advanced or hindered by the success or failure of a friend's projects, that one's interests can never conflict with those of a friend's. But even one's own interests can conflict. On my account, a conflict between my interest and my friend's is relevantly similar to conflicts between my own interests, because conflicts within my own interests (as a person) are conflicts in narrow-self-interest, and conflicts between my interests and my friend's are conflicts in broad-self-interest. This also means that, just as I can sacrifice some of my interests for others without thereby sacrificing my interests, I can sacrifice my interests for my friend's without thereby being said to sacrifice my self-interest in one sense (in the way that the soldier in the foxhole who throws himself on the grenade to save his friends, or the parents who forgo eating to feed their child, might seem to be promoting their interests even while sacrificing some interest). My account rules out is that sacrificing one's narrow self-interest for a friend could be *completely* selfless, but this is a point I am happy to concede as intuitively incompatible with a healthy friendship.¹⁸

This account will not, all on its own, fully explain why friends care about each other, because identity is not sufficient to give one an interest in something, especially not an all-things-considered interest. Finding out that you are a pathological liar is not in itself grounds for you to have an interest in lying; upon realizing this, one may then devote oneself to resisting this tendency. But it does explain how friends can see themselves as unified while *at the same time* recognizing, respecting, and valuing each other's differences.

¹⁸ See Hampton's "Feminist Contractarianism" for a lucid discussion of some of the problems with self-abnegation and self-sacrifice in personal relationships.

5. Self-Differing among Parts and Wholes

If we accept at the outset that many things can be one thing, we must reject the idea that self-differing is inherently paradoxical. At this point, one might object that this account seems to violate Leibniz' Law, often cashed out as the claim that indiscernibles are identical and things which are identical are indiscernible. However, taken at face value, this ends up sounding implausible, and a refined version of Leibniz' Law is available to the many-one identity theorist which avoids the problematic implications of the literal reading. Baxter notes in "The Discernibility of Identicals" (1999) that self-differing seems to be a basic feature not just of composite objects, but even of partless objects. Consider bittersweet chocolate. Chocolate is both bitter and sweet, but bitterness and sweetness are different and not identical to each other: bitterness is not sweet, and sweetness is not bitter. So the chocolate differs from itself. Baxter appeals to a theory of aspects to explain such self-differing. The chocolate in one aspect is sweet, in another aspect is bitter, but the chocolate itself includes both aspects, much as a whole can include numerous parts. (Baxter 1999)

Self-differing seems paradoxical when an object with all aspects taken into consideration differs from itself. A red square cannot also be a blue circle if being red and square exhausts its aspects. There may even be some cases in which something's having one aspect (say, being all red) rules out its having another aspect (being all blue). But focusing on mutually exclusive aspects, and objects considered in some aspects versus considered unqualifiedly, eliminates problematic cases of self-differing, and leaves room for self-differing in cases that seem intuitively acceptable (such as bittersweet chocolate). Thus, Leibniz' Law should be understood as saying that an object considered in all aspects cannot differ from itself, considered unqualifiedly, while avoiding the inference that aspects of an object cannot differ from each other.

Different parts can then consistently share identity via the whole they compose while differing from each other. Where two parts are each identical with the same whole, then in one respect they are identical. But this does not rule out their differing from each other. Insofar as part A is identical with the whole, it is identical with part B, but A and B are not identical in all aspects and so not indistinguishable.

By adopting this model of identity, we thus capture some important pretheoretic judgments about identity, particularly with respect to composite and complex objects. We avoid the paradoxes sketched out in the section “Many-One Identity, Parts and Wholes”, and end up with a model of identity in which parts are identical with the whole they compose: many things can be one and the same thing. This means friends can differ from each other without running afoul of the intuitions and explanatory advantages of considering friends as unified or somehow identical with each other (“other selves”). If friends are parts of a friendship, and an object can be identical with its parts, then Aristotle’s claim is not paradoxical but instead straightforwardly descriptive, and friends can differ from each other without contradicting the claim that they are unified.

6. Richness and Variety as Sources of Value in Friendship

This revised version of Leibniz’ Law is important not only for capturing intuitive features of composite objects, but also for explaining much of what we think is valuable about friendship. Friends with complementary but differing character traits, different backgrounds or areas of expertise, and different interests and values can enrich our lives in ways that would be impossible if friendship thrived only in a monoculture, where each person was exactly like the other.

Friendship, on my account, involves each friend identifying as a part of a friendship, and thus as the friendship, and in virtue of this friendship, identifying with one’s friend. This

helps make sense of the way friends' interests are paradigmatically interrelated, coordinated and interdependent. Each friend sees herself as both a part of the friendship and the friendship, and thus also as the friend. By seeing oneself as the whole which includes both friends, one sees oneself as now expanded or extended to include the friend. This eventually helps explain the importance to friendship of valuing and pursuing joint projects, including the interdependence of reasoning and openness to revision that implies, as well as explaining why we think friends can be an important and valued part of one's life.

If friendship is about expansion of self, and friendship is a valuable institution, then the value of this expansion needs explanation. Simply having *more* of oneself is one possible source of value, and consistent with Aristotle's original and ambiguous discussion in Book 9, Chapter 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he spells out the benefits of expansion of self in terms of increased capacity for continuous activity. (1170a) While this might seem like it assigns friends a merely instrumentally rather than intrinsically valuable role in one's life, this is incorrect. Friends, by extending a person and becoming 'other selves', are intrinsically valuable as components of an intrinsically valued entity. They are not mere means to an independent end.

This expansion, however, is impoverished if it is limited to duplication of a person's features. Bernard Williams argues that "differences of character" are of central importance in personal relations, and not obviously compatible with an Aristotelian account. "Once one agrees that a three-dimensional mirror would not represent the ideal of friendship," says Williams,

...one can begin to see both how some degree of difference can play an essential role, and, also, how a commitment or involvement with a particular other person might be one of the kinds of project which figured basically in a man's life... something which would be mysterious or even sinister in an Aristotelian account." (Williams 1981, pp 15-16)

But if we incorporate differences between friends into a theory of friendship, this makes the expanded entity more complex, not just bigger, and defuses Williams' objection. In friendship, one takes on a friend's different talents, interests and concerns without sacrificing one's own. Friends become identical with the friendship by identifying as both parts of, and as, the whole. They are now more than they were, before they became parts. This means that friends together are not just capable of more continuous activity but can lend differing perspectives and talents to a shared project, or even complementary traits, as, for example, where one friend's courage is complemented by another friend's carefulness. These features are not available simply by scaling up one person's efforts. Shared activity, including a shared life, is thus enriched by at least some differences between friends.

On a simple unifying model of friendship, it is difficult to capture the enriching value of differences between friends. But a simplistic model's inability to capture this richness is not good grounds for concluding that identity between friends *cannot* be shared, especially if the belief that identicals must be indiscernible is itself oversimplistic. The ability to accommodate and explain such richness is one of the significant advantages offered by a many-one identity theory of friendship.

Conclusion

I began by noting the apparent tensions between self and other that seem inherent to friendship, exemplified by Aristotle's claim that friends are "other selves". Both are highly desirable in a theory of friendship, and yet it seemed difficult to reconcile the two. I considered several reasons to think that friendships are genuine unities, then appealed to a metaphysical account of parts and wholes to show how it is possible to have friends be both "self" and "other," by being different parts which are nonetheless identical with the whole they compose, the friendship. The friendship is identical with the friends, not something other

than them, and the friends collectively are identical with the friendship. We saw how such an account makes for a natural explanation of the way that variety and difference among friends can contribute to a friendship. Friends contribute different strengths and perspectives to enrich the friendship, and by becoming part of the friendship, one makes such richness one's own.

Chapter 2: Reciprocity and Friendship

1. Why Think Reciprocity is Important in Friendship?

In this chapter, I will argue that reciprocity is an essential component of friendship. As friendship seems intrinsically valuable, getting clear on how reciprocity contributes to friendship will help us to understand an important human good. I will then give a theory of the work reciprocity does for friendship, and show how this theory fares against competing accounts of friendship.

Some points about the value of friendship and reciprocity can be brought out with a couple of thought experiments.

The first one comes to us from Aristotle's famous discussion of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. At the start of Book VIII, the first of two books devoted to the subject, he notes that, intuitively, friendship is necessary for the best life, even if a good life is possible without friends. We can bring this out by imagining that we've been given a choice between two possible lives: in Life A, we will have every good *except* friendship. We will have money, power, entertainment, security, intellectual stimulation, and so forth, exactly suited to us, but not a single friend. In Life B, we will have these same goods, but also some good and long-lasting friendships. In my experience, people almost universally choose option B. People usually even choose the life with friends when the setup is modified slightly so that Life B, while it includes many important goods, does not contain quite as many external goods as Life A. That is, people opt to go without some additional goods of other sorts for the distinctive good of friendship. Aristotle takes this to show that friendship is intrinsically valuable: not merely a means to other, independent goods (such as money, power,

entertainment, security and so forth), but valuable in its own right, and something that makes a good life go better. (Whether it is possible to have a good life without friends is a different question, and not incompatible with the spirit of Aristotle's claim. It might be *possible* to have a good life without friends. Some tradeoffs could make it necessary that we live without friendship – perhaps a closer relationship to God, or a highly demanding career or charitable endeavor leaves one with no time to cultivate friendships. But given the *choice*, we would prefer that friendships be part of our lives.)

Aristotle goes on, then, to note that friendship requires reciprocity: People aren't friends but only well-wishers when their care is not returned. "If you wish good things in this way [for the other's sake and not merely your own benefit], but the same wish is not returned by the other, you would be said to have [only] goodwill for one another. For friendship is said to be *reciprocated* goodwill." (1155b, p. 121) And this seems to be the case in modern conceptions of friendship also. Pre-theoretically, we often speak as though true friends value each other for themselves and not merely for some selfish end, but we also think people are not friends unless they return our care and seem to value us.

In fact, if we modify the thought experiment above, so that in Life A, you will have all the other external goods, *and* will love people, *and* people will love you... but none of the people you love, will love you, and you will love none of the people who love you, then Life B, the life with reciprocal friendship, still looks to many like the preferable option. This intuition seems to show that not only are friends important, but that reciprocity is essential to their being friends.

As I will discuss in greater detail in Section 4c, *un*-reciprocated caring and valuing of another (that is to say, something like unrequited love) does not seem to be a desirable component of a good life in the way that friendship is. In fact, in some cases, especially those where unrequited love is used by the object of love as a lever to control or manipulate a

person, it seems to be a way that an otherwise good life can go worse. As an ideal we aspire to, friendship then seems a better candidate than unrequited love. Reciprocity seems to make a significant difference.

Finally, note that friendship requires valuing people for themselves and wishing them well. Aristotle argues for this by contrasting love of friends with love of wine: “it would presumably be ridiculous to wish good things to wine; the most you wish is its preservation so you can have it.” (1155b, 121) While you love wine just so you can have it, friendship must involve valuing others for their sake, not (just) yours.

At first glance, however, the kind of friendship that these thought experiments imply might look like it involves contradictory expectations. Friendship is supposed to involve goodwill for the other, for the other’s own sake, but adding in a reciprocity requirement seems selfish: it may seem to imply that friendship is a mutual benefit arrangement, where each agrees to support and care for the other in exchange for some guarantee of the same on one’s own part. Upon consideration, this sounds incompatible with deep friendship. One might therefore be tempted to conclude that while friendship is reciprocal, to be a *good* friend one must value the other person purely for themselves, and not be concerned with reciprocity.

Imagine a person who deliberately “keeps score” in their relationships, consciously measuring and weighing how much effort each person puts forth, how much each person sacrifices or trades off for the sake of the relationship, and criticizes others for failing to match their own contributions. Such a person seems to miss something important about friendship, and it might seem that a better friend would not be concerned with reciprocity, but rather simply values their friends as individuals. One might be tempted to conclude that the goodwill characteristic of friendship should not be made contingent upon reciprocation. But there are important reasons to hold onto reciprocity as a matter of concern to friends. The apparent conflict between goodwill toward others and valuing of reciprocity is only apparent,

I will argue.

The core intuitions observed so far seem to be that:

- Friendship is intrinsically valuable
- Friendship requires caring for and valuing another, for the other's own sake and not merely for what they can do for you
- Friendship requires reciprocity

A “tit-for-tat” approach to one's friendships seems self-defeating. But friendship without reciprocity seems no friendship at all. If reciprocity is crucial to friendship, and friendship is an intrinsically valuable and important feature of a good life, then we seem justified in concerning ourselves with reciprocity. But the fact that people who concern themselves with reciprocity seem to be bad friends speaks against this. The last two intuitions then seem to be in tension with each other. I aim to show that despite the apparent tension, all of these intuitions can be respected with the right account of reciprocity.

2. Merging Versus Separate Concerns

Perhaps it would be plausible to think that in friendship, one's interests and one's friend's interests seem to merge, in important ways, and thus avoid making reciprocity an explicit concern of friends. Jean Hampton, who raises powerful worries about the sort of exploitation possible given unreciprocated love (to be discussed in greater detail in section 4c), argues that for a loving relationship (including deep friendship) to be genuine and authentic, each party must bring an “authentic self” to the “unity” that is the love, and yet not distinguish their good from the good of the other person (Hampton 1993, p. 158). Her primary examples of relationships in which one party fails to bring such an authentic self to a union involve self-sacrificing wives, who set aside their old identities in order to identify primarily with their spouses and children. This, she thinks, is bad and undesirable.

Nonetheless, she maintains that characterizing love as unification is desirable, because in a loving relationship boundaries between the good of one person and another seem to dissolve, even though both goods are present as considerations:

...The love I am talking about is not a feeling (although a feeling may often accompany it), but a point of view, a way of conceiving of oneself in connection to others... Those who experience such love are so unified with those whom their acts are attempting to benefit that what they regard as good for themselves is what will be good for those with whom they are unified. (Hampton 1993, p. 158)

But as described, we are not given an adequate account of how it is possible to conceive of this kind of unification as compatible with a sense of “authentic self” that does not get lost in unifying with another. After all, the following sort of scenario seems at least technically consistent with the account of unification she spells out: Suppose Cady identifies strongly with Regina, so that what Cady regards as good for herself is whatever will be good for Regina. But Regina, as it happens, takes no account of Cady’s own good. Cady might complain to Regina that some of the things Regina wants are bad for Cady. Regina could, it seems, say, “Cady, you identify with me and think that the things that are good for me, are good for you. So even though the things I want would be, in other circumstances, bad for you, because you care about me they are, by your own lights, good for you now, and so you have no cause to complain to me.” Cady’s care for Regina pits Cady against herself, and the more she identifies with Regina, the more weight she must give Regina’s concerns in her own evaluations, until, relative to her own independent concerns, Cady’s own good becomes outweighed by Regina’s even in her own mind. The kind of servility or subservience that Hampton identifies seems to be of genuine concern, her characterization of their loss of identity apt, but her claim that loving relationship involves unification seems, without some supplementation, to invite rather than rule out such servility.

Some think that unification inevitably invites servility, so that to maintain an authentic self one must keep some emotional distance between self and other. In “The

Vulnerability of the Good Life: Relational Goods”, Nussbaum notes that Aristotle explicitly says that slaves and masters cannot be friends because the slave’s identity in relation to the master, that of part of a whole, is not such that he can fulfill the role of an “other self”: a close friend. The problem as Nussbaum sees it is that friendship, on Aristotle’s account, includes

two requirements for *philia* [friendship]. The first is mutuality: *philia* is a relation, not a one-way street; its benefits are inseparable from sharing and the return of benefit and affection. The second is independence: the object of *philia* must be seen as a being with a separate good, not simply as a possession or extension of the *philos* [friend]; and the real *philos* will wish the other well for the sake of that separate good. The connoisseur loves the wine as his own possession, as a part of his good. *Philoï*, by contrast, should be separate and independent; they ought to be, and see one another as, separate centers of choice and action. ... the slave is like ‘something of’ the master, an extension of the master’s own good. He or she is not regarded as a separate seat of choice, whose *eudaimonia* [wellbeing, flourishing] it is the business of the relation to promote. (Nussbaum 1986, 355).

Nussbaum argues that for the master to see the slave as a part of his own good is for him to fail to see the other as an independent and “separate good” toward whom he wishes well; in seeing the slave as an “extension” of himself he is thereby rendered incapable of seeing the friend as a “separate seat of choice” toward whom he can wish well for this person’s own sake. However, to move too quickly from the need to respect friends as separate centers of agency, to the conclusion that friends are completely distinct, runs the risk of leaving one’s theory without the resources to describe the relational aspects of *philia* that Nussbaum identifies. If *philia* requires mutuality, as her quote above implies, and the “sharing and the return of benefit and affection”, then friends had better not be conceived as completely distinct beings with completely distinct interests, or else the importance of sharing and concern for mutual benefit and affection seem threatened.

It seems, at first blush, that pure well-wishing for another can be incompatible with protecting and promoting one’s own wellbeing. This is related to the old fear that egoism interferes with friendship. And yet, as Hampton points out, selfless altruism seems to lead to

servility, and as Nussbaum notes, subsuming another's good as part of one's own seems excessively proprietary. How can personal integrity be compatible with deep and sincere concern for another? If one identifies too strongly with another, one's other concerns may start to seem of relatively little importance by comparison. But the most obvious way to forestall this would be to think that, ideally, one's capacity to identify with another should come with limits, so that the other person's good does not, in the long run, outweigh one's own concerns in one's own estimation of their relative importance. But such a limit makes it difficult to see why a person would ever be justified in sacrificing their own good for a friend, and at least some such sacrifices seem to be exemplary cases of friendship. Limits on the capacity of one person to identify their good with another's, so that giving up something of one's own for the other's sake would seem reasonable, seem to be limits on an important component of friendship. This results in the unpalatable conclusion that concerns about integrity and self-respect are in tension with friendship.

However, reciprocity offers us a way to resolve the tension. When two people are in agreement about their own and each other's importance and value, when each person's care for the other is reciprocated, then wholehearted concern for someone else no longer threatens one's own integrity, partly because among the other person's concerns is one's own well-being and valuing of authentic self. If A cares about B and B cares about A, then in caring about what B cares about, A cares about (among other things) A. This need not be the only route to self-care and self-valuing, but does bring out an important feature of such reciprocal care: built into it is a reason to care for oneself that is part and parcel of caring for another. One's own and one's friend's interests can come to be seen as unified, where friendship is a two-way street, because and not despite the fact that each is a "center of choice"; because each values the other. That is, people can wholeheartedly value another for themselves without risking servility, by valuing others who value oneself in return. This would explain

why friendship rather than love simpliciter is Aristotle's paradigm example of a social relationship necessary for the best life.

3. Why Think Friends Value Friendships, Not Just Their Friends?

Given that I have just argued that a good account of friendship must accommodate the intuitive importance of the separateness of friends, and have claimed that it is an ideal of friendship to value friends for themselves, one might be tempted to think that friendship just consists in or is reducible to a non- (or at least not-necessarily-) romantic kind of love directed at individual friends, and that this strategy might help us avoid the need to talk about friendships as entities over and above component people, as I have advocated in the previous chapter.

Although people sometimes balk at using the term "love" to describe the way people value their friends, others explicitly intend for their theories of love to cover friendship. In "Love as a Moral Emotion", for instance, J. David Velleman says of his target concept, "what I have in mind is the love between close adult friends and relations—including spouses and other life-partners" (351) and in his discussion of the literature makes free use of essays nominally focusing on friendship to analyze common conceptions of love. In "Love as Valuing a Relationship," Niko Kolodny says, "I apply the word 'love' not only to the attitudes that family members and romantic lovers have to each other, but also to the attitudes that friends have to each other" (137). Even if one does not follow Kolodny, however, in thinking that friends' attitudes toward each other just are a kind of love, friends' attitudes may resemble love insofar as they involve valuing others for their own sakes and wishing them well.

This sort of approach might be desirable because one finds the intuition that people should love friends for their own sakes especially powerful. A person might be moved by the

consideration that a reciprocity requirement seems to interfere with this, by making love for another, as friend, contingent on the other's returning one's love. For this reason, I will focus my discussion by examining a common presupposition found in two prominent theories of love that are – at least in part – motivated by such concerns. These theorists start their accounts by focusing on cases in which the object of a person's love does not (or at least, need not) reciprocate such feelings, and I will evaluate the resulting theories' potential to explain the features of friendship identified in Section 1.

Both Harry Frankfurt, in his *Reasons of Love*, and J. David Velleman, in his "Love as a Moral Emotion", express concerns that self-interest, including concern for reciprocity, is not properly considered part of loving an individual. Frankfurt, for example, says that

...the love of persons other than one's children or oneself is rarely... thoroughly disinterested. It is nearly always mixed up with, if not actually grounded in, a hope to be loved in return or to acquire certain other goods that are distinct from the well-being of the beloved – for example, companionship, emotional and material security, sexual gratification, prestige, or the like. It is only when the beloved is the lover's child that love is likely to be as free of such calculated or implicit expectations as it is almost invariably free of them in the case of a person's love of himself." (Frankfurt 83)

He seems to think that valuing reciprocation or relationship, over and above valuing a person, is a separate and distinct concern from love.

We find a similar idea in Velleman. After reviewing a series of other theories about love, he concludes,

The error in all of these theories, I think, is not their choice of an aim for love but their shared assumption that love can be analyzed in terms of an aim. This assumption implies that love is essentially a pro-attitude toward a result, to which the beloved is instrumental or in which he is involved. I venture to suggest that love is essentially an attitude toward the beloved himself but not toward any result at all. (Velleman 354)

Reciprocity and relationships, for Velleman, seem to be aims. A person's love being reciprocated cannot be achieved by the psychological state of an individual. It requires someone else's cooperation. Velleman is concerned that where a result or aim is valued, this seems to make the beloved somehow "instrumental" to a goal rather than intrinsically

valuable, a concern which is not alleviated, in Velleman's view, by noting that the beloved is "involved" in the result, even constitutively. He proposes instead to explain love as "an attitude toward the beloved himself but not toward any result at all." He claims that his theory will show how reciprocity and sharing and caring can all arise out of what he takes to be the essence of love (and so we can derive a theory of friendship from it, presumably) but that such considerations are not necessary in order for something to *be* love. "According to this hypothesis, the various motives that are often identified with love are in fact independent responses that love merely unleashes." (361) Such motives include, he says, "the sympathy, empathy, fascination, and attraction that we feel for another person when our emotional defenses toward him have been disarmed." (361). In order to successfully develop an account of friendship from this starting point, one would need to show that the key aspects of friendship identified in the thought experiments at the start of this paper can likewise be derived from such a theory. In particular, to successfully account for friendship, one must be able to explain why friendship is preferable to unrequited love.

But if the good of friendship consists merely of the good of loving another plus the good of being loved, this does not make sense of the intuition that a life with friends is more desirable than a life with all the other external goods, even including unrequited loves. If Life A can provide one both with opportunities for unrequited love (as both lover and beloved) and with all the external goods one would normally realize through friendship, then it, rather than the life with good friends, should be preferred, or at least considered on a par with, option B, the life with friends. But it isn't. So friendship cannot be explained as just a kind of love, conceived as an attitude toward another person without taking oneself into consideration, because we consider reciprocation to be more valuable than unrequited love.

a. *Why reciprocation might be necessary at the ground level*

Making love exclusively about responding to another can yield implausible results by forcing us to draw implausible distinctions between love and loving relationships. We can see this in Velleman's discussion of Williams' famous thought experiment in which a man is justified in saving his wife before saving a stranger, but seems to have "one thought too many" if he questions whether he has such justification before responding, even when he concludes with an affirmative. "The reasons why he should save her have nothing essentially to do with love," says Velleman, startlingly. Instead, he argues, the reasons "include... the mutual commitments and dependencies of a loving relationship" and that such relationships to have, in principle, no necessary connection to love. "Even a husband who long ago stopped loving his wife—stopped really looking or listening—might still be so strongly attached to her as to leap to her rescue without a second thought." Thus not only reciprocal relationship but also deep emotional attachment are, he thinks, distinct from love: elaborating on this case, Velleman says the man may be "deeply attached to her and stands in horror at the thought of being separated from her by death" even if he does not love her. This attachment, unlike love, claims Velleman, is "nonmoral" and "self-regarding."

In elaborating on his case for separating relationships from love, Velleman says, "What the wife should say to her husband if he hesitates about saving her is not 'What about me?' but 'What about us?'" implying that these are distinct considerations. "That is," he claims, "she should invoke their partnership or shared history *rather than the value placed on her by his love.*" (emphasis added) This, he thinks, is not merely including the wife and the value he places on her in a larger consideration, but actually changing the subject. Presenting these as exclusive options rules out the possibility that the partnership or shared history can be part of valuing her, even in a "loving relationship." (373)

This strikes me as implausible. To think of one's beloved as beloved, and the relationship between oneself and one's beloved, as separate and distinct things, as Velleman seems to, puts too much distance between them. First, it errs in separating attachment from love. It is strange to think they are completely distinct phenomena that have "nothing to do with each other" as he thinks the husband's reasons have "nothing to do with love" if they involve attachment. Second, it errs in taking the wife's thinking "what about us?" to be somehow opposed to thinking "what about me?" She is part of the *us*, and so the *us* considerations should subsume rather than replace the *me* considerations. Finally, it errs in thinking that loving relationships and shared history and partnership have nothing to do with love. Just because love can exist without reciprocation, attachment or a persisting relationship, does not mean love has "nothing to do with them," as Velleman would have it, and it would be difficult to explain what is involved in each of them without appealing to love and the value of one's partner that is involved in them.

Velleman concludes this discussion with the suggestion that "Williams imagines the wife to be wishing for...a blind attachment, to which any critical reflection would be inimical." (He asserts that such attachment is distinct from love in that it can appear without love being involved at all.) "But then" he goes on, "the wish that is disappointed by the Kantian agent in this story is not the wish for a loving husband; it's more like the wish for a trusty companion." (373) But the thought that loyalty, trust and companionship are distinct from love and, furthermore, their reasons unrelated to reasons of love is explanatorily impoverishing. It rules out the natural explanation that trust and companionship are found amongst those who love and value each other; and who value each other intrinsically, not merely instrumentally, and that trust is part of letting one's guard down with another, or companionship most desirable when it involves those we love.

But even if one does not share my concerns about his account of love, approaches like his face another problem accounting for friendship, identified above. To recap, there seems intuitively to be something valuable about friendship (over and above unreciprocated love). A theory that can explain this is at an advantage, all other things being equal.

b. Reciprocity as irreducibly valuable

It is true that there might be a value to being loved, and a value to loving, but neither of these alone or in combination will explain why we think it is deeply important and valuable that in friendship, the people we value should value us back. If that were so, then we should think the same goods could be realized by being valued by one person and valuing another (not the same one). We need an account that makes reciprocated love or care intrinsically valuable, and one straightforward way to do this seems to be to make the reciprocation part of what is intrinsically valued.

Consider the way that we value some shared pursuits. Nancy Sherman offers some compelling examples of activities that seem to be valued simply in virtue of their being shared. She contrasts a happily married couple's raising of a child, as a joint project that is valued in part for its being shared with one's spouse, with a divorced couple raising a child together, where each finds it instrumentally valuable to the (as it happens) joint goal of raising the child to be to some degree respectful and in some ways caring toward the other, but where the fact that this activity *is* shared with the ex-spouse is not itself of value. (Sherman, 1993) She argues that an important part of capturing the sort of sharing involved is that each partner values the other's involvement and contributions to their joint activity, such that together they engage in the project, construct the shared world, pursue a shared goal. Sharing a project with another makes successful sharing fall outside the sphere of one's own influence: the other person must reciprocate the interest and valuing. Velleman should say that this makes the sharing an intermediary "aim" and thus rules out responding directly to

the other person, but I think that this direct response is plausibly part and parcel of the aim, and that without expanding what one may value to include such an aim, important aspects of friendship and other reciprocated loves are left unexplained.

Given that reciprocity is necessary for friendship, the theorist who would say that valuing individuals and valuing reciprocity are distinct concerns must say that in friendship they are also distinct, even though both are necessary components of friendship. In the next section, I argue that drawing such a distinction too sharply, however, has problematic consequences.

4. Against Contractual Accounts of Friendship

In short, if one is to have reciprocity be independent of love in one's account of friendship, we need an account of this reciprocity, and explain why it is valuable in a way that is consistent with intuitions about friendship. Because reciprocity is so intuitively important to friendship, some make reciprocation central by explaining friendship as a matter of implicit agreement between friends, on the order of an implicit contract. While love might be valuable, the fact that it can be unrequited makes it inadequate as an account of friendship without supplementation, and if one takes love to have nothing to do with a concern for reciprocation, the reciprocation necessary for friendship seems to be a separate consideration. In the end, however, I conclude that accounts of friendship which make reciprocation an independent requirement for friendship are unsatisfactory because the reciprocity found in agreements and contracts cannot account for some important features of friendship.

a. A problem of motivation

What sorts of reasons are necessary for a person to find compelling, in order to be a friend? To what extent are friends governed by obligations, and what role do special duties play in friendship?

One school of thought holds that friendship entails a particular set of obligations or special duties, which bind or connect one friend to another. David Annis, for example, notes that “As the friendship develops, an intricate web of reciprocal and mutual dispositions, beliefs, understandings, feelings, etc., develops.” Once such a web is established, it “give[s] rise to legitimate expectations about caring, support, honesty, etc.... When a friend doesn’t live up to those expectations, we feel that there has been a breach of understanding.” (Annis 354)

The contractualist makes this understanding central to friendship, emphasizing it even over participants’ natural dispositions and feelings. Feelings and dispositions can be taken to be important developmentally to friendship, to explaining how and when such an understanding might arise between people. But once such an understanding or agreement is established, contractualists take this understanding to be the central or defining feature of a mature friendship, and the details of establishing and developing such an understanding to be of lesser importance. This is roughly the route Annis takes:

Instead of viewing the formation of a friendship diachronically, over time, we might compress its development into a moment. A reasonable rational reconstruction of the formation of a friendship thus might be two people voluntarily pledging that they will show concern, comfort, sympathy, support, be open, honest and trustworthy, and help one another. Given this model, without pledging themselves, there are no duties of friendship, but no friendship either. Although friends rarely explicitly pledge friendship in this way, such a model helps us to understand the deontological basis of the duties of friendship. (Annis, 354-5)

Such an account, however, assumes a relationship between expectations, duties and friendship that clashes with some powerful intuitions about appropriate kinds of motivation in friendship. In particular, assuming Kant was roughly right in thinking that actions are plausibly subject to duty, while feelings and inclinations cannot be commanded, this sort of account faces the difficult challenge either of explaining how emotions and inclinations can, in fact, be the subject of obligations, or else imply that friendships without affection and which run counter to inclination are not only possible, but perfectly adequate *as friendships*.

The problem is not mitigated by stipulating that friendships require both love and (contractual) reciprocity, because if one cares about a person but only treats that person as a friend would out of duty and against one's inclinations, preferences and concern, this does not seem to be a good and well-functioning friendship. The contractualist could of course say that duty-based relationships are perfectly good friendships but undesirable for practical reasons, but there seems to be a deeper problem with thinking that relationships relying on fulfillment of obligations count as unproblematic instances of friendship, even without taking external pragmatic factors into account.

In Bill Watterson's comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes," a young boy, Calvin, tries to get his friend Hobbes the tiger to sign an agreement codifying the terms of their friendship. Hobbes objects, "People are friends because they want to be, not because they have to be!" "That's what this fixes," Calvin retorts. This fails to persuade Hobbes, who tells Calvin that "if your friendships are contractual, you don't have any." (Watterson 1996, 38) For a more careful presentation of a similar concern, consider some remarks by Michael Stocker about duty and friendship:

Duty seems relevant in our relations with our loved ones and friends, only when our love, friendship, and affection lapse. If a family is "going well," its members "naturally" help each other; that is, their love, affection, and deep friendship are sufficient for them to care for and help one another (to put it a bit coolly). Such "feelings" are at times worn thin. At these times, duty may have to be looked to or called upon (by the agent or by others) to get done at least a modicum of those things which love would normally provide. To some rough extent, the frequency with which a family member acts out of duty, instead of love, toward another in the family is a measure of the lack of love the first has for the other. But this is not to deny that there are duties of love, friendship, and the like. (1976, 465)

Contracts and understandings are leveraged to introduce deontological considerations, but both Stocker and Calvin and Hobbes caution us to be careful about the deployment of duties and obligations when they would have us act against our inclinations, pointing out that the inclinations themselves may be crucial to friendship. As Stocker notes, this need not mean that friends are *never* motivated by a sense of duty, but it does place important constraints on

such a motivation. The intuitive priority of “natural” inclinations to care for each other, over duty and obligation, raises difficulties for a contractual model of friendship: contracts sketch out obligations which compel us to act in one way even when we would rather do something else, given some prior agreement, but friendship seems rooted in loving motivation. A contractual account would have a difficult time accounting for this, because it seems one could not be obliged to feel particular feelings or inclinations; obligations, rather, seem like the sorts of things that apply to our actions, which we can control, rather than emotions, which are not usually considered voluntary, or at least not susceptible to obligation.

But contracts are attractive because they get at the essentially reciprocal nature of friendship. And it is not enough to say that, necessarily, friendship consists of love and affection plus reciprocation, because reciprocation is intimately connected to the love and affection we feel (and seem justified in feeling) for our friends, as friends. There is a natural tendency, for example, to think that what we owe our friends, we owe in light of their standing in a particular relation to us. Many of our obligations to our friends seem contingent, in the long term, on our friends’ reciprocation, on “fulfilling their half of the bargain,” so to speak. I might be obliged to tolerate my friend’s foibles as he works through a rough patch, but if the relationship becomes highly asymmetrical with little or no prospect of change on this front, then in at least some cases I seem to be fully justified in walking away or at least downsizing my own involvement. But this dependence on reciprocity is not limited to obligations, which can be modeled by a contract but which do not have much authority over emotions. While one may care for a former friend, one no longer seems to care for them in the way one cares for and values a friend. A change in attitude, and sometimes quite a drastic one, seems justified when one’s love is not reciprocated. The role of self-interest is both supported in some ways and constrained in others in a contractual account, and both of these features seem, at first blush, appealing and desirable in a theory of friendship.

However, constraints on self-interest seem less appealing, as we have seen, when they seem to imply that a friendship can be perfectly good, as a friendship, when one acts as a friend solely or even primarily out of duty rather than love, as Stocker points out in the passage quoted above and elsewhere (for example, in his “Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories”, where he points out that, if you hear from a friend that the friend is only visiting you in the hospital because she believes it is her duty to do so, you seem justified in thinking something has gone wrong). Ideally, friendship seems to require not just action but emotion, of the sort that, as Kant famously pointed out, cannot be legislated and so is not subject to considerations of duty.

b. Contracts as third wheels

Another concern about a contractual model of friendship, even assuming one could find a way around the problem of appropriate motivation, can be brought out by looking more closely at another contractual account of relationship. It is roughly this: putting a contract at the heart of a personal relationship seems to make the contract an intermediary between friends, in a way that only ensures reciprocity at the cost of direct responsiveness to each other’s interests.

Margaret Gilbert has developed a contractual account of what she calls “fusion” in relationships. She takes this fusion to be an ontological phenomenon, as I take friendship to have an ontological basis, but her ontology differs with respect to the account of identity she uses. Here, I explore how her account can be applied to friendship, to show why her ontology is well-suited both to her contractual approach, and to illustrate why I think such approaches have an inherent weakness.

Like Annis, who holds that friendship “involves shared activities where one of the goals is the mutual contact or companionship”, (349), Gilbert thinks that shared action is a key component of social fusion. “Shared action,” writes Gilbert, involves a “structure that is

constitutive of social groups as such,” (1990a, 2) and she uses a discussion of this characteristic structure to analyze issues relating to the ontological status of such groups, ultimately defending the claim that social groups are ontologically significant. If someone who has committed to the shared activity of walking with a partner behaves in ways that make this shared activity difficult (for example, by pulling ahead or lagging behind), the other party is entitled to rebuke him, says Gilbert. “The existence of this entitlement suggests that [the delinquent party] has, in effect, an *obligation* to notice [where the other person is relative to him] and to act [so as to fulfill the shared goal].” (1990a, 3) These obligations arise, she says, because of the way each party is related to the shared goal; once A has committed to the goal of walking with B, and B has committed to walking with A, A may rebuke B for failing to act so as to bring this about, or for acting in a way that hinders achievement of the shared goal. B is obligated to fulfill this commitment to the shared goal, and so by proxy ends up obligated to A in ways related to this goal.

These obligations, she elaborates, can also be construed as symmetrical rights to “the other’s attention and corrective action.” (1990a, 3) Each person has a right, in virtue of the shared activity, that the other fulfill her portion of the labor required to achieve it. Gilbert claims that these are not moral rights and obligations, but rather rights and obligations distinctive to the activity.

These rights and obligations are established when “each party has made it clear to the other that he is willing to *join forces* with the other in accepting” the goal (1990a, 7). Gilbert says “each of the parties must express willingness to constitute with the other a *plural subject of the goal*” (1990a, 7) At this point, she explains, “the foundation has been laid for each person to pursue the goal *in his or her capacity as the constituent of a plural subject* of that goal.” (1990a, 7)

What distinguishes an individual person, Gilbert holds, is that an individual “can represent herself as ‘I’, and her qualities, including her goals, values, and beliefs, as ‘mine.’” (1990b, 67). Fusions involve a person “represent[ing] herself as *part* of a ‘we’ and may represent herself as *participating* in ‘our opinions, goals, values, and so on.’” (1990b, 68) People in such relationships do not, however, in Gilbert’s account, end up being identical with the fusion. While they *may* play the part of a ‘we’ and participate in joint activities, because (she argues) the fusion is something over and above the parts, people’s goals and values can stand in opposition to those of the fusion.

To illustrate, she gives an example of a married couple with differing ideas about what would be a good curfew for their child: suppose one thinks 8pm is reasonable, while the other favors midnight. The decision arrived at jointly by the couple might be 10pm, which they might present and enforce jointly even though it does not coincide with either’s views individually but rather consists in a mutually agreed-upon compromise. “They have arrived,” says Gilbert, “at what they may properly characterize as ‘our view’—not his, nor hers, but ‘ours’, and in this case, ours only.” This cooperation does not flow from the dispositions of the participants (as they would on a Stocker-esque account of friendship) or from a merging of each’s good with the others (as Hampton proposes), where each is naturally disposed to take on the other’s concerns as such, but rather follows from each committing to participate in a fusion which is distinct from either participant.

In Gilbert’s account, fusion can occur even where people’s interests and concerns and dispositions are very nearly diametrically opposed to each other, and the fusion serves to enforce compliance, to bring each person’s actions in line with the agreed-upon joint goal. The fusion imposes obligations and entitlements to rebuke, such that participating members of the fusion may exact cooperation from each other. This contractual account of fusion, holds Gilbert, means that “those with a joint aim are only obligated thereby to behave in a

caring manner [toward each other] insofar as this is necessary to promote their joint aim.” (1990b, 70) She introduces the example of a couple, Belle and Ben, with the “joint aim” of “keeping Ben happy” where what makes Ben happy is causing pain to Belle. (1990b, 70) “Insofar as Belle has to exist and be capable of suffering pain in order that Ben have his pleasure, Belle’s continued survival and her continuing sensitivity to pain, at least, will be a matter of concern for both. This will tend to produce a minimal degree of caring behavior on Ben’s part...” (1990b, 70) even though presumably such caring is against his natural inclinations, and her suffering is against hers (assuming she is not a masochist).

Both cases, but especially the last, are key to why such an account of contractual fusion, I think, fails as an account of friendship. Where the contract model makes the most sense is where people seem bound to certain goals that shape their actions even against their preferences (Ben prefers to hurt Belle, but as a result of his commitment to a joint goal ends up committed to caring for Belle). But this raises the problem of motivation again. It seems problematic for a theory of friendship to hold that relationships in which each person acts primarily from duty and against inclination, are equally good instances of friendship as those where friends’ interests and inclinations naturally align.

A person might object at this point that the example is flawed: while Ben and Belle might make up a Gilbertean “fusion”, they do not exemplify a friendship. Perhaps friendship, or friendship of the fullest and best sort, consists of a fusion with certain additional conditions: that part of the joint goal, say, is companionship and caring, or direct concern for the other party. This would alleviate the recurrence of the motivation problem.

But setting aside the disturbing nature of Belle and Ben’s relationship, what Gilbert describes ends up sounding like what Aristotle called a utility friendship: what each person is interested in and committed to is not the other person as such, but just the other person

insofar as they are useful to pursuit of a goal, and it is the commitment to the goal rather than the other person that motivates them to behave as friends should.

The nature of contractual fusion remains problematic: even with a better set of obligations, this approach ends up putting the agreement between the friends. The contract serves as an intermediary between them, so that friends care for each other as friends because of their arrangement, rather than because of direct concern for the other person themselves.

The joint commitment, construed as a third and separate entity, is necessary, on Gilbert's view, to leave room for variety and differing perspectives among the participants. She is concerned that fusion of individuals implies obliteration of people's egos, which pushes her to make fusion something other than the individuals, so that "each can maintain a personal belief antithetical to their group belief. Their fusion does entail corresponding constraints on their behavior, of course." (1990b, 70-71) Fusion, Gilbert is careful to say, does not "require the obliteration of the egos in question," (1990b, 70), and this seems an advantage in applying her theory to friendship, as it seems counterintuitive to think that friendship obliterates a person's identity. But a theory of friendship that incorporates many-one identity also avoids this, as discussed in Chapter 1, because the friends are parts of the whole, the friendship, and the parts are distinct from each other even though both are identical with the whole, so their individual interests and concerns are not obliterated here, either, and their differences can in fact contribute to the functioning of the whole. The application of her account to friendship is then left with the intuitive problem of the joint commitment being a separate thing from the good of either or both participants, but without the theoretical advantage she takes this to have.

In the best sort of friendship, it seems natural to think that I do not care about my friend because I am obligated to do so; if anything, obligations to a friend seem to follow from our caring about each other (as even Annis notes in his discussion of the development of

friendships), but our caring about our friends as friends seems to a large extent contingent on their reciprocating our feelings, and this is difficult for the contractualist to explain. If a person ceases to care about a friend, this seems to be the end of the friendship, even if residual duties and obligations remain (recall Sherman's example of the couple who raises a child together as a common project, versus the divorced couple who cooperate with each other in order to raise a child). It looks like a good account of friendships should make friends' overlapping interests and concern for each other take priority, rather than their obligations to do so, but contract-based accounts must run the other way.

c. Contracts as counterfactual tests

We need a theory of friendship in which friends care directly for each other, but are nonetheless sensitive to counterfactual considerations that could lead one to give up the friendship if it failed to be reciprocal. Jean Hampton presents a detailed account of a counterfactual test for such reciprocity in her "Feminist Contractarianism". She argues that literal contractual agreement is not only unnecessary to relations like friendship but is downright undesirable. "A 'pay for service' mentality exists between business partners; but between genuine friends, there is only a concern to serve the other ... " (358) Thus, a concept of a contract between friends would be "misapplied if someone were to try to use it to evaluate directly ... affective bonds" (358). Instead, she argues, imagining friendship as a contract can be useful as a 'counterfactual test' for the fair distribution of benefits and burdens in a loving relationship among equals. She agrees that obligations make a poor grounding for friendship, yet argues that contracts are still useful as a model for friendship.

Hampton argues that good relationships take account of the intrinsic value of each participant in a way captured by the image of a contract. The relationship involves a fair distribution of benefits and burdens among friends when each person can ask themselves, 'would I agree to this arrangement, this distribution of benefits and burdens, were I not bound

to the other by emotional ties?' and honestly answer 'yes' to this question. This helps one sort the fair and equitable relationships from the unfair or exploitative ones, but does not tell us what is responsible for this difference, she argues. Such a test “does not tell us the emotions we ought to cultivate if we wish to develop enriching ties to others.” (363)

Rather, the counterfactual test is supposed to help a person identify and avoid 'exploitative' relationships, which she defines as ones where one party treats the other as intrinsically valuable, with interests worthy of being promoted simply as such, while the other considers the other party merely instrumentally valuable, whose interests are relevant solely in virtue of their ability to further one's own goals and interests.

This is one way of getting more precise about what one is committed to and values in a reciprocal and equitable friendship: not some particular distribution of benefits and burdens as such (which could be realized by other means than the current relationship), but the expectation that another's interests importantly resemble and overlap with one's own, which will both ensure (as much as possible) an equitable and mutually acceptable arrangement of benefits and burdens, and rule out exploitation as Hampton has defined it: one person using the other's emotional attachments for instrumental reasons without taking the person to be intrinsically valuable.

Hampton argues that the appeal of the image of a contract is its ability to emphasize two points: first, that selflessness is a poor way to think of healthy relationships between able adults. People ought to consider themselves intrinsically valuable in the choices they make about how to live their lives, including choices about which relationships to maintain. Second, while not sufficient for a healthy personal relationship on its own, benefits friends accrue and burdens they bear as a result of the relationships they enter into and sustain will be fairly distributed when both people value both themselves and each other intrinsically, as

equal partners in the arrangement, each of whose needs should be met and interests addressed.

This brings us back to questions about the role of obligation in friendship. In Annis's account and in an application of Gilbert's theory to friendship, obligation and entitlement to rebuke are found at the heart of friendship, as necessary constitutive elements of such personal relationships. If the counterfactual test is supposed to probe whether the other party has the correct attitude toward oneself, then this might seem to suggest that one has a right to such an attitude, is entitled to such an attitude, or that the other owes one such consideration. (Perhaps because one bears that attitude toward them.) A contractual picture makes friendship conditional on the other person reciprocating one's feelings and values, certainly, but it is not so clear that models of entitlement or rights or obligations are the right way to go. Both Kant's skepticism about the possibility that emotions are subject to duties, and the concerns raised by Stocker, that relationships where people act from a sense of duty or obligation seem deficient when compared to relationships in which people act out of direct concern for each other, speak against such an approach. Rather than think one is entitled to reciprocation in a friendship, it seems more appropriate simply to say that such reciprocation is a necessary constitutive part of friendship, and that where the other party values oneself merely as instrumental to their own ends, there simply is no friendship.

This might (but does not necessarily) mean that one ought not then continue to value the other person as a result of the friendship that has transpired. I leave open the possibility that one might remain in a caretaking role, as for example when one's close friend or spouse suffers some sort of brain damage and is thus incapable of reciprocating care, although I should note, in passing, that in considering such cases it seems to make an intuitive difference whether one ought to care for someone *incapable* of reciprocating (as in with a victim of brain damage), and whether one ought to care for someone who is capable of reciprocating

the care, but in fact does not do so. Intuitively, it seems that the first kind of case is more plausible than the second. Although this complicates the picture, the basic point remains: obligation and duty may have a role to play in friendship, but they should not be the primary normative or motivational forces. Instead, we ought to think loving, caring dispositions are necessary and constitutive features of friendship.

If this is so, then Hampton's proposed test picks out reciprocated intrinsic valuing, which is necessary for friendship. When people value each other intrinsically, the other's interests count for each in their choices, deliberations, and so forth, because each person's interests are valued both by themselves and the other party. This tends to produce a fair distribution of benefits and burdens, because both parties value both people's interests.

What this seems to mean is that one can securely let down one's guard and value another intrinsically when this valuing is reciprocated, because in such cases can one be fairly confident that this will not compromise one's own interests and well-being. Reciprocity is necessary for friendship, but to be compatible with intrinsically valuing another without compromising oneself, one must avoid the extremes of the selflessness that Frankfurt's and Velleman's accounts of love both presuppose, and the distance between friends posited by Annis's and Gilbert's contractual models, in different ways, which make obligation and affective ties separate concerns. Hampton's work shows that, while contractual accounts cannot do all the work, Frankfurt's and Velleman's theories, unmitigated, license exploitation, which is intuitively contrary to friendship. And while they can sidestep the possibility of exploitation by saying that reciprocity is necessary for friendship, if reciprocity is to be truly independent of love, as they take it to be, then they invite many of the counter-intuitive results of the various contractual accounts surveyed here, because reciprocity that is distinct from love is not able to satisfactorily account for the interplay between love and reciprocity in friendship.

5. A New Theory of the Role of Reciprocity

Rather than give a reductive account of friendship in terms of love, or use a contractual theory to capture the intuitive importance of reciprocity to friendship, I propose we start with the intuitions surveyed in Section 1, and take each of them to be literally correct. To recap:

- Friendship is intrinsically valuable
- Friendship requires caring for and valuing another, for the other's own sake and not merely for what they can do for you
- Friendship requires reciprocity

Start with the first intuition, that friendship is intrinsically valuable. Suppose it is true, as I argued in Chapter 1, that friendships are composite objects with friends as parts, and that friends' coordination of interests and values and mutual responsiveness to each other is essential to their composing such a whole, as is the case with many other component parts of composite objects. The parts that compose a car only seem to do so when they are properly coordinated and mutually responsive to each other. Without such coordination and responsiveness, one seems to have just a heap of disparate and unconnected parts: coordination and responsiveness help distinguish the mechanic's collection of automobile parts from the completed car. In that case, friendship requires reciprocity as an essential component of its existence: without reciprocity, there would be no composite object, only distinct human beings.

The remaining intuition, that friendship requires caring for and valuing others, for themselves and not merely for what they can do for you, also follows from this model of friendship, although less obviously. Friendships are valuable intrinsically, not instrumentally, by hypothesis, and the parts of the friendship *are* the friendship, given many-one identity. Friends are not valued instrumentally, as means to an independent end, but as irreplaceable parts of an intrinsically valuable entity (this claim will also be elaborated upon in Chapter 4).

At this point, one might object that this solution does not seem like it *really* captures valuing friends for themselves, because it does not make it the case that we value friends for themselves *alone*, without also taking ourselves into account (because in valuing the friendship we also value ourselves as other component parts). But as Hampton emphasizes, the intuition that we should value people regardless of how they treat us, manipulate us, and exploit us seems deeply flawed, and based in a naïve conception of selflessness that seems incompatible with a mature moral theory.

We should reject the idea that valuing friends should mean valuing them regardless of how they treat us. However, this does not mean that we cannot value other people for themselves. We can value others without inviting ourselves to be exploited when they value us in return. Thus, the thought experiments with which this chapter opened, which suggested that friendship, as distinct from love simpliciter (which seems to be able to be unrequited), is a unique and irreplaceable contributor to a good life lived well. If loving others is good, but has the potential to make us vulnerable to exploitation of the sort Hampton describes, then friendship (which meets the counterfactual test she proposes) precludes (or at least mostly precludes) the risk. Friendship is thus especially valuable because it allows us to enjoy love without putting ourselves aside.

Friendships, then, conceived as entities which encompass both ourselves and others we care about, can accommodate and explain the intuitions surveyed without the theoretical costs incurred by the other approaches. Note that this is not to say that reciprocity is *always* valuable: just because someone reciprocates your care does not mean that the friendship is good, or worth preserving. Chapters 3 and 4 explore various sorts of reasons that particular friendships may not be worth pursuing, even though friendship *is* a good. Rather, it says that reciprocity is valuable in virtue of being an essential component of friendship.

6. Conclusion

I started by noting that, given the choice, most of us would prefer a life with friends over a life without, even when the life without friends includes more external goods. Most of us would also prefer a life with friends over a life with only unrequited love. Given the three intuitions spelled out in Section 1, I showed the results of various theories of friendship in relation to these observations and intuitions.

Starting with a theory that makes friendships require valuing others strictly for themselves, without concern for reciprocity, leaves us without the resources to explain why friendship is preferred over unrequited love, or else posits an implausible divide between love and reciprocity.

Starting with a theory that makes reciprocity valuable but also distinct from love (as some contractualist accounts do) raises a different set of problems. Reciprocity, envisioned as a contractual affair, conflicts with the intuition that friends ought to be valued for themselves, and furthermore runs counter to the thought that friends ought to respond to each other's concerns naturally, as a matter of dispositions and emotions, rather than being compelled by duty to do so, all things being equal.

However, if we start with the idea that friendships are intrinsically valuable to friends, and flesh out this account with the theory that friendships are entities with friends as parts, whose coordinated and shared activities and values partly comprise their composing into a whole, reciprocity follows as a natural consequence of such coordination, and friends are valued as parts of the valued whole, not mere means to an end, given the conception of part/whole identity deployed here.

Without making it the case that concerns about reciprocity always obligate one to return another's care, nor licensing exploitation of one's emotional attachments by another for their own gain, an analysis of friendships as entities with friends as parts explains both

why we think it is important that friends value each other, and why (at least, ideal) friendship seems less likely than other loves to threaten self-respect and integrity.

Chapter 3:

Why Bad People Can't Be Good Friends

1. Introduction

Must the best friends necessarily be good people? On the one hand, as Aristotle puts it, “people think that the same people are good and also friends”.¹⁹ But on the other hand, friendship sometimes seems to require that one behave badly. For example, a normally honest person might lie to corroborate a friend’s story. What I will call closeness, which I take to include sensitivity to friends’ subjective values and concerns as well as an inclination to take their subjective interests as reasons for action, is characteristic of friendship. But this seems to require that good friends should be morally flexible, more so than is compatible with a virtuous character. This would imply tension between ideals of friendship and ideals of character. But there is an important connection between virtue and friendship which arises precisely from friends’ closeness, when concern for wellbeing, another important feature of friendship, is also taken into account. This helps mitigate the tension and shows how friendship and virtue are interconnected. The connection in turn provides friendship-based reason to think the best friends must be good people, even though concerns of friendship may occasionally clash with other moral concerns.

Although the importance of character to friendship is sometimes defended by arguing that virtuous people tend to treat each other better, and/or that vicious people are likely to mistreat each other in ways incompatible with friendship (for example, to cheat, steal from, and lie to each other), on its own this seems insufficient for a robust defense of the role of virtue in friendship. Friends may need to treat each other well, but this seems to be compatible with their being otherwise dishonest, cruel, thoughtless, and so forth, to other

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Terence Irwin, trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), 1155a, p. 119.

people. In such cases, then, virtue seems like merely one possible route to a good friendship, and not itself necessary for the friendship to be good. In what follows, I will focus on another line of argument, one which does not rely on empirical questions about whether people who are generally bad to others are capable of making exceptions when it comes to their friends.

Some accounts of friendship, especially those that portray friendship as opposed or at least unconnected to morality,²⁰ assume that friendship is about closeness, openness to each other's perspectives, and friends' coordination of values and activities. On these accounts, friendship is a distinct but non-moral good, whose norms can conflict with those of morality. But this is to sell friendship short. Closeness is partly constitutive of friendship, but only partly, and while closeness on its own may pose a threat to a person's moral motivations, other features of friendship, including concern for friends' wellbeing and desire to promote their good, are also partly constitutive of friendship. These other features on their own, however, are not sufficient for good friendship without closeness, because in the absence of closeness, paternalism in excess of the ideal of friendship would be licensed. Both closeness and concern for wellbeing, then, are necessary for the best friendships, and closeness and concern for wellbeing together generate a connection between the character of friends and the quality of their friendship. Friends may be very close without expressing proper concern for wellbeing, or show concern for wellbeing without being very close, but neither arrangement represents an ideal of friendship. Those who take friendship to be independent of considerations about moral character thus sell friendship short as a good, by portraying it as being primarily about closeness, and miss an important connection between ideals of friendship and ideals of character. Even if one does not take friendship to be a moral good properly speaking (in the way that one might take fairness, for example, to be a moral good),

²⁰ See Dean Cocking and Jeannette Kennett, 'Friendship and Moral Danger', *Journal of Philosophy* 97 (2000), pp. 278-296; Alexander Nehamas, 'The Good of Friendship', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 110 (2010), pp. 267-294; Richard White, 'Friendship and Commitment', *Journal of Value Inquiry* 33 (1999), pp. 79-88, the modern version of friendship sketched by David O'Connor in 'Two Ideals of Friendship', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7 (1990) pp. 109-122.

one should still believe that friendship is closely intertwined with virtuous character; that good friendship requires good (though maybe not perfect) character.

Friendship, I argue, is like an organism: its parts (the friends) must be closely aligned, inter-responsive, and coordinated with respect to some important interests and values. But this closeness, though necessary for friendship, is not sufficient for its wellbeing, which is partly dependent upon the wellbeing of its parts. An unwell part (or vicious friend) necessarily means an unwell organism. Being friends with a vicious person results in an unhealthy friendship, one in which the closeness of friends negatively affects the friends' wellbeing and thus fails to fulfill the ideals of friendship in at least one important way.

2. Virtue and Good Friendship as Necessarily Connected

To begin, I review Aristotle's account of friendship, which entails a connection between virtuous character and friendship (and which most later accounts of friendship draw on for inspiration or opposition). Aristotle argues that there are three kinds of friendship: friendships based on mutual usefulness (which he calls friendships of utility), friendships based on pleasure taken in each other's company (friendships of pleasure) and friendships in which friends value each other as good in themselves, which he calls friendships of virtue. These last, he says, "are likely to be rare, since such [virtuous] people are few."²¹ If virtuous people are relatively rare, then combinations of virtuous people are limited by the number of potential virtuous friends, and will, correspondingly, also be rare. Nonetheless, despite their scarcity, friendships of virtue are the best and fullest form of friendship.²²

Perfect friendships then require fully virtuous participants, who seem vanishingly rare in real life. But John Cooper argues that a more moderate version of the idea is available: virtue friendships are characterized by the goodness of the friendship's being predicated on

²¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156b, p. 123.

²² *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156b, 1157a; p. 123.

the (moral) goodness of its participants. Middling good people have middling good friendships, mediocre people have mediocre friendships, and very good people have very good friendships. In the limit case, morally perfect people will have perfect friendships.²³ So the theory may be read as a description of an ideal of friendship, which people can more or less closely approximate depending on the state of their own and their friends' characters. One need not read this as implying a strict correlation between the goodness of friends' characters and the goodness of their friendship. Some virtues and vices may have a more direct bearing or a more significant impact on a friendship than others. But the Aristotelian can and should say that thoroughly bad people cannot be good friends, while people with better characters will tend to have better friendships, all things being equal.

It is a basic assumption of most eudaimonist theories of ethics, including Aristotle's, that character matters to one's wellbeing: virtue is important for the best life, and vicious people do not live the best lives. If one cannot show that an apparent virtue is related to the good life of the individual who possesses it, this is generally taken to cast doubt on its status as a virtue. Philippa Foot, for example, famously said that "if justice is not a good to the just man, moralists who recommend it as a virtue are perpetrating a fraud."²⁴ This premise then yields at least one plausible connection between good friendship and virtue. Good, virtuous people have the best shot at living well, being equipped to value and promote their own and other people's good, and better people are better at this, all other things being equal. Friendship involves concern for friends' wellbeing, and so it is, then, no accident that good friends are called *virtue* friends in Aristotle's theory, and that the best people make the best friends.

²³ John Cooper, 'Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship', *The Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1977), pp. 619-648.

²⁴ Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 126.

3. Against Highly Moralized Friendship

We might worry, however, that tying friendship too closely to virtue rules out an intuitively important feature of a good friend: your responsiveness to their interests, even when these interests seem to be in conflict with your morals. Cocking and Kennett²⁵ charge that one important feature of friendship is being directly receptive and responsive to friends' concerns in a way that precludes what they characterize as *filtering*: evaluating the friend's concerns in terms of one's own conception of morality, before taking them as reasons for action. While friendship is a valuable human relationship, they conclude, its norms and ideals clash with those of morality: in fact, it necessarily involves moral danger.

They appeal to a bit of dialogue from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to illustrate the point. Elizabeth Bennett tells Mr. Darcy that "A regard for the requester would often make one yield readily to a request, without waiting for arguments to reason one into it."²⁶ Similarly, Michael Stocker argues that in becoming a friend, one becomes the kind of person for whom the friend's concerns are taken directly as reasons for action.²⁷ Though these reasons of friendship may not always override competing considerations, they nonetheless characteristically figure in friends' deliberations and choices. In fact, failure to be open to the other's point of view seems inherently unfriendly. "If I always insist upon my own point of view, or really refuse to listen, then I have not made a serious commitment to the other person in the strong sense that friendship requires," argues Richard White.²⁸ But listening to morally bad reasons seems incompatible with excellent character. Note that the concern I am raising here is not merely one of epistemic modesty (about the importance of being open to other viewpoints, say, or willingness to concede that one might be wrong), but rather that friendship involves a commitment to take a particular other person's reasons as *prima facie*

²⁵ Cocking and Kennett, 'Friendship and Moral Danger'.

²⁶ Jane Austen, qtd. In Cocking and Kennett, 'Friendship and Moral Danger', p. 285.

²⁷ Michael Stocker, 'Values and Purposes: The limits of teleology and the ends of friendship', *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981), pp. 747-765.

²⁸ Richard White, 'Friendship and Commitment', p. 82.

valuable in their own right, in some special and strong sense above and beyond general norms of discourse and interpersonal conduct. But this can be hazardous to one's character. For an ordinary example of this, consider that being a good friend to a person with a particularly sharp wit may involve laughing at his jokes, reinforcing this trait in the friend while also leading one to share, somewhat indirectly, in his cruel humor.

This kind of closeness then seems incompatible with being a fully virtuous individual. Friendship requires relinquishing some control over the shape of one's life, desires, and goals. For contrast, Cocking and Kennett invite us to imagine someone whose responsiveness to you is "subordinate to and filtered through moral considerations."²⁹ Such a person seems to be too cold and inflexible, too much of a goody-two-shoes, to make a very good friend, and it is her goodness that gets in the way of her friendliness. For her to display the appropriate warmth and responsiveness that characterize good friendship, she would have to set aside her moral 'filter' when it comes to the friend's concerns. But that would leave her susceptible to the friend's vices.

If closeness involves taking the other's perspective and subjective interests as *prima facie* valuable, even where one would ordinarily be left cold by these considerations, one's own values and judgments about what is right may change over time, and such change may not be an improvement: as Alexander Nehamas puts it, rather starkly, "I may never realize that as a result of our relationship my judgment was gradually debased and that I may find myself happy to have become someone I would have hated to be had I not submitted to you."³⁰

To avoid this fate, one may choose morally good people as friends, so as to limit the likely number of practical conflicts between morality and friendship. But that only shows why good people ought not to choose bad people as friends, not why bad people make bad

²⁹ Cocking and Kennett, 'Friendship and Moral Danger', p.295.

³⁰ Nehamas, 'Good of Friendship', p. 280.

friends, at least to people who have no special commitment to morality and/or who share the same vices. It also shows that morally, one ought to choose good people as friends, but not why bad people make bad friends as such. To reach this stronger conclusion, we would need to see why the best possible friendships are necessarily between virtuous individuals, as Aristotle claims. But this claim seems implausible without further defense.

Virtue, for the Aristotelian eudaimonist, is an excellence of the best possible human life, and so desiring virtue for someone means desiring what is best for them. To defend the idea that norms of friendship entail that good people and good friends are the same people, one must persuasively show why virtue is a necessary component of good friendships rather than accept that a perfectly good friendship can morally corrupt a person, reinforce one's own vices through shared celebration of flaws, or simply be unrelated to the moral character of friends. Closeness alone seems to offer no such reason.

4. Why Mutual Concern for Wellbeing Is Inadequate for Friendship

Closeness alone, as I have indicated, seems insufficient for a good friendship. Friendship includes not merely responsiveness to a friend's subjective interests, but also concern about friends' wellbeing. It is by no means guaranteed that responsiveness to a friend's subjective concerns will coincide with concern for the friend, especially if the friend's subjective values fail to adequately track what is good for them. As Diane Jeske puts it,

... if Henry is not good, it seems that I cannot promote his ends as 'independent goods' – his ends simply are not goods at all. This sort of objection, however, confuses concern for a friend with concern for his subjective ends. I can care about Henry, be concerned to promote his well-being, and yet recognize that he has chosen to pursue harmful or trivial ends. My concern for him will lead me to try to help him to revise his ends – my concern for him is a concern that he pursue worthwhile ends, or, in other words, that his subjective ends correspond to his objective ends. Concern for a person need not involve valuing the ends she has chosen for herself; parental

concern for children and especially for teen-agers is a good example of concern for a person coming apart from concern for her chosen ends.³¹

Jeske ultimately concludes that concern for a person's objective ends may not always keep friendship consistent with morality. But others take the spirit of her concern to motivate an account of friendship that traces a necessary connection between virtue and concern for wellbeing characteristic of friends. In this vein David O. Brink argues concern for a person provides a natural account of the relationship between friendship and virtue.³² Just as people concerned about their own wellbeing will have reason to become virtuous, on a eudaimonist account, they are concerned for each other's wellbeing and so seek to promote virtue in their friends. In his account, mutual concern yields a natural connection between friendship and virtue, but it does so only at a cost that I think is too high.

Brink argues that it would be a mistake to think that friendship of virtue requires one to love people just for the virtue they (already) possess, because this would seem to make friends valuable just as *bearers* of virtue: if that were true, then what one really loved would not be the friend, but the virtue that friend exemplifies, a concern he gets from Gregory Vlastos.³³ Instead, Brink argues, what is most central to virtue friendship is that virtue friends care about each other. Given that they care for friends as they care for themselves, they want what is best for them. When we care about friends, argues Brink, we desire virtue for them, because virtue is importantly related to a person's wellbeing. Thus, while we need not have friends who are *presently* as virtuous as possible, argues Brink, "we can understand Aristotle's claim that interpersonal virtue-friendship reflects the comparative worth of friends as the claim that friends who care about each other for the other's own sake will prize and

³¹ See Diane Jeske, 'Friendship, Virtue, and Impartiality', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57 (1997), pp. 51-72, at pp. 65-66.

³² See David O. Brink, 'Eudaimonism, Love and Friendship, and Political Community', *Social Philosophy & Policy* 16 (1999), pp. 252-289.

³³ See Gregory Vlastos, 'The Individual as Object of Love in Plato', in his *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 3-42.

seek to promote the other's virtue."³⁴ He concludes that virtue friends, the best kind of friends, are characterized by virtuous manner of caring, rather than the sorts of people who enjoy such relationships.

But this seems unsatisfactory without taking into account the closeness discussed in the previous section. As Cocking and Kennett argue, in ordinary cases, it seems inaccurate to describe friendship exclusively in terms of concern for the friend's welfare.

[T]he nature of the interest I have in her as my friend, and the reasons I have to act as her friend which I do not share with others, such as, for example, my colleague, is more naturally explained by my special receptivity to her direction than by any distinctively moral concern for her welfare.³⁵

Brink's account, then, seems lacking because it avoids any "special receptivity to direction" that might come apart from concern for the friend's moral character.

On Brink's account, it seems to be entirely possible that a good friend may, for instance, report a friend's tardiness to the boss, if doing so will be conducive to the development of the friend's character. For example, facing up to the consequences of his actions may give the friend a chance to reflect and repent, to reconsider life choices, and thereby become a better person. This sounds counterintuitive as an account of a friendly action, however. Brink would either have to argue that it is *never* in a person's interest to be forced to own up to the consequences of his actions, or else that turning a friend in to an authority figure is in fact a friendly action, counterintuitive as it sounds.

But it is troubling to suppose that because a person knows what will be good for his friend, their friendship entitles him to act against that person's wishes, for her own good. Such paternalism, while eminently appropriate in, for example, relationships between parent and child, or even (in limited circumstances) between teacher and student or therapist and client, seems to be incompatible with good friendship in a great many cases. There may be

³⁴ Brink, 'Eudaimonism, Love and Friendship', p. 273.

³⁵ Cocking and Kennett, 'Friendship and Moral Danger', p. 287.

times when friendship allows or even calls for *some* paternalism, but there are important limits. It will be problematic if promoting a friend's virtue seems to require or allow for more paternalism than is plausibly characteristic of good friendship. A good theory of friendship will allow one to distinguish, then, between friendly (meaning: compatible with being a good friend) and unfriendly paternalism.

It seems important to respect and respond to a friend's subjective interests. In some cases, as a friend, you ought to support her even though you disagree. A good friend may date or marry a person you find unappealing, and yet friendship may require you to muster up some congeniality toward the partner, or at least to keep quiet about your distaste. Or, a friend might decide to pursue a career that you disapprove of, but your concern for your friend might compel you to support her, nonetheless. Friends may disagree, sometimes quite deeply, about politics, religion, and social issues, and yet, out of respect for their friends' perspectives, tone down or avoid voicing their objections in their friends' presence, or where their friends might be affected. (There are limits, of course, to how much one might be expected to tolerate, but some tolerance is, it would seem, desirable.)

Some tensions between sensitivity to a friend's subjective interests and what you take to be her wellbeing will turn out to be illusory, and in some cases paternalism will be justified even between friends: if what your friend is pursuing is dangerous, as a friend you may be obliged to say that you think this is a bad idea, present her with reasons to reconsider her plans, or even, in extreme cases, actively oppose her (suppose I hide her car keys when she's been drinking). This might seem sufficient to justify Brink's version of virtue friendship, and Jeske's example of parents and teenage children trades on the intuition that setting aside a loved one's subjective interests is sometimes justified by concern for their objective wellbeing.

However, some important constraints must be placed on such concerns to prevent counterintuitive conclusions about the role of paternalism in friendship. After all, relationships between parents and teenage children are not paradigm cases of good friendship. Something like Brink's approach runs the risk of widespread paternalism, because when one acts purely out of concern for the friend's objective wellbeing, the friend is not consulted, nor is their perspective factored in. Thus, it seems lacking as a description of good friendship if it cannot plausibly explain how friendship may at least occasionally involve setting aside one's values (moral or otherwise) to support a friend, nor why closeness seems to require taking friends' reasons to be at least *prima facie* reasons for oneself. We could stipulate that what we are sensitive to is the friend's good as the friend himself conceives it. However, once we do this, we seem to be back at the problem Cocking and Kennett pointed out. Taking a friend's concerns as directly important to oneself, without an intermediary moral filter, leaves one susceptible to acting immorally or at least less morally than one might otherwise be inclined to do.

5. Valuing Friends vs. Valuing Virtue

If a theory lacks the ability to distinguish between promoting a friend's wellbeing, and promoting a friend's subjective interests (or at least respecting and supporting them), either too much paternalism seems to be endorsed, or friendship seems to be merely a matter of closeness. We need a finer-grained approach in order to accommodate both the intuitive point that friends are responsive to each others' interests, and the thought that friends are concerned for each other's objective wellbeing.

There are additional reasons to think friendship cannot and should not be contingent on a friend's virtue, presented in Vlastos' objection to Aristotelian virtue friendship, which was part of Brink's motivation for developing his own version of virtue friendship. Vlastos

argues that in Aristotle's account, virtue friends are valued as bearers of virtue and are thus not themselves intrinsically valued, and this sounds quite unfriendly.³⁶ We can respond to Vlastos' challenge, however, by carving out a new role for virtue that makes the best friends (evaluated by the standards of friendship) neither (mere) bearers of virtue, nor recipients of paternalistic beneficence, nor yet major sources of moral danger, as the accounts surveyed so far seem to do. Furthermore, such an account can draw on reasons and concerns internal to friendship to explain the importance of character.

It seems intuitive that in valuing a friend, one values the person, not merely their virtue. And it seems natural to think that in valuing a friend as a person, one should take a friend's subjective values and concerns to be important and valuable; this explains the closeness emphasized by Nehamas, White, O'Connor, and Cocking and Kennett. This does not, however, rule out virtue as a concern for friends, because in valuing the person one does not (as Jeske points out) *merely* value that person's subjective perspective on the world; one also wants the friend to do well, and have a good life. And recall, for the eudaimonist, that the virtues are associated with the best life.

Grant that a friend's perspective can differ from one's own. Where subjective values are shared, clashes between friends' values and interests are minimized, and closeness is achieved. While we can imagine friends who 'agree to disagree' about, for example, religious matters or social issues, this seems most successful when they agree about other central matters of value: integrity, honesty, and so forth. As Laurence Thomas notes, friendship is a "minimally structured" relationship, but "minimally structured interaction will be harmonious only if the parties involved are sufficiently attuned to the way in which each other views and

³⁶ Vlastos, 'The Individual as Object of Love'.

interacts with the world.... Successful minimally structured interaction requires a shared conception of the good.”³⁷

The friend whose idea of caretaking is to leave a person alone will make a poor friend for the person who expects and offers more involvement in times of stress and hardship (and vice versa: the person who wants time alone to process things may feel smothered by attention from a friend who can't see and respect this). This, then, gives a reason internal to friendship to think the best friendships are those between friends who share at least some important values. Shared values promote closeness, which is central to friendship.

Values, however, influence how a person lives her life, and we want our friends to have good lives. So at this point, a eudaimonist should ask which values a person ought to have. Given that friends care about each other's good *and* are sensitive to each other's conception of the good, the best friendships to be in will be those in which the friends are both in agreement about what is good, and correct about what is good. Such friends will tend to promote each other's actual wellbeing, and not inadvertently encourage friends to pursue harmful or self-destructive goals.

For friends who are close but not virtuous, however, prospects are less sanguine. A gambler, for example, may promote his own pleasure at the expense of his bank account, and friends gambling together may jointly promote their pleasure at the expense of their finances. Even where direct sensitivity fails to adversely affect another's character, friends with vices fail to consistently promote their own interests, and thereby harm the interests of those who care about them, because in harming themselves they harm something of value to their friends. It seems incorrect to call people like the gambling partners above *good* friends, though they are directly sensitive to each others' interests, because their shared conception of

³⁷ Laurence Thomas, 'Friendship', *Synthese* 72 (1987), pp. 217-236, at p. 220.

the good ends up being bad for them, and so they inadvertently help each other to hurt themselves.

Although this point might seem tendentious, it is consistent with the majority of popular eudaimonist theories of virtue. Consider the possible ways that virtues can contribute to living a good life, and the ways that vice can prevent this. Some of the most common strategies are as follows. One may hold, as the Stoics did, that virtue is both necessary and sufficient for a good life. Or, following Aristotle, one may think that virtue is necessary but not sufficient for a good life; one cannot live a good life (or at least, not the best possible life) without virtue, but some 'external goods' are also required; contingencies like health, resources and social circumstance. Finally, one might hold that virtues are the most reliable strategy for living a good life, though one might end up with a good life by being lucky or pursuing less reliable or more risky means (or, alternatively, one could take the most reliable approach and fail anyhow). Combinations of these positions are possible (some virtues might be necessary for a good life because they are partly constitutive of it, others could be merely reliable means of achieving an independently specifiable good), but for our purposes it will be enough to take each in turn and see how direct sensitivity to a vicious person ends up exposing a person to harm, or potential for harm, in a way that is incompatible with the best sort of friendship.

Suppose the Stoic approach is correct, and virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness. Then, if one is close to a vicious person, and hence directly sensitive to their subjective concerns, one ends up less virtuous than one would otherwise be, and so less happy. The vicious friend thus makes one less happy, and this seems intuitively unfriendly. Or, suppose the Aristotelian approach is correct: virtue is necessary but not sufficient for happiness. Closeness to the wrong people can thus deprive a person of at least some virtues necessary for a good life, and this also seems unfriendly. Finally, suppose virtue is the most

reliable strategy for living a good life. Vicious friends then encourage one (not deliberately, but simply by presenting one with their subjective concerns and values) to adopt strategies less reliably connected a good life; again, this seems unfriendly, and unfriendly in virtue of failing to promote friends' wellbeing, and in fact making them worse off.

But the story cannot end there, because the cases raised so far presume that having a friend *more* vicious than oneself is damaging, and hence unfriendly. One might wonder about cases where one's friend is only equally vicious. Consider the two gamblers, who in fact bond over and share in a vice together. Why think that this is incompatible with the best friendship, or at least, the best friendship available to them? Here, to respond, it is important to note that friends not only change us, but can reinforce traits in us, as well, by responding to us and by sharing our concerns. This is a good thing if these traits are those one ought to have (the friends who reinforce each other's thoughtfulness or bravery seem to be good for each other), but bad if you would be better off without those traits. Again, a quick survey of the possible connections between virtue and a good life shows that in each of the most popular versions of virtue ethics, one is worse off for having bad traits reinforced by a friend who shares those traits. If virtue is necessary and sufficient for a good life, vicious friends reinforce each other's vices and each makes it less likely that the other will move away from vice and develop the traits that would constitute a good life for them. That seems unfriendly. The same is true even if virtue is necessary but insufficient for happiness: by reinforcing traits that stand between people and the best possible life for them, one seems to harm them. Finally, even if virtues are merely the best possible strategy for living a good life, vices which are reinforced will make it less likely that one will live a good life, not a fate one ought to wish for a friend.

While vicious friends may display the characteristic sensitivity to each other's needs that we find in friendship, there is no reason to think that these cases are especially exemplary

or choiceworthy cases of friendship. In fact, there is reason to think that such friendships are flawed, because such friends cannot reliably or consistently promote each other's good, and in fact such friends tend to harm each other. This clashes with the common sense view that a good friend will not help you hurt yourself. Thus, at least major vices, the sorts of character flaws which are significantly detrimental to one's ability to live a good life, will clash with the requirement that friends show concern for wellbeing.

Finally, one smaller point about the interactions of friendship, virtue, and concern for wellbeing: just so long as a vice is harmful to the person possessing it, the vicious friend ends up harming a portion of her friend's interests by harming herself. So even in the event that friends' closeness is insufficient to influence each other for the worse, the friend of the vicious person ends up worse off simply because the person whose wellbeing they value is incapable of being as well off as they would be if they had better character. Although none of us are perfect, friendships are in general made better by virtue, and worse off by vice. Though some minor flaws and failings may have little impact on the quality of a friendship (someone who is a little vain may still be quite a good friend), major vices will be incompatible with good friendship.

6. Connecting Virtue and Friendship

One need not value a friend as a mere bearer of virtue, but friends should be virtuous to enjoy the best friendship. Friends can be 'partners in crime', but these will not be the best sort of friendships because they will not consist in both friends consistently and wholeheartedly wishing and promoting what is good for each other, because their reasons for action are not consistently good even for themselves. This is not just a good self-interested reason to be selective in one's choice of friends; it is a reason internal to friendship to think character matters.

Direct sensitivity to another's concern does not rule out the possibility that bad people may be interconnected by sharing concerns. But it does give reason, based in concern for wellbeing (both one's own and one's friend) *not* to become close to another unless both parties are virtuous. As Aristotle predicted but Brink conceded, the best friendships will be limited by the number of virtuous people who can participate in them. This does not eliminate moral danger entirely, but it does provide a necessary connection between good friendships and good people; between standards of friendship and standards of character.

We might worry that accounts like Aristotle's overlook moral danger inherent in friendship; friendships are characterized by closeness and sensitivity to each others' needs and concerns, which may compromise one's commitment to living a virtuous life. But as Brink notes, friends are concerned for each other's wellbeing and so (on a eudaimonist account) have reason to promote each other's virtue. But without closeness, which entails sensitivity to a friend's subjective values and concerns, attempts to promote virtue can risk unfriendly paternalism. In friendship, it is important to consider both a friend's actual and perceived good. I conclude that direct sensitivity and objective concern for the friend's wellbeing together provide reason to think that bad people cannot participate in the best friendships. Something like Aristotle's virtue friendship reemerges as the ideal friendship. Though in some cases friendship between even the best people may present some moral danger, the best friendships are nonetheless those between virtuous people. Though friendship poses some moral danger, standards for excellent friendship depend upon the moral character of the friends.³⁸

³⁸ I wish to thank Paul Bloomfield, Donald Baxter, and Michael Lynch, as well as Katherine Fazekas, Casey Johnson, Michael Hughes, Ross Vandegrift, Toby Napoletano, and the rest of the members of the University of Connecticut's summer research group, all of whom provided excellent and insightful discussion and feedback on various versions of this paper. Thanks are also owed to an anonymous referee at this journal for some very helpful comments which much improved the final product.

Chapter 4: Flourishing Friendships

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1. Introduction

Some important intuitions about friendship appear to be in conflict. These conflicts are often handled either by privileging some intuitions over others, or by embracing the conflict as inevitable. It would be desirable to accommodate these intuitions without downplaying some, while showing how they can co-exist harmoniously. Taking the object of characteristically friendship valuing to be the friendship, an entity which encompasses both friends, and can thrive or wither based on the wellbeing of its constituent parts, captures the relevant intuitions while explaining that apparent tensions result from misapplications of the standards relevant to different aspects of the friendship. In what follows, I will show why the major theories of friendship value which take friends (or features of friends) to be the primary object of value are unsatisfactory, either because they fail to accommodate one or more important intuitions, or because they are explanatorily inadequate. I will then show why

taking friendships – which I conceive of as diachronic entities characterized by certain repeated and reciprocal interactions between friends – to be themselves objects of value and which friends desire to flourish, provides a theoretical solution with greater explanatory power than the alternatives and the ability to accommodate our pretheoretic intuitions about friendship.

A few notes, before we begin, about terminology and methodology.

By “friendship value” I mean the value which is intuitively characteristic of friends and friendship (not, for example, identical with monetary value, or hedonic value, though a particular friendship may also involve these sorts of value). While I do not begin with a complete account of this value, by distinguishing between cases intuitively representative of it, and intuitively at odds with it, I will develop a clearer account by exploring theoretical tools for capturing such distinctions as the essay proceeds.

I will distinguish, in what follows, between friends, which I define roughly here as “people in a friendship”, and friendships, diachronic entities that take friends as parts and involve persistent patterns of interaction amongst these parts. Again, I start with a somewhat vague but intuitive picture of such entities, and then get clearer on what they consist in and what they entail by exploring how questions of value are answered by considering them.

Throughout the paper, I will distinguish between what I call “repeatable” and “nonrepeatable” properties. I have in mind something like the distinction between tropes and universals in theories of properties: repeatables may be instantiated at many different times and places throughout the world, while nonrepeatables only appear once. Both appear important to friendship, but seem to play different roles in grounding our reasons for valuing friends.

Because my approach involves the fairly radical claim that friendships are objects with people as parts, I spend some time making this plausible, first by taking a look at the

phenomena to be explained, and then by surveying what seem to be some more straightforward ways to explain them, showing why despite some initial promise, each ends up being unsatisfactory. I then show how my own theory explains intuitions about friendship without the pitfalls of previous approaches, and demonstrate its application in a particularly thorny area.

In section 2, I survey some intuitions about friendship and valuing, and some natural ways to think that they can be broken down into various theoretical categories, some of which seem, at first blush, to be incompatible with each other. In section 3, I review some arguments for prioritizing intuitions about repeatable valuing, and argue that such theoretical approaches face a serious challenge. In section 4, I review arguments for prioritizing the non-repeatable and particular over the repeatable in a good theory of friendship, and conclude that this approach also is unsatisfactory. In section 5, I survey arguments for locating the distinctive valuing characteristic of friendship in terms of flexible versus inflexible valuing, and show why a theory of friendship which explains its special character as a matter of more flexible standards of value is unsatisfactory. In section 6, I explore the ways that adjusting what we take the objects of friendship value to be can more or less successfully incorporate the different intuitions laid out in section 2. In section 7, I show how my preferred theoretical approach – that friendships are objects with friends as parts, whose flourishing depends in part on the wellbeing of the friends – accommodates the intuitions laid out in section 2 without running into the problems encountered by the theoretical approaches in sections 3, 4, and 5. In section 8, I show how my theory can handle the apparently challenging problem of making sense of our intuitions about how and why friendships can be ended. In section 9, I make some concluding remarks about the nature of friendship and the lessons drawn from this theoretical approach.

2. Conflicting Intuitions about Friendly Value

A number of intuitions about friendship value appear to be in conflict. Broadly, it seems important to value friends as unique and nonrepeatable entities, and also to value their repeatable properties, such as character traits like kindness, bravery, and honesty; traits which can not only be displayed by more than one person, but which we hope many people will exemplify. Furthermore, friendship seems to involve both irreducible partiality, and to be best when it is objectively justifiable (and problematic when it is not: someone's being a bad person, or a bad friend, seems a perfectly reasonable reason to end a friendship, and a theory of friendship which says that loyalty or partiality should carry the day in such cases seems to be missing something important about friendship).

Here are some examples of important intuitions about friendship:

Universality of reasons

- Reasons seem important in friendship: we have reason to choose the friends we do, sustain the friendships we do, end the friendships we end. This seems to be explained by postulating a general value of some repeatable properties.
- We don't think many people could be good friends with us.
- Friends must be people we can trust, which seems to involve both that they share a conception of the good with us, and that they be people we think are good.

Particularity

- Friends are non-fungible. Fungible things can be freely substituted for one another, so long as they have the right relevant features. One dollar bill can be freely exchanged for another, without loss of value. But intuitively, friends cannot be freely exchanged or replaced. This seems to be a central and

important feature of friendship, and helps distinguish friends from, for example, co-workers or employees. This supports the apparent importance of nonrepeatable properties in friendship value.

- Friends are valued as unique individuals, not merely for instantiating properties others could display. We also value some unique and non-repeatable properties of a friend, and this seems, at first blush, intimately related to valuing that particular person as a friend. Quirks, in-jokes and so forth seem to be common objects of this sort of valuing.
- Loss of a friend seems to be a significant and irreplaceable loss, even when it is, on balance, the best available option, and even when you make new friends who end up being better for you. It seems tragic to end a friendship, and when it is the best available option it seems to be best because it minimizes loss, rather than avoiding it. This seems to support the idea that something unique and non-repeatable about the friend is valued.

Partiality

- Friendship has historical dimensions. It takes time to develop, and can persist over long periods of time and through changes in friends' lives. Shared history seems to be characteristically valued by friends. The weight of such history can exert a pull on friends; shared history can be a reason (though not always an overriding one) to continue a friendship or to act out of friendship.
- Friends should be responsive to each other, and their interests and values should adapt to each other over time (the reasons we became friends need not be the reason we remain friends 20 years later).

- It seems that in valuing friends, we should value the complete individual, not merely the quirks and unique particulars. This may pose problems for a theory that prioritizes the value of nonrepeatable properties. (Nussbaum 1997)
- We should think well of our friends. We also *want* to think well of our friends, as we want to think well of ourselves, but this is sometimes unjustified -- sometimes it seems to be irrational or unfair bias.

Conflict?

Not all of these intuitions seem to get along well together. Intuitions about reasons for choosing friends, or the importance of good character to friendship, support the role of repeatable properties in friendship value, while the importance of valuing a particular individual, and the irreplaceability of friends, seem incompatible with this approach. The role of loyalty, and the apparent importance of relational and historical properties to friendship, add further potential for confusion. Loyalty seems important to friendship, but suggests that friends continue to value each other through great changes, including many of the traits and qualities the friends may have initially found attractive about each other. If one's reasons for making friends with someone, or maintaining a friendship, are rooted in their repeatable qualities, then once these repeatable properties are lost, one seems to have no reason to continue the friendship: people who become friends over a shared hobby should stop being friends if their recreational activities change, but good friendships seem capable of surviving radically different life stages and successive interests. However, some changes to people, particularly some (but not all) changes to their character, do seem to give good reason to end a friendship. The friend who becomes more outgoing, or more introspective, whose character changes as they mature or adapt to new life circumstances, might still be one's good friend, while the person who becomes cruel and callous seems a poor candidate for continued friendship, even if remaining otherwise very much like the person one first befriended. A

survey of some theories of friendship will show how these intuitions can be used to motivate several approaches to characterizing friendship value. Before embarking on this, however, a brief overview of the major historical theory on which contemporary accounts draw will be helpful.

Aristotle divides friendships into friendships of utility, pleasure, and virtue. In virtue friendship, the most “complete” form, friends are valued in and of themselves, just as virtue is (on Aristotle’s account) good in itself. Pleasure and utility friends are valued for some property which is pleasant or useful to the valuer. Aristotle thus draws a distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value, and between valuing a property and a person, and connects the intrinsic value characteristic of friendship with valuing a person, instrumental value with valuing a property. However, he thinks virtuous people are the only ones eligible for virtue friendships, thus making repeatable properties apparently central to his theory, a move that may not sit well with the above distinctions. Subsequent theorists (such as Whiting 1991, Badhwar 1991 and 2005, Nussbaum 1997, Levine 1999, and Rorty 1993) have tended to prioritize either intrinsic value of the person, or repeatable value of character traits, but not both at once (or, where both get priority, they are taken to be in tension).

For any account of friendship value, one needs to consider: The relationship between valuing properties and valuing a person; how evaluation of a property is affected by its being possessed by a friend; and the way unique features (such as aspects of personality, details of history, or quirks of appearance or presentation) distinguish a particular person from anyone else. These features, like fingerprints, seem to differentiate us one from another, but may also differentiate the same person at different times. People also possess more universal traits, sometimes the sort which discussions of character tend to pick out as worthy of value (virtues), or less morally loaded traits like taste in music, interest in a particular hobby, and so on. If we are supposed to value a particular person, particulars seem to matter, and it may

be important to assess something differently (an action, a trait, a claim, a belief) in virtue of its being the friend's. But if we are supposed to find it reasonable to value that person, we seem inclined to explain this in virtue of instantiating some more universal traits.

Repeatable and nonrepeatable properties, and objective versus partial valuation, then, will be the focus of the next three sections, with arguments in favor of the primacy of each considered in turn. Each of these approaches, I will argue, seems unsatisfactory.

3. Considerations in Favor of Valuing Repeatable Properties

The thought that we value our friends because of their good qualities seems, on one level, consistent with Aristotle's claim that the best friends are people we find "good in themselves", and explains why we think character is important in choosing friends. Thus, some theories of friendship value prioritize the repeatable over the nonrepeatable as objects of friendship value.

In Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates describes the process of loving a person as gradually learning to abstract away from people's particulars to better appreciate the goodness inherent in them. Though we start out being attracted to individuals, he says that a reasonable person "should realize next that the beauty of any one body hardly differs from that of any other body... it's very foolish of him not to regard the beauty of all bodies as absolutely identical." (210b) Individual people are useful as rungs on a ladder, in his memorable analogy, to help a person appreciate the good properties they instantiate.

This may sound unappealingly cold and unfriendly, but a more sophisticated version of this approach is adopted in Jennifer Whiting's "generic" account of friendship valuing (1991). In "Impersonal Friends", Whiting presents a dilemma about reasons in friendship: either valuing of friends is 'brute' and inexplicable, or else it is based on reasons. If it is based on reasons then it seems they must be somehow generic, repeatable and consistently

applicable. We may also value distinctive features of a particular friend, but for instrumental reasons: features like personal preference or shared taste, as well as random happenstance – that I happened to meet this person first, or lack time to develop another friendship at the moment, trivialities that make this person rather than someone else a presence in one’s life.

She bites the bullet about making friendship impersonal, as she grants in her title. But, she argues, the explanatory advantages of this approach are great, charging that the major competitors are unsatisfactory in other ways. Taking another’s good to literally be part of one’s own good – a standard Aristotelian way of explaining friendship value – is ‘colonizing’ and domineering and thus intuitively unfriendly. (Although as I argue in Chapter 1, a different way of cashing out what it is to be “part of one’s own good” may avoid this objection.) ‘Brute’ care, she argues, stands at a more basic explanatory disadvantage by making our choice of friends mysterious. Rejecting many intuitions associated with friendship, including some to do with particularity and loyalty, is a worthwhile tradeoff, she argues, to gain the explanatory advantages of a generic account of value. (Whiting, 1991)

This approach comes with some serious costs. Besides losing the above intuitions, it seems to yield a counter-intuitive account of how we select friends. Contingencies of accessibility, compatibility and availability make particular friends as individuals especially valued, but these seem unappealingly like pricing and shipping considerations in shopping, where once one has decided what features one is looking for, one then selects based on availability and cost. Finally, by making the core valued features generic and repeatable, this seems to make friends fungible, freely interchangeable with others of their kind so long as they exemplify similarly virtuous character. In this impersonal account of friendship, to save the importance of reasons, we do not value all of a friend’s features, only the good ones (at least not deeply and not with any moral significance). We thus lose the partiality and irreplaceability that seem characteristic of friendship. But where friends are valued for their

virtue, then a more virtuous person would be more valuable, and one is bound to current friends only by pragmatic considerations, things like accessibility of virtuous people or personal preference (if the most virtuous person in town wears a perfume you can't stand, it will be difficult for you to spend time with them). It then seems desirable to 'trade up' in one's friendships whenever possible. This is a high theoretical cost.

One can try to preserve more intuitions about friendship while making space for generic reasons by thinking someone's character sets the stage for friendship without fully determining it. Laurence Thomas argues that this captures our sense that friendship involves choice, and also the idea that a friendship can spring up unexpectedly. Though he thinks one cannot shop for friends, he takes the fact that friendship can surprise us as evidence that friendship is not something people can arbitrarily decide to engage in. Rather, some people's features make them well-suited to be our friends, relative to many other people out there, though more than one person can possess relational properties of "fit" (compatibility with one's own preferences, values and interests) that make a person particularly well-suited to be friends with you. These might include virtuous character traits, like loyalty, honesty, and generosity, but also less morally loaded features, including hobbies, interests, tastes, sense of humor, whether one is a morning person or a night owl, and so on.

Relevant features will enhance one's ability to engage with another in minimally structured interactions, absent the restrictions of clearly defined social roles. In such interactions, each is at the mercy of the other's judgment about what is helpful, enjoyable, harmful, and so forth. Minimally structured interaction characteristic of friendship requires a great deal of mutual trust. This, then, explains the sense of surprise and discovery that accompanies the development of friendships: we discover traits about these people that make them well-suited to be friends with *us*. Though the traits are repeatable, they are valued for relational reasons (the way their character and concerns "fit" with ours) rather than

intrinsically, as on Plato's and Whiting's accounts. These traits are background conditions for friendship, argues Thomas, because "minimally structured interaction will be harmonious only if the parties involved are sufficiently attuned to the way in which each other views and interacts with the world.... Successful minimally structured interaction requires a shared conception of the good." (Thomas 220)

What these theories have in common is the importance they ascribe to repeatable traits. They all emphasize the importance of reasons in explaining how we select friends. Without certain repeatable traits, we would not befriend the people we do, nor choose to end friendships that turn out to lack these traits. Some such approaches hold that we value people only insofar as they instantiate a valuable property. Individuals are then fungible, a counter-intuitive result for a theory of friendship. The strategy pursued by Thomas seems problematic in a different way: friends' character traits are valuable because the right ones allow us to let our guard down, but we do not (yet) have a story about how the friends *themselves* are valuable. Both sorts of approaches fail to explain how a particular friend is valuable. The intuition that some unique person is valuable, by contrast, motivates a different approach to friendship valuing: one that prioritizes non-repeatable features, thus avoiding the theoretical cost of fungibility.

Thomas' account seems to correctly identify certain repeatable features of individuals as necessary but not sufficient conditions for friendship, while Whiting's account seems to run afoul of the fungibility problem in trying to make such character traits not only necessary but also sufficient for friendship (even with the stipulation that contingent factors, including accessibility and shared taste, can further limit the pool of possible friends available to a person). A good theory of friendship, then, will hold that some repeatable features of individuals are necessary but not sufficient for a good friendship, leaving the particularity of

friendship to be explained by other means.

4. Considerations in Favor of Particularism

The idea that a friend is some particular person one finds intrinsically and especially valuable has intuitive pull. It is, furthermore, related to several other intuitions about friends and friendship. The idea that friends aren't fungible would be easily explained if there is something uniquely valuable about each particular friend. It would also explain the intuition that the end of a friendship is a genuine and significant loss, even if you have or can make other friends, and even if you are better off without this person in your life. It can also explain why your values are, and ought to be, shaped by your friends; if there is something both distinctive and valuable about your friend's perspective on the world, this can explain and justify modifying your values to reflect your friendship.

One account of the intrinsic value of particular individuals is developed by Neera Badhwar, whose theory describes what she calls "end friendship". Badhwar argues that end friendship is marked by "necessary irreplaceability" (1991, 484) of the friend. "In an end friendship," she explains, "one loves the friend as an essential part of one's system of ends and not solely, or even primarily, as a means to an independent end... In such love, one loves the friend for the person that she is".

End friends are constitutive goods, not necessarily maximizing goods, and Badhwar reminds us that "a constitutive role is not a maximizing role" in our ends. It seems quite plausible that one could think, of a friend, "I might well have been happier on the whole without this friendship, whose presence is now a unique and irreplaceable constituent of my good." (1991, 492) This constitutive role amongst our ends explains the intuition that the end of a friendship is a significant loss, even when ending a friendship seems the best course of action.

Loving someone intrinsically, for Badhwar, entails loving what is metaphysically distinctive about that individual; “her essential rather than incidental features,” she explains. Essential properties, she says, “include both her character traits... and her unique perspective on herself and others: *her* view of the important and unimportant, *her* interest in herself and others.” These traits are not supposed to be shared with others, because in her theory, friendship is not fungible: “in end friendship the friend cannot be replaced by another, for no other can have her essential features.”

We need a more robust account of essential features, however, if they are to serve such an explanatory role. Because “no other can have her essential features”, that makes virtue and other repeatable character traits insufficient for valuing a friend as a friend. But what properties could play the right role? Badhwar’s claim that we value a person’s “essential features” seems to need supplementation in order to do the theoretical it is supposed to do: picking out a unique individual. Many of what we ordinarily take to be essential features of a person could be shared, and many unique features do not seem essential to the individual: fingerprints, for example.

We need an explanation of how and why we value friends without making such an account rest on that person’s instantiating repeatable features, in order to avoid making friendship fungible. This also needs to be compatible with the fact that people can change over time without ceasing to be valued by their friends. A theory that accounted for changes over time would be able to account for the diachronic nature of friendship, hopefully while also avoiding the pitfalls of theories that license fungibility. Ideally, this explanation would also take account of another point raised by Badhwar: part of valuing a friend as a constitutive part of one’s good is valuing “her unique perspective on herself and others: *her* view of the important and unimportant, *her* interest in herself and others” (1991, 483).

There seems to be something about valuing a particular friend that is in principle unrepeatable. I am sympathetic to Badhwar's approach, but I think it is lacking in some important details, especially what the essential non-repeatable properties of individuals are that could both give one reason to become friends with them, and yet allow a person to end a friendship with good reason. The major lesson we should take from the discussion so far is that friends are nonfungible, and attempts to reduce friendship to valuing of repeatable properties violate this requirement of an adequate theory of friendship valuing.

5. Flexible Versus Inflexible Valuing

One strategy to deal with the tension between repeatable and nonrepeatable properties in friendship value is to argue that something about how we value our friends, rather than what we value about our friends, best explains friendship; that friendship consists (at least partly) not in finding something uniquely valuable about our friends, nor in rationally valuing our friends as bearers of traits we independently find to be of value, but in valuing qualities of our friends differently, somehow, than we value other people's qualities – less consistently and (on a certain reading) rationally, but because these traits are our friend's. Both the particularist and the universalist try to identify some (repeatable or non-repeatable) quality of the friend that we value: and its repeatability or non-repeatability either makes one vulnerable to the fungibility problem (as the universalist must concede) or makes one's reasons for valuing this friend and not someone else be rooted in their unique and irreplaceable features (which may look nothing like the considerations of character, interest and values that we appeal to in explaining why we value our friends: because they are brave, loyal, curious, thoughtful, have good taste in music, sharp sense of humor, and so forth).

Nussbaum's Challenge

Martha Nussbaum argues that there is a tension between valuing something as an instantiation of a (repeatable) universal, and valuing the particular, unique and non-repeatable. While Badhwar thought loving a person's essential properties would ensure their irreplaceability, Nussbaum fears that taking this strategy will invite the problems of a repeatable-property theory, because unlike Badhwar, she thinks irreplaceability can only be ensured by focusing on people's trivial features. Appealing to Aristotle, she says that one's "character and value commitments (as opposed to superficial pleasantness or advantageousness) are what each person is *kath' hautō*, in virtue of himself or herself" (Nussbaum 324), and such character and value commitments are repeatable. Unique and non-repeatable properties are often not properly properties of the person (or at least, not deep or essential properties); they tend to be relational or historical properties, or, at best, accidental properties. By focusing on what is unique to the individual, one risks missing out, charges Nussbaum, on a large part of what makes the individual who he or she most truly is.

But this does not mean that valuing a person's character is sufficient for the sort of value found in deep personal relationships. To think that character traits and commitments are what a friend values seems to imply that one could build a sort of checklist for shopping for a potential friend or lover, and furthermore, that, upon finding someone who fit the criteria, one would be guaranteed satisfaction in relationship. If this were true, "one could in principle advertise for a lover, say, in the *New York Review of Books*", giving a list of the traits one values: "committed to philosophical and ethical values, seeks excellent man with similar aspirations..." If the list were good enough and one could ensure applicants possessed these qualifications, then that would be "sufficient for ... love". After all, if the repeatable properties are what we value then the list "sufficiently define[s] love's object." (326) This result, she thinks, is "bad or absurd". (Nussbaum 326)

She notes that it seems correct to say that the list of traits she values and the traits of the people she loves overlap heavily, but this is not sufficient to guarantee its primacy; after all, she says, “I had made up the list by thinking about [people I love].” (326) In fact, she poses a thought experiment in which a person becomes dear to her who lacks some of the traits on her list but possesses others: “If I loved him I’d change the list”, she concludes. This shows that the issue is open to a kind of Euthyphronic contrast: given that one values someone whose traits did not appear on a previous list, one can then ask, “was I discovering something about myself that had been true all along (a kind of Platonic inner list), or was I really changing the list [to include the beloved’s features]?” (326) She claims that her intuitions and reasons do not or cannot support one possibility over the other.

Nussbaum’s solution consists principally of a list of desiderata, and seems unsatisfying in the face of the tensions she identifies between repeatable and nonrepeatable properties. Perhaps it is intended to be. Love “based upon character,” she argues, will include love of “many relational and nonrepeatable properties” which are considered “just as intrinsic to the love as the repeatable,” because in love people “come to see one another as wholes, not as composites of essence and accident.” (331) Repeatable character traits, however,

take priority, in the following way. We know that to be a good object of love, a person must have these repeatable character traits and not these—for example, be committed to justice and not injustice. We don’t in the same way care which loveable accidents the person has. There have to be some; but insofar as they are morally neutral, it seems not to matter what they are (whether he makes jokes about cheese or some other jokes). (331-2)

This, however, is theoretically unsatisfying because it leaves the particular merely “lovable accidents”. However, she has just proposed that when it comes to people we care about, we ought to see them as wholes and not “composites of essence and accident”. Her solution only reintroduces the distinction between essence and accident, without explaining how this contributes to valuing a person as a whole. Furthermore, this leaves it mysterious how loving a person as a whole can lead to revising one’s own values. Her account seems to raise more

questions than it answers. The repeatable and nonrepeatable remain in tension, but in an unsatisfying way, with the added complication of explaining how, why, and when we (ought to) revise our values in light of established friendships.

Stroud: Epistemic bias as a norm of friendship?

One might be tempted to drop much of the discussion of valuing repeatable properties, at this point: perhaps we simply approach our friends' properties differently, so that the same property gets evaluated differently when possessed by a friend rather than a stranger or mere acquaintance. This would explain both how one's values are revised by friendship, and why a friend seems irreplaceable by others who possess the same qualities. Though not originally intended to satisfy the theoretical problem raised here, a theoretical approach that seems like it could fit the bill is taken by Sara Stroud in her paper "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship" (and a similar approach is explored in Simon Keller's "Friendship and Belief"). She argues that epistemic norms of friendship diverge from epistemic norms. Friends (ought to) judge each other differently than they would judge other people given the same evidence. For example, upon seeing or hearing about someone's truthful but potentially hurtful remark, one's response might normally be to think "what a jerk!" or at least that the speaker was somewhat tactless. The same remark made by a friend, however, would be (appropriately, according to norms of friendship) judged to indicative of forthrightness rather than tactlessness.

Stroud claims that the difference is not merely a matter of evaluating the evidence in light of familiarity with the friend's character (perhaps a remark that prima facie looks like tactlessness is better judged forthrightness, given a friend's history of accurately judging when harsh truths must be spoken). That would make the judgment a matter of handling evidence consistently across contexts, so that an acquaintance who also showed a good sense of appropriate times to share hard truths would also be judged forthright.

Rather, Stroud insists, perhaps somewhat implausibly, that the very same situation *should*, according to the norms of friendship, yield different judgments for friends than non-friends. This account could easily be extended to explain valuing friends, so that a friend is valued intrinsically, even though the same properties would not be judged valuable when possessed by a mere acquaintance.

This, however, leaves it mysterious why we become friends with some people and not others (as noted in the section on universalist approaches, Thomas' observation that friends and potential friends seem to need to share some values and priorities, some conception of the good, seems plausible), and also leaves us with little resource in explaining why people might choose *not* to continue some friendships, where (as I will discuss in Section 8) repeatable character traits and values seem to play an important explanatory role. So a more nuanced strategy for explaining friendship value might try to accommodate both flexibility and principled valuing: a more "objective" evaluation of traits, independent of their relation to one's friend, and a more "subjective" evaluation which is responsive to one's relationship to the bearer of the property in question. Such a strategy is pursued by Amelie O. Rorty.

Rorty: Room for both flexible and inflexible valuing

Rorty claims that there is an inherent tension between valuing just those traits a person happens to exhibit now, and valuing traits and properties because they belong to a person one values. She diagnoses this as a tension between openness to changing one's values in light of attachment to a person, and staying true to one's (current) values.

Willingness to revise one's values helps to secure focus on the friend as he changes over time. This way of valuing is "is directed to the same person, extensionally identified, and the attachment remains at roughly the same level of devotion" but such a valuer is only constant to the person by being flexible enough to value different properties and traits over time. (76) But openness to revision, Rorty worries, leaves the friendship vulnerable in certain

ways. “The internal momentum of [such friends’] interaction... might lead to its dissolution... if they parted, it was because they had truly affected one another” (78-79). Willingness to change values may eventually make friends incompatible with each other. It might also lead to shared psychosis: *folie à deux*.

But a less flexible, more consistent kind of value seems to come with its own costs. Because a person rigidly fixed on valuing certain character traits is not sufficiently sensitive to changes in their friend, friends will drift apart as people change. It may also prevent someone from responding appropriately to a friend’s concerns. Even where neither friend changes much, friendships between two inflexible people are, Rorty thinks, unlikely to be terribly close (81). Responsiveness that allows one to value a person through historical changes by modifying one’s own values is vulnerable to dissolution, but rigidity and lack of responsiveness interferes with historical valuing of just that very person, and prevents intimacy.

Like Stroud, Rorty argues that rigidity and flexibility are the result of different kinds of evaluation. Some evaluations are “affected only by changes in a person’s relation to evidence and other historically relevant factors. They are not (or should not be) affected by changes in one’s character—by whether, for example, one is depressed or elated, angry or affectionate.” (84-85) She characterizes this as a “truth-oriented epistemic attitude”. (85) In more flexible evaluation, by contrast, people’s “thinking, doubting, believing is affected by their psychology, by their character traits, moods, and desires.” (85) This is associated with willingness to change values in light of attachments to people. As friend, one may discount rumors overheard about a friend, or interpret a sharp remark charitably. As truth-seeker, one may be compelled to give the rumor weight, to seek out confirming or disconfirming evidence, or to reevaluate the friend’s character in light of the sharp remark.

She warns us against assuming that the truth-oriented approach is to be preferred, because detachment from one's own psychological concerns can spell trouble, both for friendship and for one's own wellbeing. The more flexible psychological attitude, of course, is not guaranteed to go well, either; as she notes, it can lead to shared psychosis, as well as the usual problems associated with wishful thinking and bias.

The best approach, she argues, is for a person to strike a balance between flexibility and consistency. "Rationality serves the wise person by enabling her to do the right thing at the right time in the right way; it is this that keeps her truth-telling and valid inferences from being inconsequential, inappropriate, blind, stubborn or silly," and the more psychologically sensitive attitude is likewise beneficial just when it contributes to a person's flourishing. (87) Both flexible and rigid attitudes must be appropriately related to flourishing, either together with a friend or alone, though Rorty warns that "what conduces to Louis's developing and thriving need not serve the interactive harmony between him and Ella" (87) so that one may have to choose, at times, whether to act so as to serve the "interactive harmony" between friends, or one's own wellbeing. There is no simple formula for deciding when and where to stick to one's principles, and where to adapt one's values to the other person. "It is only in the details of [a] particular situation that can determine what would be rational, what would be appropriate, what would constitute (whose?) thriving" (88), she concludes.

Inherent in Rorty's account is the idea that there are three entities' wellbeing to consider in a two-person friendship: each friend in the friendship, and the "interactive harmony" between friends. Each friend's concerns with thriving might in principle lead them away from the relationship, and the "interactive harmony" between the friends might be achieved at the expense of either (or both) parties' sanity or wellbeing. About the last point, I am skeptical. As I argued in Chapter 1, I do not think that the friendship is properly thought of as independent of its parts, and I think it puts too much distance between friends to think

that the friendship could be harmoniously interactive when neither participant thrives. Instead, while I agree that friends may be sensitive to each other's concerns without thereby promoting each other's interests, I think a friendship can only be fully harmonious when both friends thrive. This is one point where I diverge from Rorty. More generally, I am not satisfied with an account that leaves tensions between the value of repeatable and nonrepeatable properties (or impartial and partial valuing) in tension, as Rorty's does when she claims that no principle can guide us in choosing whether to stand by a friend and adjust one's own values, or stay firm in one's convictions and end a friendship. Though the suggestion that flourishing may help to arbitrate between competing concerns is promising, I think there is a more explanatorily rich and coherent account is available by developing an account of what is involved in a friendship's thriving.

Against epistemic bias in friendship

Finally, I do not doubt that a favorable bias toward friends' traits, simply in virtue of their being the friend's, accurately describes how many people actually judge their friends. But I question whether doing so is any more normatively desirable than someone judging themselves in an excessively positive light (and as Stroud notes, feeling pulled to view friends in a special light parallels the ways in which people tend to cut themselves slack). If Aristotle is right that friends are other selves, deceiving oneself about one's friend is no more plausible as a norm than deceiving oneself about oneself would be, and if it is important to know thyself, it seems equally important to know thy friends. Her solution, and relevantly similar strategies, thus seems an unsatisfactory way to capture the intuitions that motivate a theory of friendship value which emphasizes particularity.

I think, however, that Stroud is correct to note there is something special about judging friends. If we imagine a spectrum, running from dispassionate but reasoned judgment where like cases are always judged alike (which seems to run the risk of being coldly clinical

and thus incompatible with deep friendship), to irrational and unjust prejudice and bias toward oneself and one's friends, this may yield a middle ground, in which we look for the best in ourselves and our friends, more so than we do in others, but not in order to deceive ourselves; rather, to identify and encourage latent strengths. This would capture the intuitions Stroud notes without some of the theoretical costs.

One account that incorporates these intuitions without such costs is sketched out by Badhwar (2005), who points out that friends can help each other by recognizing and drawing attention to potential that they might overlook in themselves. This could explain Stroud's example of the inappropriately blunt remark by saying that (ideally) one recognizes that one's friend is tactless in making that remark, but at the same time wishes to draw out the friend's potential for forthrightness, which requires fearlessness about speaking the truth (which the friend displays). Because of one's special role in reflecting back to the friend her latent potential, one might be justified in judging friends both veridically and yet differently than we do mere acquaintances. It would be inappropriate and probably paternalistic to focus on an acquaintance's tactlessness as potential for forthrightness, with the intention to help the person improve. But it seems a valuable part of friendship to see potential in a friend even when he falls short, so that one might say, 'you hurt his feelings when you said that, but I think it's important to speak the truth... maybe you should find a more tactful way to make your point next time'.

This sort of account would capture an intuitively appealing account of friendship judging, without advocating the more radical conclusion that truth norms conflict with norms of friendship, as Stroud and Keller propose. However, this then threatens to leave us without resource in explaining how we can value a friend without thereby valuing other people who display properties possessed by the friend (and without prioritizing unique trivialities over central and important features of the friend). Furthermore, as I argued in Chapter 3, close

friendship seems to require a kind of openness to friends' perspectives, values and opinions which can substantially shape our own perspectives and values over time. Something more is needed to adequately account for these features of friendship.

6. Valuing Properties, People, and Friendships

It would be helpful to have an account of valuing over time and through changes that does not explain this value as a violation of epistemic norms, and yet does not make friends fungible. As we have seen, to identify people with their properties seems liable to the shortcomings associated with prioritizing repeatably valued properties, or else to require that we value properties no one else could have even in principle. But, as Nussbaum notes, the properties we identify as those no one else could have are likely to be relatively trivial, the historical and relational properties that brought people together or reflect their shared history or even in-jokes or personal quirks and peculiarities, rather than intuitively central and important features of a person's character. While valuing the person as opposed to any or all of their properties preserves the particularity and nonfungability of friendship, it does so at the cost of metaphysical plausibility: it seems that "there is nothing else, no self-alone, to love apart from properties that a person more or less uniquely instantiates" (254), as Michael Levine puts it (Levine 1999).

Levine, who argues for a property-based account of love, claims that "[m]uch, but not all, of what appears to make the universalizability of love problematic is forestalled as soon as one sees that the properties in virtue of which one person loves another are often (virtually) uniquely exemplified." Although this seems to make him liable to Nussbaum's objection (that such uniquely exemplified properties are likely to be trivial rather than central features of a person, he offers an important observation that helps advance the discussion. He notes that discussions of love and friendship often falter when one restricts one's account to valuing

properties individually, but one may conceivably love, not just a single property, but a complex set of properties, including both character traits (our paradigm of repeatable qualities) and relational and historical properties. Though many component properties in the complex might be in principle repeatable or trivial, their combination cannot be repeated in a world because to reproduce the person's character and value commitments would not be sufficient to duplicate the complex, so long as it also involved different historical and relational properties. Because particular historical and relational properties are partly constitutive of the complex, it cannot be duplicated, at least not in this world.

The fact that relational and historical properties may be duplicated in other worlds should trouble us less, both pragmatically and theoretically. Pragmatically, we may have to choose whether or not to become or continue to be friends with someone based on features repeatable in this world, but not on the basis of features repeatable in other possible worlds. As for the theoretical implications, this may also be less troubling for an account of friendship. Kolodny, proposing a view that is similar in some respects, points out that it may not be a bad thing for a theory to say that one would just as well value another person with whom one had a rich history of reciprocated caring, for example. The problem of fungibility seems most pressing when we restrict ourselves to discussing intrinsic traits of the person, rather than relational properties and shared histories.

A complex of properties, which includes relational properties like "altered by one's friend" and "result of prior relationship with this very friend" avoids the implications of a generic account of love, in which the things we love about our friends are identical to the features of other people who are not our friends, while at the same time making room for central character traits as further parts of the valued complex.

This sort of account seems to fulfill many of the desiderata noted in the previous section: it yields nonfungible valuing, because a complex of properties that includes both

features of character, history, and relations, could not be repeated (or at least, not in this world). Nonfungibility is explained without the need to invoke epistemic bias, because this object of value is unique. Furthermore, this account makes the interplay of relational and historical properties central to irreplaceability, and both relational and historical properties are intuitively important to friendship, as we noted at the outset, so it is a virtue of this theory that it gets these intuitions right.

Because of the diachronic and relational nature of some of the properties that make up the complex, this account gives us both particularity (love for that individual for which no other could be substituted) and a possible role for reciprocation in friendship in securing that particularity, at least so long as the relational properties necessary for a structure of the relevant type include something like “each returns the other’s concern”. But though including relational and historical properties in the valued complex seem to help secure particularity, these are not, intuitively, central features of a person, as Nussbaum notes. So while Levine’s suggestion seems promising, I question whether his account, at this point, is truly an account of what it is to value another person, *simpliciter*, because at least some ways of valuing a person would not be terribly sensitive to details of a person’s history and relationships, although such historical and relational properties are part of Levine’s account of what we value. However, a modification to our theory of what friends value yields a framework consistent with the intuitions with which we started.

I propose that what is valued by friends is a complex that includes both historical and relational properties, and is not limited to merely the friend as individual. Rather, it also includes the diachronic relationship between friends, where each friend’s properties are part of a larger complex that covers the friends’ history and interactions. This extended object of value is necessary to explain some intuitively important features of friendship.

In some respects what I propose here resembles Kolodny's 2003 "Love as Valuing a Relationship". However, my account differs from his on some key points. I aim here to give an account of friendship, while he intends for his account to also cover parents' love for children and other cases of familial love, in which one has substantially less choice about one's object of love, which means he must try to account for some examples that a theory of friendship would find unproblematic and that are in fact troublesome for a good theory of friendship. As Helm (2010) notes, for example, Kolodny has a difficult time giving sufficient grounds for *ending* a loving relationship, besides that other concerns may trump those reasons provided by history and (non-reciprocal) relational properties, while as I argue in Section 8, my account provides a theory of how friendship itself can give reasons to end a relationship. This in part stems from my claim that the relationship is a composite object with friends as parts, so that valuing the complex composite is (also) valuing its parts, while Kolodny holds that love involves *both* valuing the individual and the relationship (which he does not construe as an object), and occasionally takes these to be two separate things (which I explicitly reject – see Chapter 1). Finally, because I take relationships to be not only objects, but living objects capable of flourishing or withering, whose wellbeing is partially dependent upon the wellbeing of its constituent parts (the friends), I have some explanatory resources available (particularly for the role that character plays in friendship – especially as presented in sections 7 and 8) that are not part of Kolodny's account, nor is it clear how they could be incorporated into such a view.

In ordinary English, it is characteristic of friends that they value their friendship. What we value includes persistent patterns of interaction between particular individuals, and these patterns of interaction do not require prior and special intrinsic valuing of the other person as an individual but are themselves part of what is intrinsically valued. Taking the friendship, not just the friend, to be an object of value relates to another intuition about

friendship: it unfolds over and through time, and is not the sort of thing that, even in principle, one could enjoy without some upfront investment. Valuing historical and relational properties of the friendship as part of a complex of properties could explain and incorporate intuitions about the importance of history, reciprocity and relational properties. These are not necessarily important to the individual's identity, but essential to the friendship. This makes an important role for shared history in friendship, as an essential aspect of an object of friendship value.

By claiming that a friend values not merely one particular person, but the complex of properties that encompasses both people interacting over time, we get a way to capture the particularity of friendship valuing without taking it to involve epistemic bias, and also a way to flesh out Badhwar's appeal to "essential properties". The properties we value are essential, but not (merely) to the friend qua (for example) human being. Rather, they are essential properties of the friendship as a diachronic entity that includes both friends.

7. Reconciling (Apparently Contradictory) Intuitions

I have proposed that friendship value is characterized by taking an object of friendship value to include but to not be limited to the friend; rather, it extends to cover the friendship and one's own role in it. Taking this approach allows us to accommodate and explain many important intuitions about friendship, without positing irreconcilable tensions between intuitions or values.

To recap what we have seen so far: insofar as we value friends' repeatable traits (and value them repeatably) we seem to gain rationally consistent reason for valuing friends (as opposed to "brute care") and to value something deep and important about them: their character. But to place too high a priority on these features risks making friendship fungible, an intuitively unfriendly result. It also makes it mysterious why and how we value shared

history, or how we change what we value about our friends over time and through changing lifestyles and evolving character, and why we adjust our ideas about what is valuable in light of our friends' traits and interests. Valuing shared history, relational fit, and particular contexts in which these broadly repeatable traits are instantiated avoids the problems of fungibility and tracking, but this risks endorsing arbitrariness and/or bias. Both strategies thus come with significant theoretical costs.

The intuitive importance of reciprocity and mutual responsiveness suggest a connection between initial fit amongst friends, the seeming importance of historical properties, and sensitivity to another person's values. If one object of value is the friendship, a diachronic entity characterized by such reciprocity and responsiveness, then we are – to some extent – asking the wrong question about friends when we ask, what about that person guarantees that I will (or ought to) value him? This is a problem for parents, perhaps, but not for friends, because reciprocity seems necessary for friendship to take place. People who do not reciprocate one's care are not properly objects of friendship value.

Taking friends to value the friendship, not just the friend, is also consistent with Badhwar's point that friends are constitutive rather than maximizing goods in our lives: if what we value is participating with our friends in a reciprocal complex (a friendship) over time, in which we adjust and attune to each other's values, then we will to that extent be inclined to consider our friends' values and perspectives both intrinsic to them, and valuable to us, as part of this friendship. Yet, this is not simply to value them in virtue of instantiating some more generally valuable characteristic (like courage or forthrightness) but in virtue of their role in our lives, as irreplaceable constituents of something we value. The friends are irreplaceable at least partly in virtue of the identity conditions of friendships, which do not seem to survive the replacement of friends.

Character traits and repeatable properties remain important in several ways, without entailing conflict between repeatable and nonrepeatable properties. The appearance of conflict arises from confusion about when and where each should be a predominant concern, but this is avoided by taking them to play different roles in a valued friendship. One way repeatable properties may be important comes at the stage when we select our friends. Some repeatable traits are necessary for someone to be a desirable part of this complex, partly, as Thomas notes, as necessary preconditions to allow us to trust people without relying on the external constraints and protections of a more structured social role. But this does not mean that every person who meets these conditions is likely to become a friend; some people may strike us as fine and admirable individuals without leading us to desire to enter into a friendship with them.

Once a person has enough of these traits that we are willing to let down our guard, a friendship can commence, provided both people are interested in pursuing it, and given time and reciprocation, each person's judgments may eventually taken on by the other as being of brute value. But this brute value is not as much of an explanatory disadvantage as Whiting thinks. As Nussbaum notes, having the friends one does goes a long way toward explaining why one has the values one has. Rather than think either one's friends or one's own values are privileged *in an established friendship*, either is open to adjustment and pruning, as part of continuing involvement in a friendship. Now, contra Rorty's description of friends' flexibility of values, flexibility need not mean that we set our own values aside as less or unimportant. Rather, friendship is characterized by the fact that both friends' values are both now taken to be considerations for a friend, because friends are both parts of the valued friendship, and because coordinating interests and values is necessary for people to compose a friendship, as argued in Chapter 1. Friends also have reason to compromise and curtail competition between their values in order to have internal as well as external harmony, given

that they value themselves and their friends as parts of the friendship, and that they want the friendship to flourish.

This does not make values merely of instrumental value in ensuring fit, however, as Thomas's account suggests, and the way that people's value commitments relate to friendship assures the continuing importance of friends' character. One's 'vision of the good' matters because, among other things, it directs a person's actions, and when one cares about a person (oneself or another's), one wants for that person what is (in fact) best. Bad values will direct a person at bad, harmful ends. One wants to get one's values right, and to be connected to people whose values are right, because rather than despite the fact that they will affect one's own values.

Being sensitive to each others' values can produce unhappiness (in the form of shared delusion or reinforced vices), as Rorty notes. But when one object of value is the friendship, which encompasses both friends, then coordinating one's values with the friend is seen as part of advancing the interests and promoting the wellbeing of the friendship, and the fact that we desire the flourishing of the friendship helps determine which values it would be best for the friends to have. Because the friends are constitutive parts of the friendship, their individual wellbeing is necessary for the friendship to flourish, just as the constitutive parts of an organism must be healthy in order for an organism to flourish. The friends' wellbeing, then, at least partly constitutes the wellbeing of the friendship, so their concerns are already incorporated as part of one's concern for the friendship. But the value of the friendship comes before the value of virtue in the order of explanation in an established friendship. We want friends to have certain repeatable traits because we care about them and want them to do well, and want them to be part of a flourishing friendship with us; their virtue does not fully explain why we value them. Thus, valuing virtues in this way does not imply fungibility of friends, as it is not the case that any other virtuous person would be equally valued.

On this account, then, if a person sets aside his interests in the interest of the friendship (as when someone falsely says something is ‘no big deal’, to keep the peace), he harms a part of the friendship and thus fails to promote its wellbeing. This is consistent with the thought that self-abnegation is not a feature of a good friendship, and that friends should value both themselves and each other. This does not, however, mean that one can *never* set aside one’s own interests to help a friend; more on this in the following section.

And, although Whiting worries that taking a friend’s good to be part of one’s own good is colonizing, taking *both* friends to be parts of the valued friendship alleviates this concern. Where both are equally important to the friendship, neither’s concerns take automatic priority. In valuing the friendship, neither person’s good should be seen as subsuming the other’s.

A friend’s virtues play an explanatory role in our valuing, but are themselves also explained in terms of other things we value, including the friend’s wellbeing and the flourishing of the friendship. Thus, the connection between valuing a virtue and valuing a friend depends upon the status of the friendship. Initially, a potential friend’s values are checked against a potentially revisable list of one’s own values. One can be delighted to find a person who shares them. (This captures Thomas’ point that such traits can be necessary features of potential friends, without going so far as Whiting by making them sufficient for friendship.) But the replaceability problem drops out once a friendship is established, because friends’ values become open to revision as the friendship unfolds, as friends reciprocally respond to each other’s interests and perspectives. Particularity is thus guaranteed not just by valuing the friend’s own historical properties and unique combinations of properties, but by those historical properties and combinations of traits being properly related with one’s own, so as to constitute a flourishing friendship. Historical and relational properties are thus crucial constituents of a friendship, and some person’s trait’s bearing the right historical and/or

relational features is a prerequisite to friends' (ideally) responding to that trait as a friend would.

Finally, taking a friendship to be a characteristically object of friendship value naturally suggests a role for the intuition that we judge friends differently than non-friends. As a friend, one plays a special role in highlighting potential and helping to direct a friend's character, which may warrant focusing on different aspects of a person's action than would be justified were the person not one's friend. Insofar as one is concerned with both one's own and one's friend's flourishing as parts of the flourishing of the friendship, one has reason to see oneself and one's friend both clearly and positively. To the extent that seeing potential goodness in a friend is pragmatically beneficial for promoting the friend's wellbeing and helping the friend become the best person possible, one ought to see the best in one's friend, and be open to the friend returning the favor. This is not in violation of epistemic norms but the result of additional pragmatic norms that come into play given one's interest in the flourishing of the friendship, which requires both veridical and helpful observation of the parts and the whole.

8. On Ending Friendships

I have characterized the primary tension to be resolved as between intuitions that support the idea that repeatable properties are valued by friends, and intuitions connected to the idea that nonrepeatable properties are so valued. I have defended the idea that a good theory of friendship value will take both sorts of intuitions on board, and show how both can be accommodated. One situation where both sorts of intuitions seem important is when a friendship ends. Intuitively, it seems both that ending a friendship can be a good and reasonable decision, given certain events or character traits or circumstances, and at the same time, that even a reasonable and advisable ending of a friendship seems a genuine and

significant – perhaps even tragic – loss. These intuitions are well explained by considering how values are involved in deciding whether to sustain or dissolve a friendship.

If the friendship is an object of friendship value, friends ought to realize that when a friendship's flourishing is rendered impossible, its concerns, though valuable, are tragically unsatisfiable. That still leaves the wellbeing of each component part (each friend) at issue. Friends can (and should, in such cases) choose to end a friendship for each other's sake, or their own, as a result of valuing themselves and each other. As Socrates notes in the *Symposium*, we ought to value goodness over wholeness. In his graphic example, we are willing to amputate even our own limbs when they become gangrenous.

So, for example, one might choose to sever ties with a friend because one recognizes that one's own or one's friend's problems are 1) unfixable and/or 2) likely to contribute to the other's unhappiness. This is not inconsistent with also valuing the whole, the friendship: it just says it is not the only concern, but this was never the case to begin with. What my theory predicts is that even in a case like this, the end of the friendship will be viewed as a tragic loss.

Loss of even a bad friend is construed as a loss of a constitutive rather than a maximizing good, where the friend is a necessary part of the friendship, itself a constitutive good considered more broadly, as an important feature of a good life. This captures Badhwar's intuition that friends are intrinsically valuable and nonfungible even when they do not maximize goods, such as when on the whole, one is better off without the friend. A theory based exclusively on valuing people as instantiations of valuable properties seems to make the loss of a bad friend without cost, because on such an account a bad friend is without value, because he or she lacks the virtues, or because they can be (or are in fact) replaced by another friend with better character. But this seems too harsh a conclusion to be compatible with friendship value.

Friendships can be ended with good reason, but even where friends are bad, something valuable seems to be lost when the friendship ends. As Aristotle notes, the dissolution of a friendship may reasonably be due to the deteriorating character of a formerly good friend, but this does not make the choice to end a friendship an easy one, as we would expect if friendship were purely about accruing values of which friends happen to be the bearers.

“Should the friendship be dissolved at once [as soon as the friend becomes bad]?” he asks. “Surely not,” he replies. “If someone can be set right, we should try harder to rescue his character than his property, insofar as character is both better and more proper to friendship.” But if the person is “incurably vicious” and cannot be set right, then “the friend who dissolves the friendship seems to be doing nothing absurd.” Rather than take this to be a case where self-interest and the friend’s interest are in competition and one’s own interests trump, this looks like a case where one would be advised to cut one’s losses. All things considered, it would be better to be both good and whole, but given a hard choice, where it is impossible to have both, we salvage what we can from amongst what we value.

9. Conclusion

Some intuitions about friendship seem to be important for a theory to capture, and some appear to be in conflict with each other, as some intuitions support valuing the particularity of just that friend, others support the universality of reasons for valuing a friend, and still others seem to think friendship is primarily about privileging friends in our evaluations, even where concern for truth would have us do otherwise. Some accounts privilege universals and repeatable properties in accounts of friendship, others privilege valuing particulars, and still others epistemic bias, but none of these approach seems satisfactory. In my account of friendship, friends are constitutive components of friendships,

which are important objects of value. I showed how such an account, in which both friends and friendship are objects of value to the friends, allows valuing repeatable and nonrepeatable properties to both play important but different roles in the development, sustenance, and dissolution of friendships, and showed how epistemic bias' apparent importance can be accommodated without putting truth and friendship at odds. This theory thus stands out both for capturing and explaining a number of important intuitions, and for explaining them as different but coherent features of friendship, rather than leaving them in tension.

Strictly universalist accounts of friendship seem to falter when it comes to the fungibility problem. Taking universal traits to be necessary but not sufficient conditions of friendship avoids this, but at the cost of rendering an incomplete account of friendship. Particularist accounts of friendship seem unable to come up with a plausible account of just which particulars are both unique and uniquely valuable; the best candidates for uniqueness do not seem to be central features of people, and so would have us, counter-intuitively, value our friends for trivialities rather than deep and central features of character. Partiality of evaluation in friendship must be plausibly distinguished from unacceptable examples of bias, and the prospects for doing so look dim. Furthermore, cases where bias seems acceptable or even called for seem to be better explained by combining a forthright evaluation of a friend's character with a concern for wellbeing and an understanding of what information ought to be communicated to them so as to enhance, or at least not hinder, their wellbeing.

If friendships are entities with friends as parts, whose wellbeing is partly dependent on the wellbeing of their parts (as an organism's wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of its parts) and their flourishing is a central concern of friends, then each set of intuitions ends up being assigned a role, and their conflict looks like the result of misapplying concerns about one aspect to another aspect of friendship. Partiality is handled as a combination of concern for the friend's wellbeing (as sketched above) and as a characteristic feature of friends'

responsiveness to each other, necessary for the long-term coordination characteristic of friendships (which, by hypothesis, we value and so are justified in coordinating). Particularity is secured by taking friendships to be diachronic entities with historical and relational properties of people as necessary constitutive features: we value historical and relational properties and so think friends are not (and could not be) interchangeable, not by finding some mysterious and irreplaceable essence unique to each friend but in virtue of their role in the friendship. And repeatable traits, such as virtues of character and shared conception of the good, are important preconditions of friendship in allowing potential friends to become coordinated, but also valued for their role in sustaining friendship: we want our friendships to flourish, and where friends are vicious, friendships cannot thrive. If friendships cannot thrive then we are justified in ending them, even when we still care for the people we've been friends with.

Chapter 5:

Zhuangzi on Friendship and Death

1. Introduction

At points, Zhuangzi suggests that death is a transformation that we commonly and mistakenly think means the end of someone but really just marks a new phase of existence.³⁹ I argue that this thesis allows the Daoist to enjoy deep friendships without the risk of loss typically associated with strong attachment, but limits the Daoist to friendships with those who endorse the same metaphysics. Furthermore, though they reject the idea that death is a loss, they still have reason to mourn the death of a friend.

There seems to be tension between leading a tranquil life, and being attached to particular individuals, which opens one up to the possibility of grief. But while Daoist sages seem tranquil, there is more room for attachments such as friendship in Daoism than in many other schools of thought which take tranquility to be a feature of a good life. David Wong (2006) argues that while Daoists resemble Buddhists and Stoics in holding that detachment from the world helps one to avoid being brought down by its troubles, the Daoist has a better story to tell about how such detachment should proceed. The Buddhist and the Stoic both, in different ways, seem to counsel detachment from sorrow by avoiding attachment to people. The Buddha, for example, explains that “Delusion alone ties one person to another” (qtd in Wong 2006: 208). Wong notes that other interpretations of Stoicism and Buddhism are available, but is interested in the *prima facie* challenge that attachment to mortal people is a source of grief that is incompatible with the best life as described by these traditions.

³⁹ Romanization in the various translations discussed in this paper have all been converted to Pinyin, for the sake of consistency.

Some take this to show that a life of detachment like that prescribed by Stoics or Buddhists may not be the best human life, because it precludes attachment to other people, which is intuitively important and valuable. But Wong argues that the Daoist can enjoy close relationships and yet maintain some detachment in the face of death by adopting what he calls “a duality of perspectives” (Wong 2006: 215), sometimes taking the point of view of the universe to mitigate human grief at the death of loved ones, at other times taking the perspective of a human being who enjoys social relations but is subject to loss. From the point of view of the universe, one can see the death of a loved one as part of a larger process, something impossible for the human being, he thinks. Discussing Zhuangzi’s reaction to the death of his wife, as described in chapter eighteen of the text, Wong writes, “As a small part of the whole, he is a man, and as a man, he must feel the loss of his wife and sob over her death, but as a man with intellect and imagination capable of embracing the whole, he can come to accept her death, his felt loss, and also continue to embrace his wife as part of the whole” (Wong 2006: 214). This portrays the Daoist friend or spouse as divided between two perspectives: that of a particular human being, and that of the universe.

There is a different interpretation of Zhuangzi’s writings on death and friendship, however, which preserves friendship and tranquility without positing such a divide in perspective. And while Wong draws almost exclusively on a story from chapter eighteen, one of the “outer” chapters to support his interpretation, a number of stories in the so-called “inner” chapters, bear on the issue at hand. Because the inner chapters are plausibly attributable to Zhuangzi, while the outer chapters were likely contributed by later Daoist disciples and followers, evidence from the inner chapters is especially important in shedding light on Zhuangzi’s philosophy (Graham 1979). In the inner chapters at several points, death is discussed in connection with friendship in a way which suggests that a tranquil response to the death of a loved one is possible within the personal perspective. I submit that the Daoist

friend reconciles herself to the deaths of both herself and her loved ones by embracing mortality as a quality of the people she is attached to, including herself, within a single perspective, rather than dividing herself between dual perspectives.

On Wong's two-perspectives view, the Stoics and the Buddhists have it roughly right; from an unsupplemented personal perspective, devastating grief at the death of loved ones is inevitable. A tranquil life is thus to that extent incompatible with attachment. Only by locating one's personal attachments within the vastness of universe, and assuming its perspective, can one come to terms with death in a way that allows for some measure of tranquillity and some resilience in the face of death.

However, an alternative interpretation of Zhuangzi is available, one which locates the Daoist response to death within the personal and human perspective, and thus offers a more robust alternative to the Stoic and the Buddhist position on attachment and grief.

This interpretation is suggested by several passages from the inner chapters where death does not disturb tranquillity even within the perspective that accommodates friendship. These passages indicate that death is merely a change and not a loss, and so is not grounds for the kind of grief that seems called for when one loses something of value. This alternative interpretation makes better sense of these stories from the inner chapters than does Wong's, and offers a genuine alternative account of friendship, attachment and death that leaves the Daoist in a substantially better position relative to the Buddhist and the Stoic.

On this view, Daoists value people as creatures who inevitably "transform" in death, rather than attaching to only certain qualities and stages of a person, and pretending that these qualities exhaust the individual. The Daoist seems open to the possibility that objects may undergo great change, including dispersal of their parts, without ceasing to exist. Several passages develop the idea that focusing on the presence or absence of a few qualities can mislead us into thinking something has ceased to be and leading us to mourn its loss. The

clearer-sighted observer, however, would see that there has been a change or a transformation, without thereby concluding that the object has disappeared. To the Daoist, this ends up being more than just an abstract theoretical claim. It is taken to have significant pragmatic import, and underwrites much of the Daoist ethos. This metaphysics, radical and unconventional, simultaneously sets them apart from society while grounding deep friendships between those who share their worldview and values (Blakeley 2008).

This position seems available to Daoists because they embrace the possibility of radical transformations: consider, for example, the story of a fish that changes into a bird which opens the first chapter of Zhuangzi. It would be less appealing to those whose philosophical approaches are characterized by a commitment to producing an ontology that models our ordinary beliefs about persistence and extinction conditions. This makes a position like the one I propose more plausible for the Daoist than for many other schools of thought. By taking Zhuangzi's story of the Four Friends at face value as literally giving a Daoist account of friendship, death and grief, we end up with a picture of attachment that seems consistent with the text at several important points.

2. Valuing Friends for What They Are

In two stories from the inner chapters, beliefs about mortality form the foundation of several friendships among Daoists. Making this the basis of a friendship would be somewhat mysterious on Wong's account. Because on the two-perspectives account, accepting mortality as natural ebb and flow requires identifying with the universe as a whole and thus, he thinks, departing from the perspective of a human being, it is not clear why Daoists should find it important to befriend people who share one's beliefs about death. From the personal perspective, in which friendships take place, the death of a loved one is, according to the two-perspectives view, roughly as we usually take it to be: a devastating loss. However, if

accepting death as change rather than loss is compatible with friendship within a single perspective, then agreement on this metaphysical thesis would naturally have import to Daoists. Its role in friendship could be an extension of the idea that the Daoist *as person* is better off for being clear on the nature of human beings, and valuing people for who and what they are. And this is what we find in at least two stories about friendship and death.

The first story is found in chapter six. Four men, in the course of talking together, raise the question, “Which of us is able to think of nothingness as the head, of life as the spine, of death as the rump? Which of us knows that the living and the dead, the surviving and the lost, are all one body? He shall be my friend.” (Graham 2001: 87) At this question, “The four men looked at each other,” we are told, “and smiled, and none was reluctant in his heart. So they all became friends.” (Graham 2001: 88)

Blakeley (2008) argues that this serves as their friendship’s foundation because it showed they shared the same values. When, in answer to the question, the men confirm (non-verbally, but with smiles indicating their emotional states) that they have the same values, they proceed to become friends. This grounds what Blakeley characterizes as a “relationship based on a particular perspective (lifeworld, form of life, worldview, semantic field, dispositional deportment) and its values.” (Blakeley 2008: 329) As the friends’ story proceeds, these shared values and shared perspective on death allow them to help each other out at times when living with their values proves difficult, or conflicts with society.

For example, in one scene, Si visits Yu when Yu is ill. When asked how he fares, Yu exclaims, “the maker of things is turning me into this crumpled thing. He hunches me and sticks out my back... my chin hides down in my navel, my shoulders are higher than my crown...” (Graham 2001: 88) He describes aging as transformation, and as the conversation continues, takes death to be just another transformation like that which he is currently undergoing.

The two discuss his attitude toward the changes he is going through and will soon undergo. “Do you hate it?” asks Si, referring to these changes. “No, why should I hate it?” responds Yu. (Graham 2001: 88) He proceeds to consider all the different things he will become as his transformation proceeds (especially after he is dead), and all the different things he will go on to become as bits of his body disperse and get incorporated into new things:

If the process continues, perhaps in time he’ll transform my left arm into a rooster. In that case I’ll keep watch on the night. Or perhaps in time he’ll transform my right arm into a crossbow pellet and I’ll shoot down an owl for roasting. Or perhaps in time he’ll transform my buttocks into cartwheels. Then, with my spirit for a horse, I’ll climb up and go for a ride. What need will I have for a carriage ever again? (Watson 2003: 80-81)

Several metaphysical ideas are implied in this unusual exchange: First, Yu identifies himself with his body. He thinks that he will be the things into which his body is transformed. Secondly, in order for him to be these things, he must take himself to persist beyond the dispersal of his body’s parts. We normally take dispersal of parts to mark the end of an object, but he seems to characterize this as a mere change: he transitions from coherent to dispersed object. Finally, Yu says the changes are normal and not to be resisted: “to get life is to be on time and to lose it is to be on course; be content with the time and settled on the course, and sadness and joy cannot find a way in.” (Graham 2001: 88) For Yu to be tranquil and satisfied with his fate he must accept who and what he is, and value himself for being exactly that.

3. Helping a Friend Transform

As the story continues, we find that this account of death as transformation also gets offered as advice from one friend to another. When Lai, another of the four friends, falls ill, his friend Li visits, and helps him to maintain his composure even in the face of external pressures and his own imminent death. As Lai “lay panting on the verge of death,” we are

told, his “wife and children stood in a circle bewailing him”. Out of concern for his friend, Li sends the distressed family from the room: “Shoo! Out of the way! ... Don’t startle him while he transforms.” (Graham 2001: 88) While the Daoist sage is often portrayed as avoiding action and refraining from telling people what to do, here Li steps in and takes charge of the situation in order to help his friend out. Even for the Daoist, friendship seems to license involvement in the world when it aids a friend in need.

Once alone, he offers Lai comfort in roughly the same way that Yu came to terms with his own death: “Wonderful, the process which fashions and transforms us! What is it going to turn you into, in what direction will it use you to go? Will it make you into a rat’s liver? Or a fly’s leg?” (Graham 2001: 88) And as Yu did, Li describes life and death as inevitable stages of the same process, and, he elaborates, valuing the process at one stage gives him reason to value the next: “That hugest of clumps of soil loaded me with a body, had me toiling through a life, eased me with old age, rests me with death: therefore that I found it good to live is the very reason why I find it good to die.” (Graham 2001: 88) Life and death are both natural stages of a human being, and if we value a person’s life, he reasons, we should likewise value their death. This stands in contrast to the idea that valuing a person leads inevitably to grief at their death.

For a person to value life but resist death would be a perversion of our very nature, he goes on. “If today a master swordsmith were smelting metal, and the metal should jump up and say ‘I insist on being made into an Excalibur’, the swordsmith would surely think it metal with a curse on it.” (Graham 2001: 88) Likewise, the person who tried to direct the maker of things about what sort of thing he should be made into (or maintained as) would be defective.

This indicates a natural role for the Daoists’ agreement on metaphysics as part of their friendship. In the context of the story, these words are presented as comfort to Lai, and provide him support in sticking to his values in the face of death and the wailing of his

family. Because agreement on metaphysics formed the basis of the friendship, Li can then step in and help, both by standing up to Lai's family, and by offering moral support in the form of this strange Daoist pep talk. "As friends care for one another," explains Blakeley, "their caring is determined by their understanding of how to care." (Blakeley 2008: 324) A kind of honesty takes center stage in this version of care: they seem to think that one ought to be cognizant of the nature of what one values, and value all of it, not pick and choose, clinging to some parts at the expense of others.

One might worry that this somewhat strange belief that death is a change and not a loss, especially combined with the Daoists' explicit rejection of one single correct way to divide up the world, would only alleviate grief at the death of a friend by making it somewhat irrational for someone to value a person to begin with. Without rules indicating when an object goes out of existence, they are open to the possibility of objects with widely dispersed parts, so why not just as well value some arbitrary collection of bits of other objects? But I do not think the Daoists are committed to this conclusion, because they reason about how value should be extended to later stages of an object, not about which objects we can or should value to begin with. Daoists can come to value people for all the usual sorts of reasons we come to care for our friends: shared interests and values, compatible sense of humor and personality, and so forth. Their metaphysical beliefs become salient at times like death because, given that they already value their friends, their metaphysics suggest that the object of value is not gone, only changed, and that such change is part of the normal course of events. Like metal being reshaped, their friends have changed form, and because they value their friends, they value their friends in these new forms: As Lai puts it, "that I found it good to live is the very reason why I find it good to die." (Graham 2001: 88) A metaphysical perspective that takes some of the sting out of death is then a part of the perspective where we

find friendship, and does not stand in need of supplementation, as on the two-perspectives view.

One might object, here, that it would not be clear why it would be plausible to suppose that people continue to value their friends, when the original qualities on which the friendship was initiated have disappeared. But this is in fact paradigmatic of friendship, and not an odd or obscure feature of Daoist friendship in particular. Friendships are frequently praised for their longevity, and good friends value each other as they grow and change, as circumstances shift, and as interests, hobbies, careers, and family roles change, sometimes quite radically. You and I might become friends initially because we are next-door neighbors, because we like the same music, or because we are taking the same college course. But these qualities can change and yet the friendship persist. Friendships may persist through periods of depression, illness, and vastly different life stages. The Daoists, then, seem to be merely extending this ordinary (and intuitively important) feature of friendship in continuing to value their friends through what they take to be transformations and changes, rather than coming up with a bizarre or ad hoc response to death in an attempt to mitigate grief.

Although it might still seem odd to think that a dead person still exists, even after being scattered throughout a multitude of diverse forms, and thus still capable of being valued, there are theoretical advantages that may make it worth the cost. Alternative interpretations of the Four Friends passage, perhaps that following the friends' death, what one really values is the universe, which contains the parts of the dead friend, do not adequately explain the partiality characteristic of friendship. If friendship with one's living friends is merely derivative of one's valuing of the universe as a whole, it seems to lack the partiality characteristic of friendship, where we take our friends to be especially valuable. But if one first values the friend, and then comes to value the whole universe after the friend dies, this seems to leave too much unexplained. Why think that the friend's death (and, via

dispersal of parts, incorporation into other objects throughout the universe) gives one reason to value the universe as a whole, when the friend was equally a part of the universe while alive? It would be preferable to consistently explain why one cares especially for this friend, this part of the whole, and connect it appropriately to the friends' responses to death. The account I propose says that attachment to the friend (that very part) in new forms follows from attachment to the friend in the form in which friends first establish their friendship, as an extension of the loyalty and valuing friends through various changes and stages that already seems salient to friendship. Taking the Four Friends account at face value, rather than metaphorically, allows us to do this.

4. Forgetfulness as Friendship?

Another story about friendship and death follows immediately on the preceding passage, and likewise begins with a mutual affirmation of values:

The three men, Master Sanghu, Meng Zifan and Master Qinzhang, were talking together.

'Which of us can be *with* when there is no being with, be *for* where there is no being for? Which of us are able to climb the sky and roam the mists and go whirling into the infinite, living forgetful of each other for ever and ever?'

The three men looked at each other and smiled, and none was reluctant in his heart. So they became friends. (Graham 2001: 89)

The previous passage began with an agreement on metaphysics amongst living friends who eventually faced death. Despite the initial appearance of a disanalogy between that story and this one, I conclude that they are both best read as expressing the same underlying theory of death, friendship and mourning. In this tale, I conclude that a shared belief about death eventually motivates the surviving friends' response to their friend's death.

Wholehearted ability to be "forgetful of each other for ever and ever" seems an odd basis for a friendship; in fact, it seems downright paradoxical (doubtless part of the intention of the story was to draw this out). In this, it differs from the previously discussed story, where

friends based their friendship on a shared belief, rather than a rejection of belief, or commitment to forgetfulness. But I think we should not read this part of the story literally. It would not be consistent with the stories told about Daoist friendship to think friends genuinely forget about each other. They are portrayed as thoughtful and considerate, visiting each other when sick, standing up to each other's families, and also assisting in more ordinary ways; later in the chapter, for example, we encounter someone who worries about a friend when the weather is especially unpleasant, and so cooks up and brings him some dinner.

Instead, we can interpret the "forgetfulness" as a rejection of many of our standard beliefs and values, while maintaining that these friends believe other things about the world, such as the metaphysical view explicitly endorsed in the previous story (and with which it shares significant structural features in its setup: in both stories people propose a commitment, everyone agrees to it and expresses their emotional endorsement with smiles, and a friendship is thus established). It seems plausible to suppose that in this story, their emphasis on forgetting is something of a rhetorical shock tactic, emphasizing that their commitment to each other is not supposed to motivate attachment to one phase of this person's existence at the expense of the rest, as one would expect if they subscribed to a more conventional metaphysics. This is supported by the way forgetfulness is handled in what follows. One of the friends eventually dies, and Kongzi sends a disciple to mourn his passing. The disciple is horrified to discover the living friends singing together, one "plaiting frames for silkworms, the other strumming a zither" while their friend lies dead at their feet. The two living friends, however, are not portrayed as *forgetting* their friend: in fact, they are singing about his passing. "Hey-ho, Sanghu! / You've gone back to being what one truly is, / But we go on being human, O!" (Graham 2001: 89) The shocked disciple asks if what they are doing

is “in accordance with the rites,” at which the friends “exchanged glances and smiled. ‘What does he know about the meaning of the rites?’” (Graham 2001: 89)

Kongzi, when he hears about this, does not criticize them for failing to follow the rites. Instead, he characterizes himself as “the sort that roams within the guidelines” while they are, he says, “the sort that roams beyond the guidelines”. He is therefore not qualified to comment on them, he explains, because “Beyond and within have nothing in common”. He concludes that sending an emissary from within the guidelines was “stupid on my part” (Graham 2001: 89).

The Daoists, the character Kongzi claims, “think of life as an obstinate wart or a dangling wen, of death as bursting the boil or letting the pus.” (Graham 2001: 89) But Kongzi seems to be portrayed as missing the point, since the reports by Daoists contemplating their own or their friends’ deaths indicate that it is *because* they value life, and life and death are part of the same process, that death is not to be shunned or feared. Death is not a relief or a blessing, and *therefore* valuable because it offers relief from life, but just another part of the same thing one already values. But the theme of forgetting is raised again: the Daoists are “Self-forgetful right down to the liver and the gall, leaving behind their own ears and eyes” says Kongzi. (Graham 2001: 89) Attitudes toward friends (who have explicitly agreed to live “forgetful of each other for ever and ever”) are paralleled in attitudes toward self (since they are “self-forgetful”), just as in the last passage, one dying man’s comments about his own impending “transformation” are repeated as words of comfort or advice from one friend to another. Kongzi seems to be missing something in calling this “forgetfulness”, but lack of concern for conventional cares is evident both in their attitudes towards their friends and themselves. This, however, does not yield indifference to the friend’s passing, even given their unconventional beliefs about death: they mark the occasion by singing about the change

their friend has gone through, and noting the differences between the sort of thing he is now, and the sorts of things they currently are.

If Daoists were really expected to forget themselves, this might seem consistent with the idea that in dealing with death they adopt the point of view of the universe. But the sort of self-‘forgetfulness’ that is portrayed as appropriate to a good Daoist is not one that precludes attachment or friendship: in fact, it is presented as a foundation that allows their particular form of friendship to flourish. Valuing a friend for himself as he is involves valuing his transformation in death, and so preserves a kind of bond amongst the friends. This interpretation is supported by what the friends are doing when Kongzi’s pupil encounters them: not forgetting their friend, but celebrating what he has become, and recognizing what they themselves are.

5. The Importance of Shared Values

The two stories discussed so far begin with explicit agreements about the nature of life, death, and friendship, and this seems to be no accident. Given the emphasis elsewhere in the text on the foolishness of trying to change people’s natures, it seems that the best way for the Daoist to have friends who share her values is to find people who are already wholeheartedly committed to these values. In chapter four, for example, Yan He, who has been appointed tutor to the heir apparent of a local duke, seeks counsel on how to proceed with his pupil, and is told quite firmly not to make waves, nor try to shape the heir’s character, nor think that, because the heir *appears* to have improved, he has thereby changed. Yan He is advised to imitate the tiger keeper, who goes to great lengths both to understand and work with tigers’ dispositions. This knowledge informs his choices about what to feed them and when, how to handle them, and how to conduct himself around them: thus, we are told, he “has the secret of their angry hearts.” (Graham 2001: 72)

The tigers are then safe for him to be around, but only this knowledge of and respect for their immutable nature keeps him safe: “when they fawn on the man who feeds him it is because he goes along with their dispositions; and so if they get murderous it is because he thwarts their dispositions.” (Graham 2001: 72) This is followed up by a story about a man who pampers his beloved horse but is killed when he startles the animal by swatting at a fly. About this last story, the speaker concludes, there was “nothing wrong with the intention but the love did damage. You can’t be too careful.” (Graham 2001: 72) The do-gooder bent on transforming the characters of those around him seems doomed to failure, succeeding merely in “making a pest of oneself” (Graham 2001: 67).

Were these Daoists to treat those who do not follow the Dao as they do themselves, presumably it would not go well; one can only imagine that someone with a different attitude toward death would not find it reassuring to be told, “you might turn into a rat’s liver!” while lying on his deathbed, or appreciate a friend sending his family away. It is only the shared values identified by Blakeley that allow friends to value each other as they value themselves, without the need to “be careful” lest someone turn on you. With such friends, you can trust both that your offers of help will not backfire and that your friend will provide you the help you need, in turn. Thus, the metaphysical thesis that death is a transformation and not a loss ends up being central to Daoist friendship, although not something they could expect to be able to convince others to adopt.

6. Interpreting a Challenging Passage

The account I have sketched allows us to make sense of a somewhat confusing passage in a neighboring chapter, rendering it consistent with stories about friendship and death told elsewhere in the text. In chapter three, we encounter a story about a friend’s grief at the death of the Daoist master Lao Dan. Qin Shi, we are told, “went in to mourn him,

wailed three times, and came out.” This apparently disturbed a disciple, who asked Qin Shi, “Were you not the Master’s friend?” “I was,” replies Qin Shi. “Then is it decent to mourn him like this?” asks the disciple. Qin Shi replies in the affirmative. Graham’s translation has him explain that “I used to think of him as the man, but now he is not.” (Graham 2001: 65) Translations of the text differ on what is said in the last sentence of the story. Graham offers the following as Qin Shi’s explanation about why his grieving is so unusual: “If the meaning is confined to what is deemed the ‘firewood’, as the fire passes on from one piece to the next we do not know it is the ‘cinders’”, Qin Shi tells the disciple (Graham 2001: 65). Watson’s translation of this passage runs: “Though the grease burns out of the torch, the fire passes on, and no one knows where it ends.” (Watson 2003: 48) Watson notes, in a footnote, that the “first part of this... sentence is scarcely intelligible and there are numerous suggestions on how it should be interpreted or emended.” He then lists some of the “other possible interpretations” and credits them as follows:

“When the fingers complete the work of adding firewood, the fire passes on” (Guo Xiang). “Though the fingers are worn out gathering firewood, the fire passes on” (Yu Yue). “What we can point to are the fagots that have been consumed; but the fire is transmitted elsewhere” (Legge, Fukunaga). (Watson 2003:48)

The translations agree that the explanation involves fire and change, but differ otherwise. The meaning we ascribe to “firewood” is too narrow and so we miss that it becomes cinders; or the fire burned in one place before but now burns in another; or the fire continues to burn although it has consumed one source of fuel. Clearly, what is said is offered as an explanation about responses to death, but what is the explanation supposed to be?

About this passage, Graham has this to say: “The final sentence is obscure. I take it to be using the terminology of disputation. We divide up the changing totality, use names such as ‘living’ and ‘firewood’ to detach the partial and temporary, and then suppose that death and burning bring them to an end, forgetting that they are the same thing as what in the next phase in the endless process of transformation will be named ‘dead’ and ‘cinders’.” (Graham

2001: 65) Even, however, if one is not satisfied by his translation of the passage in question, note the parallels between the various alternatives. In each version, we are left with the sense that while the substantial change involved leads most to react to death as a loss, something continues on after death. This seems to explain how different people with different perspectives react to the death of a loved one, and the fact that something continues is supposed to mitigate the Daoist mourner's grief.

Wong suggests that this passage be understood as expressing Qin Shi's "necessary duality of perspective," between "a conscious and self-aware part of the whole that can perceive the eventual extinction of self and those it loves" and that which can "through its intellect and imaginative capacities for identification with the whole ... come to embrace the ceaseless change and the whole as a home that enfolds the small" (Wong 2006: 215). But I argue that for Qin Shi, coming to grips with the death of his friend is better seen as his appreciating another step in the natural progression of his friend, and so part of a single, relatively complete perspective. In each of the varied translations of the passage, we find the idea that changes like death do not mark something's end, but rather are transformations. And in all the translations surveyed above, accepting such transformation as natural is linked with appropriate emotional response to death. Qin Shi explains that the conventional sort of grief is out of place and not the reaction of a sage because "In coming when he did, the Master was on time; in departing when he did, the Master was on course. Be content with the time and settled on the course, and sadness and joy cannot find a way in." (Graham 2001: 65)

While Wong says of this story that "the thrust of the passage seems to suggest extirpation [of emotional attachment]" (Wong 2006: 215), possibly down gradable to "acceptance of sorrow and grief as natural reactions to extinction" (Wong 2006:215-16), I suggest a different interpretation may be in order. According to Qin Shi, Lao Dan has merely

changed, not disappeared, as the discussion about fire and wood seems to suggest, and so excessive mourning would be out of place.

A few things are noteworthy about this passage. First, as Wong notes (2006: 215), it is significant that Qin Shi does wail at the loss of his friend, albeit briefly. He seems to accept Lao Dan's transformation with equanimity, but this does not prevent mourning altogether. Sadness might not stay for long, but it briefly finds a way in, a point which requires explanation. In Wong's interpretation, his grief ceases when his perspective (and thereby his judgments) change, an interpretation backed up Watson's translation: "At first I took him for a real man, but now I know he wasn't." (Watson 2003: 47) From the perspective of the human being, there has been death and loss. Then his perspective changes, and he ceases to grieve. But my theory does not appeal to a change or error in Qin Shi's judgment to explain his reaction. Instead, he may think valuing Lao Dan ultimately required him to accept his mortality as part of what he was. Qin Shi, despite being a good Daoist who accepts even the death of a friend with shocking (to others) composure, freely admits that he *has* friends, but his attachment does not drive him to mourn conventionally. The mourners who are still wailing inside, he says, "hide from heaven and turn away from what we truly are," and this interferes with the proper valuing of Lao Dan: when we turn away from what we are, we "forget the gift that we received." (Graham 2001: 65) To fail to embrace this aspect of a friend is, apparently, to disregard something important about the very thing we supposedly value. This would be consistent with the stories discussed earlier from the sixth chapter, which emphasize that valuing people when they are alive gives us reason to find death good as well. His brief mourning, however, would still be appropriate given this great change, as it means that he will no longer be able to interact with his friend as they used to; his mourning would be a reaction to change, not loss. Zhuangzi would then be using a story about the death

of a friend to emphasize the importance of owning up to the nature of what we love, rather than pretending it is something else, yet recognizing the impact great changes can have on us.

7. Transformation as Occasion for Mourning

My interpretation of the Daoist's approach is that the death of a friend cannot properly be called a loss, because the object of value (the person) is still there, even though no longer in the same form, and possibly dispersed over many forms (the haunches of a horse, a crossbow, a bug's leg, a rat's liver, and so forth). Because they hold this belief about death, their reactions strike many as strange. Hence the confusion we see in Kongzi's disciple who encounters the friends singing over a corpse, and another disciple's reaction to Qin Shi's response to his master's death. But their shared beliefs about and attitudes toward about death help ground their friendships with each other. As shown both by the stories about the friends visiting each other's sickbeds, and the person who brings a friend dinner on a rainy day, they must share a conception of what it is to care that satisfies all concerned. This does not always dictate radical divergence from normal interactions amongst friends. Often, I imagine they interact much as friends normally do: talking, visiting, sharing meals, and so forth. Their reactions to death, however, are unusual on several fronts. First, the friend's death is taken as something to be expected and even valued. Given that they care about their friends, they consider it foolish to fear or hate this transformation, because it is characteristic of the friend they value.

Furthermore, the occasion of dispersal and great change is, or can be, cause for curiosity. This is evident from their conversations in which they speculate about all the things they will become, following their deaths. This gives the friends, as Daoists, special reason to be interested in their friends' deaths, to observe, support, and participate in this process.

At the same time, death is not merely an occasion for curiosity and observation. Even Daoists grieve at the death of friends, although they accept these changes as inevitable. Even given their belief that death is transformation, it can give reason for some sadness. The friend has transformed into something that can no longer participate in the shared activities formerly characteristic of the friendship. When one's friend has died, they can no longer share conversations, or bring each other soup, or stand up for each other, or sing together. In some ways, this seems analogous to the sort of grief appropriate for a friendship that ends when someone moves away. One may appreciate that this is a natural and expected development for the friend one cares for, but it still means that the active portion of the friendship, the interactions and exchanges, are over and done with. The interactions and sustained patterns of care that Daoists participate in are diminished once friends can no longer reciprocally care for and visit with each other. They value what their friends have become, but the changes they have undergone mean they are no longer interactive, no longer reciprocally caring.

The Daoist friends in the stories related here seem to be quite clear that they do not lose their friends: they are still around, but in changed form. And this change is not in itself a bad thing; it is not to be resisted, nor dreaded (consider the parable about the foolishness of a metal that demands to be made into Excalibur). But it still seems to call for a kind of grief, expressed by the (brief) wailing of surviving friends, and the song friends sing over a corpse. Death seems to be the end of a partnership, and the fact that the friends are committed to the thesis that life and death are part of the same thread, or more strongly, that death is (only?) a transformation, does not mitigate this. And this might seem sufficient to justify some sadness. Even friends' moving away is a bittersweet occasion at best, and more so when the change involved (as in death) is irreversible: they will never again be able to interact as friends.

Shared acceptance of the metaphysical thesis that death is a transformation rather than a loss allows the Daoist to reap the benefits of friendship and to value friends for exactly

what they are, confident that she in turn will be valued (accurately) in the same way. This provides the support and camaraderie of friendship and friends, who visit with you, talk together with you about the issues you confront, and help you stand up to social pressures and expectations that run counter to your values, and simultaneously avoids some of the suffering and grief ordinarily associated with attachment. But sadness is not completely averted even given this alternative conception of death.

8. Making Death Personal

The unified point of view I describe is personal throughout because it takes the Daoist approach to death of loved ones to be governed by an insight into what the Daoist values. What one values is not lost; friends still care for their dead friends as they transform and participate in the process of change (and become bugs' legs, cart wheels, roosters, and so on). We can see why they think conventional grief in the face of death is somewhat misguided.

They take an appropriate attitude toward death to be involved in accurately valuing the thing one cares about: valuing it as something which transforms. This makes their reaction to death intensely personal throughout, rather than drawing on the somewhat impersonal perspective of the universe suggested by the two-perspectives view. However, even given the belief that the friend is not lost, the end of the friendship as a reciprocal interaction among individuals who share important values is still an occasion for mourning.

My account allows deep friendship to be of a piece with friends' mourning in reaction to death, without threatening overall tranquillity, and also explains the activities and values of the friendships described in the inner chapters of Zhuangzi. Therefore, it is both more consistent with the text, and better accomplishes the goal Wong sets out: to show how one can maintain equanimity in the face of death and yet still enjoy attachment and

friendship. Finally, it shows that even if one does not take death to be a loss, one still may have cause to mourn, not because one loses a friend but because one loses a friendship.

9. Conclusion

This says something about the nature of grief and the way it relates to attachment and friendship. Whether one takes two perspectives on death and friendship or one, we cannot seem to escape grief completely, and, if the Daoist position on friendship and death that I have argued for is correct, then it turns out that what we think about the goodness or badness of death, and whether it marks the end of an object, or merely a transformation, is not sufficient to account for grief at the death of a friend. If, as seems likely, friendship involves interaction and shared values among like-minded individuals, then the death of a friend means the end of this friendship, even given an unconventional account of death, and this itself seems cause for mourning. This seems to show that grief and mourning are not, as one might think, simply about the loss of a loved one, because the friendship itself seems to be valued above and beyond the friend. People mourn even when they take the friend to still exist. While this might seem explicable purely as a matter of selfish concerns (my friend's death means she will not be able to take care of me, talk with me, fend off my family for me, and so forth), I am not sure that this is the case, especially as an account of what motivates the Daoist sages to mourn. Friendship seems to be something they take to be valuable in its own right, not merely as an instrumental means to their own care, nor yet simply a matter of valuing the friend as individual. Once a friend dies, there is no longer reciprocal caring between friends, but one friend may still care deeply for the other (as Li says about himself, "that I found it good to live is the very reason why I find it good to die" (Graham 2001: 88) and the same reasoning would seem to be applicable to one's friends as oneself: the reasons they find it good that their friends live is the reason they find it good to die).

It is not at all obvious that the metaphysics they endorse is plausible, and given their resistance to proselytizing, it is unsurprising that their presentation of their metaphysical beliefs should strike many as strange and counter-intuitive. This might at first blush seem to limit the lessons to be drawn from examining their position. But regardless of whether one finds their approach appealing, I think there is something to be learned: we can either take the preceding to show that a perspective on death that says death is not bad will not sufficiently address grief, or that, without such a strange approach to death, we are left with exactly the problem we started out with: tranquillity and attachment are incompatible. We can mitigate this by stepping outside ourselves and identifying with the universe (as we see in Wong's two-perspectives approach), or we can give up on attachment (as the Buddha seems to exhort), or we can give up on death as a loss (as I argue that the Daoists do), but each of these approaches is unsatisfactory in various ways. Adopting the point of view of the universe seems to imply that the human perspective is badly incomplete, while giving up on attachment rules out an important good altogether. Giving up on the idea that death is a loss does not fully protect us from grief, and comes at a high theoretical cost in terms of plausibility, and may alienate us from those who do not share our beliefs.

On the other hand, there seems to be something right about the thought that valuing our friends includes accepting their capacity for transformation and changes of all sorts, including those which render continued interaction impossible. While such a belief does not protect us from grief entirely, it seems to be the most honest way to value our friends, and the grief one is subject to on such an account may still be compatible with a relatively tranquil ideal of life, by finding a role for accepting friends' changes in the context of valuing them as creatures capable of great change. This would count as a point in favor of the interpretation I have presented here.

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