Equality and justice in Aristotle's theory of friendship

Mark Christopher Brennan

University at Albany, State University of New York, markcbrennan@hotmail.com

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Equality and Justice in Aristotle’s Theory of Friendship

by

Mark C. Brennan

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I offer an interpretation of Aristotle’s account of friendship that emphasizes the importance of fairness in understanding the connection that he draws between friendship and justice. Many contemporary interpretations of Aristotle conclude either that the connection between friendship and justice is primarily relevant in the context of political friendship or is primarily a concern for friendships between virtuous individuals. Such interpretations, however, tend to diminish the importance of friendships on account of usefulness and pleasure in Aristotle’s account, as well as the importance of friendships in associations other than the political association.

I argue that instead of providing a definition of friendship, Aristotle has provided a set of sufficient conditions for friendship. While friendship on account of the good (i.e., friendship between virtuous individuals) is paradigmatic in the sense that it fulfills and exhibits the conditions of friendship to the highest degree, the secondary forms of friendship can be judged by the same paradigm as better or worse depending on how well the conditions of friendship are fulfilled. Because the conditions of friendship can be instantiated in a variety of ways, a wide range of interpersonal relationships can be classified as friendships under Aristotle’s account. I go on to argue that friendship in association comes about for the sake of something good, just as personal friendship does, whether that good is profit in a business venture, the pleasure associated with a feast, or the good of the political community. Lastly, the dissertation argues that justice serves as a means of preserving friendship insofar as it preserves the equality of those participating in the relationship. If friendships arise as a result of something good, then friendships can fall apart when those taking part in the friendship do not receive their fair share of that good thing.
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Aristotle opens his analysis of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* with an account of the reputable opinions on the topic.¹ There he claims that it “seems that friendship holds cities together and that legislators take it more seriously than justice,” and that “if people are friends, there is no need of justice, whereas people who are just need friendship in addition to justice. Also, of just things the most just of all seem to be fitted to friendship” (1155a21-28).² These reputable opinions about friendship and justice raise some questions as to how we should interpret the relationship between the two. We might wonder what a friendship between two individuals adds to their interactions that two just strangers miss out on, or whether justice is a necessary precondition for friendship, or vice versa. Attempts to answer these questions often focus on the political aspect of friendship and justice.³ But the question of how friendship and justice are connected is not simply a political one. The topic of justice is kept in view throughout the rest of Aristotle’s account of friendship, although how Aristotle conceives of the relationship between justice and friendship is not always entirely clear.⁴ In this chapter, I will first look at some prominent interpretations of the relationship between justice and friendship in the

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¹ Aristotle’s usual method is to begin with reputable opinions about a topic, which are opinions drawn from those who are wise or are opinions that most people hold. These reputable opinions serve as a common starting point, and raise potential questions about the topic that must then be answered.


³ Michael Pakaluk, for example, suggests that Aristotle might be arguing that all citizens having the virtue of justice would not by itself guarantee the unity of a city, since members of different cities or different factions within the city might all individually have the virtue of justice but not be united. If this is the case, something more, like friendship, might be required. He also suggests that friends would not need justice if friends are unwilling to harm one another, but that it is not entirely clear why just people still need friendship. According to Pakaluk, it might be that just people are still prone to disputes without friendship, or it might be that they need friendship in order to participate in the various associations that civic life requires. Aristotle, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX*, ed. Michael Pakaluk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 49.

⁴ For example, see the passage at 1159b24-25, where Aristotle claims that it seems as though “friendship and justice are concerned with the same things and involve the same people,” or at 1160a7-8, where he claims that “justice too naturally increases along with the friendship, since it involves the same people and has an equal extension.”
secondary literature, and will then offer an outline of an alternative interpretation that is motivated by Aristotle’s notion of equality.

Interpretations of Aristotle’s Theory

Many interpretations of Aristotle’s account of friendship have two things in common. First, as noted above, these interpretations focus narrowly on political friendship, and second, they are concerned with the question of whether or not the account of friendship is objectionably egoistic. Given Aristotle’s claims about the importance of friendship to the political association and its particular relevance to legislators, interpreters will either focus primarily on friendship in the political association or will mention the connection between friendship and justice as a way of drawing a contrast between Aristotle’s account and contemporary notions of justice. Because my own interpretation will assess the connection between justice and all types of friendship, my own discussion of political friendship will take place alongside the discussion of friendship in all types of association. Nevertheless, the discussion of justice and political friendship in the secondary literature raises interpretive questions that must be addressed. Moreover, whether one interprets the political association as being a type of friendship on account of the good or a friendship on account of usefulness will have some bearing on how one interprets the connection between friendship and justice. Such distinctions will be addressed in additional detail below.

The egoism discussion stems from Aristotle’s account of self-love in IX.8, as well as his descriptions of friendships on account of usefulness and friendships on account of pleasure from VIII.4. In IX.8, Aristotle argues that the virtuous person is most of all a lover of and friend to

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5 As an example of the latter, Julia Annas writes that “to our minds the parallel drawn out between the concepts makes justice too personal and friendship too impersonal,” because for Aristotle justice “is not a matter of rights held independently of one’s social relationships, and friendship not merely a matter of one’s personal likings but to a great extent defined by one’s social position as subject, son, demesman, etc.” Annas, “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism,” 552.
oneself, although not as base people are, when they allocate to themselves the greater share in money, honors, and bodily pleasures.\(^6\) In VIII.4, he describes friendships on account of usefulness and of pleasures as the only ones available to base individuals, and as merely resembling friendship on account of the good. The contemporary discussion seems to aim at discovering the motivations behind friendship on Aristotle’s account; and in particular whether it is possible for a person to be motivated solely by the good of one’s friend if it is the case that in acting for the sake of one’s friends, one is also acting to achieve one’s own good.\(^7\) Because my project is primarily focused on Aristotle’s discussion of the connection between friendship and justice, I do not plan to address the topic of the altruistic or egoistic motivations of Aristotelian friendship in any great detail. Nevertheless, because much of the secondary literature focuses on that debate, that focus has directed the discussion of friendship and justice in Aristotle. If one finds Aristotle’s account of friendship to be necessarily egoistic, then justice might be seen as a means of protecting one’s interests in a friendship. If some friendships are classified as altruistic and others as egoistic, then that might change how one classifies some of the other relationships that Aristotle covers in his account.\(^8\)

Given that these two features of the secondary literature differ in focus from my own interpretation, I have found it useful to analyze other interpretations by grouping them into three

\(^8\) Paul Schollmeier, for example, suggests that political friendship must be a type of friendship on account of the good because under a just constitution, such friendships are altruistic Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 75-96, 114.
categories: (1) those that emphasize the emotions that distinguish friendship from other relationships, (2) those that emphasize the motivations behind forming friendships, and (3) those that emphasize the shared goals of a friendship. These categories are useful insofar as the interpretations that fall under each make similar claims about the relationship between friendship and justice and insofar as they identify similar challenges in interpreting Aristotle’s overall account.9

**Interpretations Focused on Friendly Emotion**

Interpretations that focus on the emotional aspect of Aristotle’s theory of friendship tend to emphasize the function of affection and goodwill in his overall account. For example, Dirk Baltzly and Nick Eliopoulos argue that in Aristotle’s time, friendship is seen primarily as a matter of helping one’s friends and harming one’s enemies, noting that for Aristotle, friendship can have more than just this instrumental utility.10 They argue that the common core among the different types of friendship—friendships on account of the good, friendships on account of pleasure, and friendships on account of usefulness—is the fact that they all are relationships involving goodwill that is reciprocated and recognized.11 Aristotle introduces the notion of goodwill (εὔνοια) in NE VIII.2, where he writes that “to a friend, it is said, we must wish good things for his own sake. Those who wish good things to someone in this way, however, if the same wish is not reciprocated, are said to have goodwill toward him, since friendship is said to be reciprocated goodwill” (1155b30-31).

9 While not every interpretation discussed below falls neatly into a single category, I have attempted to categorize the views based on their similarity in handling the interpretive challenges they identify. That is to say, an interpretation that places an emphasis on the function of friendly feeling in friendship will be discussed along with theories that emphasize the emotions that distinguish friendship from other relationships, since both interpretations seem to address the question of how to distinguish between one’s friendships and the other social relationships that are part of a person’s life.


11 Baltzly and Eliopoulos, 23.
It should be noted that although commentators often treat goodwill as an emotion, in NE IX.5, Aristotle writes that goodwill is not a feeling of affection (φιλησις), “for it does not include intensity of feeling or desire, whereas in the case of a feeling of affection these do follow along. Also, a feeling of affection involves intimacy, whereas goodwill can arise all of a sudden—as it does, for example, toward athletic contestants” (1167a31-34). If goodwill is an emotion, it is distinct from affection and not felt as intensely. Affection is introduced by Aristotle as a possible means of equalizing unequal friendships. In NE VIII.7, Aristotle writes that “in all friendships in accord with superiority … the feeling of affection should be proportionate too—for example, the better person should be more loved than loving, as should the more beneficial one, and similarly in each of the other cases. For when loving is in accord with worth, a sort of equality comes about, and that seems to be characteristic of friendship” (1158b23-28). This distinction poses a challenge for views that differentiate friendship from other sorts of relationships using either goodwill or friendly affection, since it seems as though one can have goodwill towards someone without being friends, and since some of the relationships that are described as friendships do not seem to involve strong feelings of affection.

In his book *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship*, Paul Schollmeier analyzes friendship in terms of its motivations and the emotions associated with it. As part of his analysis, he divides friendships into two genera—personal friendships and political friendships—and divides each of these into three different species: friendship on account of the good, friendship on account of pleasure, and friendship on account of usefulness. He argues that the motivations behind friendships on account of the good are altruistic, and that the motivations

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12 Reeve translates φιλησις as “a way of loving.” Here, I have translated it as “a feeling of affection.”
behind friendships on account of pleasure and friendships on account of usefulness are egoistic.\textsuperscript{13} He goes on to describe what he sees as the primary distinction between political friendship and justice. Although they might seem like the very same relationship, or it might seem that friendship includes justice as a part of itself, Schollmeier claims that “what we shall see is that friendship does indeed include justice in one sense but that justice in another sense remains distinct from friendship. People who are friends and just people perform their actions out of virtues concerned with different emotions.”\textsuperscript{14} Schollmeier ultimately concludes that friendship has to do with the emotion of love, and that although Aristotle does not explicitly mention the emotion that justice is concerned with, he suggests that we can turn to Aristotle’s discussion of the emotions involved in the virtues of lawfulness and fairness to get to an answer.\textsuperscript{15}

Noting that Aristotle isn’t explicit about the emotion behind lawfulness, Schollmeier proposes goodwill, citing a passage at 1167a14-15, where Aristotle claims that someone who has been benefited does what is just by holding goodwill toward the person who has benefited him.\textsuperscript{16} Citing a passage at 1130b2-4, where Aristotle claims that unfairness exists due to the pleasure associated with acquisition, Schollmeier claims that fairness is concerned with an acquisitive emotion.\textsuperscript{17} So, it seems that under Schollmeier’s account, depending on the situation, a just action taken out of friendship is done from an emotion of love, whereas people who are simply dealing justly with people with whom they are not friends do so from an emotion of goodwill or appropriate acquisitiveness. Schollmeier also notes what he sees as a similarity in the relationship between political friendship and political justice and the relationship between

\textsuperscript{13} I will discuss Schollmeier’s arguments in greater detail in the next chapter, which will detail the distinction that Aristotle draws between friendships on account of the good on one hand, and friendships on account of pleasure and friendships on account of usefulness on the other hand.

\textsuperscript{14} Schollmeier, \textit{Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship}, 98.

\textsuperscript{15} Schollmeier, 107.

\textsuperscript{16} Schollmeier, 107.

\textsuperscript{17} Schollmeier, 109.
personal friendship and personal justice. Just as political friendship and political justice both involve acting for the good of another, so too do personal friendship and personal justice.

Schollmeier concludes, however, that “there remains a difference between political and personal justice. We define our obligations to our fellow citizens by means of a constitution and laws and set legal penalties for failing to meet these obligations. But we hardly define our obligations to our personal friends and penalize them in this way.”

Furthermore, Schollmeier claims that justice may be done without goodwill or virtue, and even involuntarily. According to Schollmeier, these are not acts of justice, but merely just actions. Even friendly actions, he claims, may be performed without proper motivation.

In Aristotle’s Ethics, David Bostock devotes a chapter to Aristotle’s theory of friendship. He draws a distinction between what he calls “perfect” friendship and “true” friendship.

According to Bostock, the defining characteristic of friendship is that each person wishes good to the other for the other’s own sake. He calls a friendship which satisfies this condition a “true” friendship, while “perfect” friendship is one which satisfies this condition and occurs between two good people equal in virtue. Bostock notes that he keeps these two notions separate “since it is by no means obvious that only good people can be ‘true’ friends, as defined.”

He also notes that in the cases of friendships on account of pleasure and friendships on account of usefulness, there is some dispute in the secondary literature as to the necessity of wishing good to one’s friend. Bostock argues that Aristotle seems right in saying that there are different forms of friendship, but makes a mistake in making what Bostock terms “perfect” friendship the central case. He points out his own definition of “true” friendship, and argues that “it was surely a
mistake to suppose that this form of friendship can exist only between good people of equal status,” citing examples of friendships between people who are only moderately virtuous, or even partners in crime.\(^{21}\)

Although Bostock does not directly discuss the connection between justice and friendship, he briefly mentions the chapters of Book VIII that provide Aristotle’s account of friendships between people who are unequal. Bostock argues that this discussion seems to involve “perfect” friendships that deserve special treatment because they deviate from the norm due to unequal status of their participants. Bostock notes that “the main feature of this special treatment is that, because the status is unequal, the degree of love to be expected of each is in inverse proportion to the status.”\(^ {22}\) Bostock points to Aristotle’s examples of a father being superior to his sons because he has given them their existence, and husbands being superior to their wives, and concludes that “no one nowadays is likely to feel much sympathy with these propositions, and I shall not dwell upon them.”\(^ {23}\) Bostock, then, seems to find two main problems in using friendly emotion to differentiate between the types of friendship. First of all, he suggests, friendly emotion does not do enough to differentiate between perfect friendships and other friendships, and second of all, it leaves us with objectionable claims about what Aristotle refers to as friendships based on inequality.

I take it that interpretations like those mentioned above aim to identify the primary difference between friendship and other personal and social relationships in Aristotle’s theory. What makes my relationship with the employees at the coffee shop I frequent different from the coffee shop I visit only once while I’m away from home is the fact that I feel differently about

\(^{21}\) Bostock, 184.  
\(^{22}\) Bostock, 170.  
\(^{23}\) Bostock, 170.
them. Although “love” might be too strong a word for it, I’m certainly interested in their welfare in a way that differs from my general disinterest in the person I see only once and never again. Under such a view, I can be just towards someone in a disinterested way, but cannot be that person’s friend. A potential problem with this view is that, as noted above, Aristotle’s notion of goodwill may not have a strong emotional component to it. As a result, it seems possible that under Aristotle’s view I could be friends with someone, for example a fellow citizen, towards whom I have no strong feelings. Moreover, one of the main features of Aristotle’s account is that it seems to apply the term “friendship” to a much wider range of relationships than we typically expect, and the emotions involved in the friendship between a parent and child, for example, would seem to differ from these found in the friendship between fellow citizens.

**Interpretations Focused on Motivation**

Interpretations that focus on the motivations behind forming friendships are often primarily interested in the egoism debate. If one takes Aristotle’s theory of friendship to be defined primarily by whether it is altruistic or egoistic, then the motivations of the friends become central to one’s interpretation. Elijah Millgram, for example, suggests that when Aristotle says that one desires the good for one’s friend for the friend’s sake that “the concern for the friend is justification-terminating in the same way that one’s concern for oneself is justification-terminating.”\(^{24}\) He goes on to argue that friendships on account of the good are considered primary because a person’s being useful or pleasant to me is not a part of being who one is. As a result, friendships on account of pleasure and friendships on account of usefulness are only superficially similar to friendships on account of virtue.\(^{25}\) An account like Milgram’s,

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\(^{25}\) Millgram, 374.
then, seems to focus on what it is that leads us to seek out friends in the first place. Some relationships are motivated by what we stand to gain, while others are motivated by the good of another.

Although Aristotle himself says relatively little about the motivations behind friendship, both the common opinions about friendship and some of his reasons for thinking that the blessed man still needs friends might provide some insight into why motivation is a relevant consideration in evaluating the account of friendship. For example, at 1155a4-11 Aristotle claims that “no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all the other good things,” and that both the wealthy and the poor are in need of friends, either in order to be a benefactor in the former case, or as a refuge in the latter case. Later, at 1169b8-13, he suggests that friends “seem to be the greatest of external goods,” and that an excellent person will need friends to receive his benefits, because there is virtue in benefiting others, especially one’s friends. The motivations behind forming friendships, then, seem to be because friends are good to have, as well as being good targets for excellent behavior.

In “The Good of Political Activity,” Terence Irwin argues that we can distinguish friendship on account of the good from our other relationships with others by appealing to Aristotle’s claim at Nicomachean Ethics IX.9 that a friend is another self. According to Irwin, “the distinctive feature of friendship is living together, and especially the sharing of rational discourse and thinking,” and so “in so far as I treat my friend as I treat myself, my reasoning and thinking are related to his reasoning, thinking, and action in the same way as they are related to mine.”26 The result of this way of thinking, according to Irwin, is that friends regard each other’s thoughts and desires as having an equal status, and so give them the same weight in their own

deliberations about what choices to make and how to act. On Irwin’s account, then, my actions toward and on behalf of my friends differ from my actions toward strangers because when I view my friend as another self I have more reason to act than I might otherwise. I am motivated by my friend’s thoughts and desires because those thoughts and desires are given equal status to my own.

Lorraine Smith Pangle, in *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, argues that while the goodwill that motivates friendship appears on the surface to differ from what motivates our concern for justice, friendship and justice seem to be motivated by similar concerns. She notes a tension between generosity and the pursuit of one’s own good in Aristotle’s theory. According to Pangle’s interpretation, friends are generous to one another both because they want to be and because they acknowledge and repay the generosity of their friends. Pangle goes on to suggest that when things are going well, no one seems to be really concerned with justice, noting that “Aristotle acknowledges that friends often talk as if they have banished concern” for justice, and that “friendship is indeed characterized by an unwillingness to keep strict accounts.” She goes on to add, however, that “it is when difficulties and conflicts arise that we feel the force of our friends’ claims upon us, and it is when they let us down that we realize we have all along been assuming ourselves to have claims upon them, claims of justice that are not less but greater the stronger the love between us has been, and the more selflessly we have given in the past.”

According to this account, friends repay one another because of feelings of goodwill and the desire to repay the generosity of one’s friends, and so there is a sense in which friendship does not seem to be overly concerned with justice. Nevertheless, once friends are aware of the fact

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27 Irwin, 91-92.
29 Smith Pangle, 80.
that this generosity is not being properly acknowledged or repaid, the obligations that friends have to one another become more pronounced.

Pangle’s account is similar to the interpretations provided by Cooper and Stern-Gillet discussed below, in that she argues that friendship and justice are also concerned with the common good. 30 According to Pangle, justice is necessary for friendship and some degree of friendship is a necessary precondition for justice in the sense that “at least the rudimentary elements of friendship, beginning with a recognized common interest, are essential for the establishment of justice.” 31 She suggests that Aristotle must have determined that the only way for people to take justice seriously, and to pursue the common good, is if justice were grounded in a powerfully felt sense of community. According to Pangle’s interpretation, then, it seems as though justice is primarily concerned with the pursuit of the common good. It also seems as though, under her account, this can only occur when people are motivated to be generous to another person or to some small community. While the exchanges between friends appear to be, on the surface, motivated by generosity, there is a sense in which this generosity is also what motivates justice.

Other interpretations that discuss the motivations behind friendship look to the reasons that a virtuous person in particular might want to have friends. According to Gary Gurtler, “the individual whom one wants to befriend stands out in some way as good and not merely as useful or pleasant. Thus our motive for friendship is that we like someone in such a way that we see in him some good that we want to get to know in the intimate way that friendship offers.” 32 It seems as though Gurtler thinks that this motivation might also apply to non-virtuous individuals (“the

30 Smith Pangle, 80.
31 Smith Pangle, 80.
many”) and even the vicious. He argues that Aristotle’s distinction between the good, the many, and the vicious is not made in terms of their intentions but rather of how their character facilitates or hinders their choices and thus the possibility of friendship with others. I take it that what he means here is that the extent to which the non-virtuous are able to make friends is limited by the fact that others are not going to see them as anything other than useful or pleasant. As a result, there is a reduced motive for friendship in these cases. According to this interpretation, justice has a more limited function in friendships of all types, and Gurtler argues that justice is concerned with those relations that precede friendship as well as those conflicts that arise in friendships that turn out to be on account of usefulness. Gurtler claims that this is because friendship between virtuous individuals goes beyond the moral virtues, in the sense that friendships of this sort provide an opportunity for contemplation and self-knowledge. I take it that this reduced role of justice is also the result of Gurtler’s claim that the non-virtuous have a diminished capacity for friendship, due to the fact that fewer people might be motivated to be their friends.

As noted above, I take it that these sorts of interpretations are attempting to look at how we think about what motivates one to have friends in order to help answer the question of how egoistic or altruistic Aristotle’s account might be. Note that interpretations that talk about the motivations behind friendship seem to also agree that friendship and justice have different motivations. According to these interpretations, friendship is motivated by the good, or a desire to do good, whereas justice is a matter that either isn’t a concern for friendship, or which is only a concern in friendships on account of usefulness. Although this may help to answer the question of why friends have no need of justice, but just people still have need of friends, it does not

33 Gurtler, 43.
34 Gurtler, 43.
explain why Aristotle seems to emphasize the close connection between the two throughout the rest of his account.

**Interpretations Focused on Shared Goals of Friendship**

Interpretations that focus on the shared goals of a friendship emphasize what each friend aims at in the relationship, sometimes using Aristotle’s distinction between friendships on account of the good, friendships on account of pleasure, and friendships on account of usefulness. Some, such as W.W. Fortenbaugh, argue that a friendship’s “essential nature” is defined in terms of the goal or purpose at which the friends are directed. Others, such as Charles Kahn, suggest that while the objective of friendship is the welfare of the other person in the relationship, the interest behind that objective is the impulse or reason one has in aiming at that goal. Depending on which type of friendship one is taking part in, that interest could be pleasure, usefulness, or the good itself; and in the case of pleasure or usefulness, it could be self-interested while at the same time remaining altruistic. According to interpretations like these, a friendship is fundamentally defined by the object of love which serves as its basis. The differences between the secondary forms of friendship and friendship on account of the good, or between personal friendship and friendship in association, are the result of the differences between the goals that those taking part in the relationship aim to achieve.

In *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*, Suzanne Stern-Gillet draws a distinction between friendship on account of the good and political friendship, arguing that friendship on account of the good is not attainable by most, but political friendship is. She argues that advantage is the

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presiding aim of friendships in communities, making them friendships on account of usefulness, and argues that friendships of this sort can transcend mere usefulness when there is concord.\(^{38}\) Under this account, then, friendship seems to be a matter of pursuing some shared goal, such as the good in friendships on account of the good, or advantage in cases of political friendship. As a result, the connection between friendship and justice depends upon the goal of the friendship. Stern-Gillet interprets Aristotle’s notion of justice as being either universal or particular.\(^{39}\) She defines universal justice as complete virtue in relation to another person, or people more generally, and defines particular justice as pertaining to “the apportioning of competitive or contested goods (e.g., honour, wealth, and safety) between the members of a society or group.”\(^{40}\) Stern-Gillet then claims that as universal justice differs from particular justice, so does friendship on account of the good differ from political friendship.\(^{41}\)

I take it that what she means here is that universal justice is superior to particular justice in the same way that friendship on account of the good is superior to political friendship. In the same way that friendship on account of the good is unattainable by most, so too is universal justice. Moreover, just as universal justice is complete, so is friendship on account of the good, and just as particular justice governs particular interests, so too does political friendship. Stern-Gillet concludes that friendship on account of the good “is described to be over and above considerations of particular justice,” because “the friendship of virtue is generally said to make particular justice redundant.”\(^{42}\) According to this interpretation, friendship and justice are

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\(^{39}\) I will discuss Aristotle’s account of justice in greater detail in Chapter Four, where I analyze the function of justice in a friendship as a means of preserving equality.

\(^{40}\) Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*, 155.

\(^{41}\) Stern-Gillet, 156.

\(^{42}\) Stern-Gillet, 163.
connected in what the relationship aims at. The justice appropriate to those who are friends on account of the good is different than the justice appropriate to those who are friends on account of pleasure or usefulness, as is the justice appropriate to the various associations.

John Cooper argues in “Political Animals and Civic Friendship” that political friendship is based in mutual benefit and concern with the kinds of people one is dealing with. Namely, this is “a concern that no one taking part in civic life be unjust or indeed vicious in any way. This is a concern of each citizen for each other citizen, whether or not they know each other personally, and indeed whether or not they have had any direct and personal dealings with one another whatsoever.” According to Cooper, not only do people want not to be cheated or otherwise treated unjustly by their fellow citizens, but they also want their fellow citizens to seem to be decent people. This interpretation of Aristotle’s theory seems to focus on the shared goals of friendship because it describes political friendship as being characterized by mutual benefit, mutual goodwill, and mutual trust across the population. Friendship and justice become connected in the case of political friendship because justice contributes to citizens achieving their shared goals. In the case of political friendship, justice is a matter of keeping the common good of one’s fellow citizens in mind, and acting accordingly. When this happens, according to Cooper, citizens aim at the common good, in that “each regards the others as wishing for and implementing through their actions his individual good (as he also intends in his actions their individual good), as and to the extent justice requires,” and moreover “the common good of the community will consist first of the ways in which, by the organization of civic life, the

44 Cooper, 366.
45 Cooper, 370-371.
individuals making it up each severally benefit from it, that is, benefit in ways that are assignable to them each separately as individuals.”

Both Stern-Gillet and Cooper focus on political friendship, and how such friendship benefits those who participate in it. Because these friendships aim at the advantage of their participants, both also seem to view justice as a means of protecting the interests of everyone involved. These interpretations don’t see a function for this type of justice in friendships on account of the good, however, despite the fact that Aristotle himself doesn’t seem to draw a distinction between how justice functions in the different forms of friendship. Although these interpretations make it a bit clearer as to why friends have no need of justice but just men still have need of friends (because friendship is over and above considerations of particular justice), we are still left with questions about why Aristotle thinks that justice and friendship are so closely connected.

As Julia Annas notes in “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism,” one of the advantages to thinking of friendship in terms of its shared goals is that it allows Aristotle to provide an account of friendship that allows us to explain why it is that there are so many types of relationships that can be considered friendships without going to the extreme of thinking that the term “friendship” is ambiguous. Annas also interprets Aristotle as defining friendship primarily in terms of its basis (pleasure, utility, or the good), noting that he places great emphasis on the three forms of friendship described in NE VIII.1-5. She also notes that “to like someone because he is good is to like him for quite a different kind of reason from liking him because he is useful or entertaining.” According to this interpretation, the types of friendships that one has

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46 Cooper, 373.
47 Annas, “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism”, 547.
48 Annas, 546.
are largely determined by one’s social standing. As a result, Annas notes that the closeness of the parallel Aristotle draws between friendship and justice highlights the fact that Aristotle’s notion of justice differs from contemporary views. “For Aristotle, it is not just mean or deplorable, but actually more unjust, to cheat a friend than a stranger. To our minds the parallel drawn out between the concepts makes justice too personal and friendship too impersonal.”

Like Annas, A.W. Price argues that Aristotle’s friendships on account of pleasure and friendships on account of usefulness make up a wider range of interpersonal relationships than we typically consider when we use the term “friendship”. Price suggests that the account of friendship on account of the good “amounts to an analysis of friendship as we conceive it,” while in the discussion of the other types of friendship, “what emerges is not a genus of friendship that forms a whole which unifies its species, but a range of relationships held together less by subsumption under a single formula than by reference to a single type.” These relationships, according to Price, fall far short of our notion of friendship, noting that “it does not follow that he is more cynical about the springs of friendship than we are, and sees mere well-wishing where we see goodwill; instead, he may simply be analyzing a term with a wider extension than ours.” From here, Price suggests that these relationships are partnership or association, and that partnerships are as diverse as friendships.

Those interpretations which focus on the goals of the various friendships attempt to address what I take to be a key interpretive challenge for Aristotle’s theory. As noted by many of these interpreters, the term “friendship” is broadly applied by Aristotle, often to relationships that we might not typically think of as friendships, such as that of a parent to a child, or a ruler to a

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49 Annas, 552.
51 Price, 157-158.
52 Price, 159.
citizen. Furthermore, as Annas and Price seem to suggest, if we use only what Aristotle says in NE VIII.1-5 as a definition of friendship, the only way that some of these relationships, such as those of fellow citizens or fellow-sailors, could qualify is by pointing to their shared goals. These interpretations also give some insight as to why we take there to be such a sharp distinction between friendship and justice, despite the fact that Aristotle does not. Most of these accounts seem to suggest that justice is either more relevant to, or only necessary in friendships on account of usefulness, particularly political friendships and the friendships found in associations. This seems to be because those sorts of friendship are based on some sort of advantage that the participants could possibly miss out on if dealt with unfairly by others in the association. Moreover, because associations seem to be less personal than what we typically think of as friendships, justice seems to be more relevant in these cases than in others.

My own interpretation of Aristotle’s account falls into this category, as well. As I will argue in the following sections, I take it that Aristotle views every friendship as being based on some object of love, which is pursued jointly by those participating in the friendship. That object of love can be either useful, pleasant, or good, and can be shared in common by the friends. Like the other views which emphasize the shared goals of friendship summarized above, my interpretation evaluates a friendship on the basis of the goal that the friends aim to achieve. An association of sailors aims at something different than fellow citizens, whose aims differ from the partygoers at a feast, and so the success or failure of these relationships will be evaluated on different terms. But unlike many of the interpretations summarized above, I take it that justice is not all that different between the types of friendship and is just as relevant to friendships on account of pleasure, for example, as it is in the political association.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) My arguments for these claims are presented primarily in Chapters 3 and 4, below.
Justice, Friendship, and Equality

Broadly speaking, the different methods of interpreting Aristotle’s account summarized above seem to share three key features. First, they emphasize friendship on account of the good over friendship on account of usefulness or pleasure. Second, they draw a distinction between on the one hand personal friendship between individuals and on the other friendship in association. Third, they draw a distinction between justice in the political association and in other sorts of relationships. Part of what might motivate interpreters to draw these sorts of distinctions is a general tendency to take what is said at the beginning of Book VIII of the Nicomachean Ethics to provide something of a set definition of friendship that is meant to apply across all of the different associations discussed throughout Books VIII and IX. But, as already noted above, many of the relationships that Aristotle discusses in his account of friendship do not neatly fit that definition. Moreover, this focus on the early chapters of Book VIII leads interpreters to focus on the tension between self-interest and the good of others, without focusing as much on Aristotle’s claims about the connections among friendship, justice, and the notion of equality.

I take it that this happens for two reasons. First, Aristotle’s initial description of friendship seems to apply primarily to relationships between two individuals. He provides, as examples of friendship, parents and offspring and foreigners and hosts in these opening chapters, and does not mention larger associations or groups of citizens in the early account. Because many interpreters see justice as a concern primarily in the context of political affairs, justice and equality are often neglected in the discussion of friendship between individuals. Second, the distinction Aristotle draws between friendship on account of the good on one hand, and friendships on account of pleasure and usefulness on the other hand suggests that friendships in the latter two categories are in some sense inferior due to the fact that they are based on
something coincidental. He also claims that friendships of this sort are less stable because the bases of these friendships are less stable. Because the emphasis in these relationships seems to be on the benefit or pleasure gained from the friendship and less on the individual friends themselves, scholars have often used these cases to raise questions about whether or not friendship (either in general, or in these two types specifically) is necessarily self-interested.

By contrast, I plan to offer an interpretation of Aristotle’s theory of friendship on which his analysis of friendship continues through the entirety of Book VIII and into the first three chapters of Book IX. This interpretation will in other words treat this section of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a single, continuous analysis of friendship, taking seriously Aristotle’s claim that justice and friendship are closely connected. I will argue that this interpretation of Aristotle’s methodology will lead to substantive insights about Aristotle’s views on the place of equality in friendship and how justice functions to preserve equality in friendship. Moreover, I will argue that the secondary forms of friendship make a significant contribution to the lives of the virtuous and non-virtuous alike. Not only are those relationships more commonly available than friendship on account of the good, they also offer opportunities to engage in just and virtuous activity with others.

Specifically, I take it that the passages from VIII.6 through IX.3 are Aristotle’s answer to the interpretive challenges raised by the account of friendship provided in the early chapters of Book VIII. After opening up the account with a survey of reputable opinions about friendship in VIII.1, VIII.2-6 lay out the three forms of friendship, and provide something of a preliminary account of friendship as having goodwill for the friend for his own sake, on account of either the good, the pleasant, or the useful. These chapters are also where Aristotle states that friendship on account of the good is complete, and that it is friendship in the primary and full sense. These
chapters note some of the differences between friendship on account of the good and the other
two types of friendship and conclude with Aristotle’s claim that friends make an equal return in
the good they wish to one another and in what is pleasant. This seems to be the case, according
to Aristotle, because it is said that friendship is equality, and that the equal return of good will
and pleasure are found most of all in friendship on account of the good.

In VIII.7, Aristotle begins to raise some questions for the account of friendship as it has
been presented. In other words, we begin to see some of the ways in which the definition
provided in the previous chapters is inadequate, or at least does not seem to capture all of the
relationships we call friendships. He notes that “a different form of friendship, however, is the
one in accord with superiority—for example, of a father for his son, of older for younger
generally, of man for woman, and of any sort of ruler for someone he rules” (1158b11-13). This
is a problem for Aristotle’s view, if, as he established in the previous chapters that friends make
an equal return, and he takes seriously the claim that friendship is equality. If a son can never be
equal to his father, or a ruler equal to his subjects, then how can we call these relationships
friendships? It is in this chapter where Aristotle also draws a distinction between equality in
worth and equality in quantity, and a distinction between friendship and justice. He writes that
“what is equal, though, does not seem to be the same in matters of justice and in friendship, since
in matters of justice equality is primarily equality in worth and secondarily equality in quantity,
whereas in friendship equality is primarily equality in quantity and secondarily equality in
worth” (1158b29-31). In VIII.8, after noting that ordinary people seem to wish to be loved more
than to love, but that friendship consists more in loving than in being loved, Aristotle writes that
it is in loving that “even unequals will best be friends, since in this way they will be equalized”
(1159a35-1159b1). Although the discussion of loving and being loved might seem to be an
abrupt change from the topics of VIII.7, it offers Aristotle an opportunity to begin to answer the question of how to make friendships with those who are superior possible.

From there, Aristotle opens VIII.9 by saying that it seems as though “friendship and justice are concerned with the same things and involve the same people” (1159b24-25). I take it that Aristotle is picking up a thread from VIII.7, where he claims that friendship and justice are both concerned with equality, though prioritizing it differently. This opens a lengthy discussion of the sorts of friendship and justice found in many different types of associations, including those found in the constitutions of cities, and those found in the family, that extends through VIII.12. Specifically, the discussion progresses from a general account of friendship and justice in associations to a general account of the different types of constitution and different types of familial relationships. This then becomes a discussion of how these sorts of relationships count as friendships, and of the connection between justice and friendship in these relationships, concluding with a more in-depth discussion of friendship within the family. Note that it seems as though the discussion turns from how to equalize relationships that are between superior and inferior parties (καθ’ ύπεροχήν in Greek, translated as “in accord with superiority” by Reeve), to a general discussion of the relationship between friendship and justice, and finally to a discussion of relationships that are paradigmatically in accord with superiority. I take it, then, that these chapters are meant to show why the friendships found in associations ought to be called friendships despite the fact that many of them are necessarily in accord with superiority. Moreover, these chapters seem to show that understanding how justice functions in associations is fundamental to understanding how it is that they qualify as friendships.

From VIII.13 through IX.3, Aristotle discusses the causes of disputes within a friendship and how to resolve those disputes. He begins by talking about how disputes come about in
personal friendships between equals, then turns to disputes in friendships in accord with
superiority. In both cases, Aristotle discusses how these disputes ought to be resolved: as we
might expect, those who are equals must repay with an equal quantity, while friendships in
accord with superiority are repaid with what is equal according to worth. The closing chapters of
this section deal with how to prioritize one’s obligations to friends and others to whom one is
obligated, as well as discussing the dissolution of friendships and just what one owes to one’s
former friends. Again, it seems as though these are questions that are raised because of what has
come in the previous chapters. If, as Aristotle suggests, it is nearly impossible to repay one’s
parents for the benefits received during one’s upbringing and education, then it might seem as
though one must devote nearly all of one’s resources to repaying one’s parents, which then
makes it impossible to repay anyone else. The fact that Aristotle uses the debt to one’s parents as
an example in IX.2 seems to be a direct reference back to the discussion which began in VIII.7,
and which is continued in VIII.13 when Aristotle talks about what we owe to our friends. This
would suggest that the issues raised here depend on the account presented in VIII.1-12.

If my view of how these chapters are organized is correct, then Aristotle’s analysis of
friendship is not really complete until the end of IX.3, and much of the analysis focuses on how
many of the relationships that do not seem to fit the preliminary definition of friendship can
nevertheless be made to fit that definition. Moreover, Aristotle’s discussion of equality is central
not only to understanding how these different relationships can be considered friendships but
also to understanding how friendships are maintained and fall apart. Where there is inequality in
a friendship, disputes arise, and if these disputes are not resolved, the friendship falls apart.
Justice, then, because it too is concerned with equality, is what helps to preserve equality in a
friendship, and the discussion of the causes and resolutions of disputes in friendships helps us to understand how justice functions in a friendship.

There are two potential challenges that my interpretation must overcome. First, Aristotle discusses equality in two different senses throughout his analysis. The first sense of equality is the one involved in his account of friendships in accordance with superiority. The sort of inequality involved in these cases seems to be an inequality in capabilities, as in the case of a ruler who is of far more use to his subjects than his subjects are to him. Moreover, these inequalities seem to be insurmountable, in that it seems as though subjects may never be as useful to their rulers as their rulers are to them. The second sense of equality is the one involved in unequal reciprocation, as in the case of a friendship on account of usefulness where one friend contributes more to the friendship than the other. In these cases, it is possible to overcome the inequality by simply reciprocating an appropriate amount.

These two different senses of equality seem to map onto Aristotle’s distinction between equality in worth and equality in quantity, so understanding the distinction between the two may help to resolve any ambiguities in the way that Aristotle uses the term equality. Aristotle claims that although friendship and justice are both concerned with equality, friendship prioritizes equality in quantity over equality in worth, whereas justice prioritizes equality in worth over equality in quantity. This distinction between the two types of equality, and how they are prioritized differently in friendship and matters of justice, also leads to the second potential challenge to my interpretation, which is how best to characterize the difference between friendship and justice. This is a challenge that, as noted above, other interpretations have tried to solve by appealing to the differing emotions behind or the different motivations that drive the two concepts. Interpretations which emphasize the emotions behind a friendship seem to leave
out the fact that just acts within a friendship come from the same emotion as friendship, and the fact that in cases of friendship in accord with superiority, justice requires that the inferior party increase affection. Moreover, as mentioned above, “goodwill” on its own seems to have less to do with emotion than one might think. Interpretations which emphasize the shared goals of a friendship tend to focus primarily on political friendships and associations, leaving questions about how justice functions in personal friendships. Interpretations which emphasize the motivations behind a friendship seem to suggest that the motivations behind friendship and justice differ without explaining why Aristotle might think that friendship and justice are so similar. While the distinction between equality in worth and equality in quantity may help us to understand why Aristotle claims that friends have no need of justice while just people still have need of friends, if justice is going to function within friendships as a means of maintaining equality, it is important to get clear on just what this distinction amounts to.

My argument is presented in three main stages. In Chapter 2, I argue that rather than providing a definition of friendship, Aristotle is instead establishing a set of sufficient conditions for friendship that can be instantiated across a wide range of relationships. Friendship on account of the good is paradigmatic, insofar as it fulfills all of these conditions to the highest degree. Friendships on account of usefulness and pleasure, while inferior to friendship on account of the good, are still considered friendships insofar as they fulfill one or more of these conditions. Such relationships can be deficient in a number of ways and at the same time still be considered friendships and can still contribute to a person’s happiness to the extent that they resemble the paradigm. My own interpretation is motivated by other attempts to interpret the relationship between the different forms of friendship as a case of focal analysis or core-dependent homonymy. These other interpretations are unsuccessful, I argue, because Aristotle does not
provide a definition of friendship that can include all of the different relationships that are
covered in his discussion of friendship. My interpretation of how the types of friendship relate to
one another can be applied more flexibly and can be applied to both personal friendship and
friendship in association.

In Chapter 3, I argue that Aristotle’s account of friendship applies equally to personal
friendships and friendship in association, insofar as all types of friendship come about on
account of some good thing and aim at the common good of those who take part in the
friendship. Friendship in association expands on the notion of personal friendship by showing
how the reciprocal goodwill found in personal friendships can be extended to larger groups of
individuals who share our aims. Friendship in association (just like personal friendship) can fall
short of the paradigm set by friendship on account of the good in a number of ways, but such
relationships still contribute to the good life in a number of ways, and in some cases can provide
opportunities for usefulness or pleasure that a pair of friends might not be able to achieve on
their own. Under this interpretation, the connection between justice and friendship (both personal
and in association) relies on a similar notion of the common good, which requires an
interpretation of the notion of equality more generally. A friendship is better to the extent that all
of the friends involved are able to share equally in the common good that serves as the basis of
the relationship, and in order to make judgments about whether a friendship is going well or
poorly, one must have a general notion of what it means to share equally in the common good.

Chapter 4 argues that justice and friendship are similar to one another in that they require
individuals to behave in similar ways, such that friendly actions and just actions are one and the
same. In a friendship, justice functions to preserve the friendship by preserving the equality
between the individuals taking part in the relationship. I argue that the sort of justice most
relevant to friendship is what Aristotle calls fairness. Fairness is a matter of achieving a mean between too much and too little between two or more people who have a share of some good thing, and can be achieved either proportionally, in allocations, or arithmetically, in rectification. Although Aristotle makes the claim that friendship is primarily concerned with fairness in rectification, both types of fairness will apply to friendship, since some friendships occur between those who are unable to fully repay one another for the goods obtained through the relationship. I argue that Aristotle’s discussion of how to resolve disputes in a friendship can help to both make sense of the function that justice has within a friendship and also how justice and friendship differ from one another. We have different obligations to our friends than we do to strangers under this account, and so friendship and justice—while closely related—are distinct from one another.
Chapter 2 – Friendship “by Similarity”

Early in his analyses of friendship in both the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle claims that friendship has three forms, each one corresponding to one of the proper objects of love (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1155b17-21, 1156a6-8, and *Eudemian Ethics* 1236a7-12). These objects of love—the good, the pleasant, and the useful—serve as the basis for each form of friendship, so that friendship on account of the good takes place between people who are virtuous, and friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness take place between those who find one another either pleasant or useful (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1156b7-9, 1157a25-29, and *Eudemian Ethics* 1236a12-14). In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes the claim that the three forms are related to one another, such that friendship on account of the good is friendship in the primary sense and friendships on account of pleasure and usefulness are friendships in a secondary sense “by similarity” (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα) to it (1157a30-33). As a result of this distinction, friendship on account of the good is known as “primary friendship,” and friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness are known as “secondary friendships.” This description of the forms of friendship and how they relate to one another makes analysis of the forms of friendship difficult, particularly when it comes to identifying a definition of friendship that applies to all of its forms.

Interpretive problems arise from the fact that Aristotle says little about what it means for the secondary forms of friendship to be related “by similarity” to friendship on account of the good. He lists a number of features that the forms of friendship share with one another, but says little about how the features shared by the three forms of friendship are represented in each. The lack of detail in discussing the “by similarity” relationship as it applies to the forms of friendship might suggest that Aristotle took it to be fairly straightforward or perhaps even unimportant, but
how one chooses to interpret the relationship will have implications for how one decides which relationships count as friendships under Aristotle’s account, and how different relationships should be categorized. Interpretation of the “by similarity” relationship is further complicated by the fact that what Aristotle says about it seems to differ between the Eudemian and Nicomachean Ethics. The text of the Eudemian Ethics suggests that Aristotle may see the forms of friendship as a case of focal analysis, or what Christopher Shields calls core-dependent homonymy, but as we shall see Aristotle’s typical references to core-dependent homonymy are absent from the discussion in the Nicomachean Ethics.54

The question of how to interpret the “by similarity” relationship leads to a second interpretive problem, which is the question of whether or not the secondary forms of friendship count as friendships at all. From Aristotle’s language, it is clear that the secondary forms of friendship are inferior to friendship on account of the good in important ways, which has led some to argue that only the primary form of friendship truly deserves the name.55 The secondary forms of friendship fall short of the ideal, and as a result, one might think that such relationships only imitate friendship on account of the good. But if it is the case that the secondary forms of friendship are not friendships at all, we are still left with the question of why Aristotle spends as much time talking about them as he does.

54 Specifically, while the Eudemian Ethics compares the term “friendship” to the term “medical”—a term typically seen as an example of core-dependent homonymy in Aristotle’s works—no such references can be found in the account of friendship from the Nicomachean Ethics.

55 Terence Irwin, for example, argues that the secondary forms of friendship do not include the altruistic concern found in friendship on account of the good. Terence Irwin, Aristotle’s First Principles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 612-613. David Bostock suggests that it is debatable that the secondary forms of friendship are entitled to the name “friendship,” and as a result focuses on what he calls “true” friendship for the rest of his discussion. David Bostock, Aristotle’s Ethics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 167-187. Kenneth Alpern writes that although they may not be disinterested in the way we would expect friendship to be, the secondary forms of friendship are able to exhibit qualities found in friendships on account of the good. Kenneth D Alpern, “Aristotle on the Friendships of Utility and Pleasure,” Journal of the History of Philosophy 21, no. 3 (1983): 303–15.
A final problem has to do with the wide range of relationships that Aristotle calls friendships and how to classify them. His account encompasses the sorts of personal relationships between two people that first come to mind when we think of friendship, as well as relationships between family members, fellow citizens, sailors on a journey, members of a dining club, and people engaged in marketplace transactions, just to name a few (1159b27-29, 1160a19-20, 1161b12-16). Intuitively, we might think that the friendship between a parent and a child should differ greatly from that between a business owner and her customers, and yet it seems as though Aristotle’s basic account is meant to apply to both. Moreover, there is a question about which of the three forms these different friendships fall under. While the businesslike friendship might easily be categorized as a friendship of usefulness, interpreters often differ in how to classify friendships between fellow citizens or family members.56

In my view, these interpretive problems in part arise from interpreting the “by similarity” relationship as one which allows us to derive a strict definition of “friendship” that can be applied across all three forms. Such a definition, if it were available, would allow us to determine which relationships conform to the definition and are thus considered true friendships, and which relationships are deficient. But, I will argue, Aristotle’s analysis of the various relationships that are called friendships suggests that many of these relationships do not neatly conform to a single

56 Many interpreters argue that family relationships are a form of friendship on account of the good while noting the difficulty associated with Aristotle’s claims that women and children are not fully capable of virtue. See, for example, Elizabeth Belfiore, “Family Friendship in Aristotle’s Ethics,” *Ancient Philosophy* 21, no. 1 (2001): 113–32, and Ann Ward, *Contemplating Friendship in Aristotle’s Ethics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016). In the case of friendship between citizens, some interpreters argue that it is a case of friendship on account of the good, while others argue that it is a type of friendship on account of usefulness. Still others suggest that the type of friendship that is found between citizens will depend upon how just the rulers of the society happen to be. For more on friendship between citizens, see John M. Cooper, “Political Animals and Civic Friendship,” in *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 356–77, and Terence Irwin, “The Good of Political Activity,” in *Aristoteles “Politik”*: *Akten Des XI Symposium Aristotelicum Friedrichshafen/Bodensee*, ed. Günther Patzig (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 73–98. Howard Curzer argues that there are 72 distinct forms of friendship, under which different familial and political relationships can be classified. Howard J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
Instead, I take it that Aristotle is providing a set of sufficient conditions for friendship in his analysis, which can then be instantiated in different ways across a wide range of relationships. This allows Aristotle to show what makes primary friendship as important as it is to the good life, while still directing attention to the discussion of the secondary forms of friendship which, although they are not as good as primary friendship, still contribute to the good life. It also allows Aristotle to apply what is said about friendship generally to all of these relationships while providing the flexibility to discuss the unique contributions that each type of friendship has to the good life.

In what follows, I will begin by detailing the ways in which, on Aristotle’s account, different friendships can be similar and dissimilar. I will then examine two other places in which Aristotle uses the phrase “by similarity” to relate terms to one another, and argue that neither case is analogous enough to friendship to help interpret the relationship between its primary and secondary forms. I will then argue that despite Aristotle’s references in the Eudemian Ethics, there are significant problems with interpreting friendship as a case of core-dependent homonymy. I conclude that there is no strict definition of “friendship” to be found in Aristotle’s analysis, which provides an opening for discussing the importance of the secondary forms of friendship and the types of friendship found in associations.

57 The lack of a definition for the term “friendship” is a point noted by Julia Annas, who writes of the relationship between the primary and secondary forms of friendship that, “we have apparently been promised a fairly definite account of how the cases are linked: the definition of the primary case is implicit in that of any other case, but not vice versa. And Aristotle nowhere spells out how this is to be done for the various forms of friendship; we are not given definitions of any of them. What we find in both versions of the course on friendship are discussions of various ways in which the different sorts of friendship are similar to and dissimilar from one another.” It should be noted, however, that, on the basis of the account provided in the Eudemian Ethics, Annas argues that the forms of friendship should be interpreted as a case of focal analysis. Julia Annas, “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism,” Mind 86, no. 344 (1977), 547. I discuss this in greater detail below.
The Forms of Friendship, Their Similarities, and Their Differences

In describing the three different forms of friendship, Aristotle writes that friendship on account of the good is complete, and that:

the friendship that exists because of pleasure bears a similarity to the complete sort of friendship (ὁμοιωμα ταύτης ἐκείνη), since good people are also pleasant to each other. Similarly (ὁμοίως) with the sort that exists because of utility, since good people are also useful to each other (1156b34-1157a3).58

Aristotle goes on to claim that:

friendship in the primary and full sense is that between good people insofar as they are good, while the rest are friendships by similarity (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα) to it. For it is insofar as there is something good in their relationship, and so some similarity (ὁμοιόν τι) to the primary case, that they are friends, since what is pleasant is also good to lovers of pleasure (1157a30-33).59

He then concludes this section of the text by saying:

good people will be friends because of themselves, since they will be friends insofar as they are good. So they are friends unconditionally, whereas the others are friends coincidentally and by similarity to these (τῷ ὁμοιόσθαι τούτοις) (1157b3-5).

These passages come at the conclusion of his description of the three forms of friendship and the ways in which they are similar and dissimilar. They establish that friendship on account of the good is friendship in the primary and full sense while the others are not, from which we can infer that the secondary forms of friendship are somehow deficient as instances of friendship. The passages also establish that the secondary forms of friendship are friendships “by similarity (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα)” to friendship on account of the good.

Aristotle identifies the ways in which the primary and secondary forms of friendship are similar and dissimilar in Nicomachean Ethics VIII.2-6. This section of the text begins by giving an account of the objects of love that serve as the basis for friendship. Something is lovable,

58 All translations of the Nicomachean Ethics are from Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2014), unless otherwise noted.
59 The phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” is also sometimes translated as “by resemblance” or “by analogy.” In order to avoid confusion, I have included the Greek where the phrase appears in translation.
Aristotle claims, by being either good, pleasant, or useful (1155b17-21). From there, he gives a general description of friendship before turning to the similarities and differences between its three forms, complete with examples of different sorts of friendships that are meant to illustrate these similarities and differences. This section of the text presents friendship on account of the good as paradigmatic, and the discussion seems to be loosely organized around descriptions of how specific features of the three objects of love can help to explain the similarities and differences. Specifically, Aristotle opens the discussion in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.3 by saying that the objects of love “differ in form from each other, hence so do the ways of loving and the friendships” (1156a6-7). I take it, then, that any differences between the forms of friendship are the result of the ways in which the objects of love differ from one another. Although Aristotle does not make the claim, I take it also that any similarities between the forms of friendship are grounded in the similarities between the objects of love, namely that the objects of love are all good and desirable.

Based on *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2-6, it seems as though friendships are similar to one another insofar as they include goodwill that is reciprocated and does not go unnoticed (1156a3-5), are based upon one of the three objects of love—producing either pleasure, usefulness, or both (1156b19-21, 1157a32-33), and are concerned with equality (1157b35-1158a1). Before going into more detail about these similarities, one thing to note is that Aristotle says relatively little about how these similarities are expressed in the different sorts of friendship. As a result, what we will find is that what constitutes goodwill in a friendship on account of pleasure may

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60 Aristotle identifies the same three objects of love in the *Eudemian Ethics*, although that text includes a lengthier discussion of whether a person loves what is good absolutely or what is only apparently good. Specifically, he argues that while both the absolute and apparent good are appropriate objects of love, a decent and wise person will love what is absolutely good and pleasant while a base and foolish person will choose what is only apparently good or apparently pleasant (1235b18-1236a15).
not qualify as such in a friendship on account of the good. Moreover, it is also possible that these similarities are expressed in different ways within different types of friendship of the same form. So for example while the relationship between a ruler and her subjects and the relationship between fellow citizens might both be considered examples of political friendship, what constitutes “equality” between friends will be different for each type of relationship.

**Goodwill**

Aristotle begins the description of the forms of friendship by saying that “friends must have goodwill (that is, wish good things) for each other because of one of the things we mentioned, and not be unaware of it” (1156a3-5). This description serves as a good starting point in providing a general account of how the three forms of friendship are similar to one another. In all three forms of friendship, the friends have goodwill and wish good things for one another on account of one of the three objects of love. This goodwill and wishing of good things must be reciprocated, and all parties must be aware of the fact that they feel this way toward one another. These features of friendship call to mind Aristotle’s definition of friendly feeling (τὸ φιλεῖν) in *Rhetoric* II.4. There, Aristotle defines friendly feeling towards someone as “wishing for him what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for his, and being inclined, so far as you can, to bring these things about,” and writes that “those who think they feel thus towards each other think themselves friends” (1380b36-1381a4).\(^6\) While the definition from the *Rhetoric* does not include any mention of either equality or the objects of love, it does mention reciprocal goodwill that does not go unnoticed.

When Aristotle writes in the *Rhetoric* that those who think they have friendly feeling toward one another think themselves friends, I take it that what he provides is not so much a

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definition of friendship as it is a description of something that can be found in every friendship. In order for this reciprocal goodwill to come about, however, the relationship between the two individuals needs some sort of basis. The addition of a proper object of love in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, then, explains the foundation for the reciprocal goodwill found in every friendship, and allows Aristotle the opportunity to account for the many different relationships in which reciprocal goodwill can be expressed. In addition, the *Nicomachean Ethics* provides additional detail on how this reciprocal goodwill is expressed in every friendship. Specifically, what we will see is that it is expressed as an equal exchange of something good.

**Objects of Love**

Turning back to *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2-6, we find that the forms of friendship are similar in that “every sort of friendship exists because of some good or because of pleasure, whether unconditionally or for the person loving, and is in accord with some likeness (καθ’ ὡμοιότητα τινα) between the parties” (1156b19-21). The likeness between the parties that Aristotle seems to have in mind here is a likeness in the object of love. Both parties are either virtuous, or pleasant or useful to one another, and so are alike. So, the forms of friendship are similar insofar as each form is based on some object of love, and this object of love is what determines the form that the friendship takes. The object of love is what makes the forms of friendship similar to one another is spelled out in additional detail when Aristotle writes of the secondary forms of friendship that it is “insofar as there is something good in their relationship, and so some similarity (ὁμοιόν τι) to the primary case, that they are friends, since what is pleasant is also good to lovers of pleasure” (1157a32-33). This similarity between the secondary

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62 This similarity between the forms of friendship is not to be confused with the way in which friends are similar to one another (e.g. by being useful to one another). The similarity between the friends is what serves as the basis of the friendship, and the claim that all friendships are based in some object of love is the way in which the forms of friendship are similar.
forms of friendship and friendship on account of the good is mentioned again at the end of *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.6, where he notes that “insofar as they are similar (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα) to friendship in accord with virtue they are apparently friendships (since one of them involves pleasure and the other utility, and friendship in accord with virtue also involves these)” (1158b6-8). What these passages suggest is that it is the fact that all of the objects of love are something good that makes the secondary forms of friendship similar to friendship on account of the good.

But what are we meant to take away from the claim that all friendships are similar in being either pleasant, useful, or both? Aristotle began the account of friendship by identifying the ways in which something can be lovable, and his noting that the forms of friendship are similarly directed toward something good suggests that we can infer that they are desirable. Specifically, the basis of all three forms of friendship is something that multiple people find desirable, which results in their engaging in some joint pursuit.63 This similarity is worth mentioning, then, because it provides a framework for determining what friendship requires of those who participate in the relationship. Although Aristotle has yet to detail how the joint pursuit of a common good is conducted, what we have seen so far is that, at a minimum, it will involve mutual, acknowledged goodwill on the part of those who pursue that good thing.

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63 For this reason, W.W. Fortenbaugh argues that friendships are defined by their goal or purpose. The friendships differ from one another insofar as they aim at different things. He argues that Aristotle discusses friendship in this way in order to mitigate the ambiguity involved with using the label “friendship” to talk about associations directed toward goodness, pleasure, and utility. In his analysis, Fortenbaugh sees an analogical relationship between the forms of friendship, such that friendships on account of pleasure and on account of usefulness are analogous to those formed by the morally good. Specifically, Fortenbaugh claims that “just as the good is related to friends of goodness and the pleasant is related to friends of pleasure, so also the useful is related to friends of utility. All three kinds of friendship may be related by analogy and therefore called friendships without simple, unmitigated equivocation.” W.W. Fortenbaugh, “Aristotle’s Analysis of Friendship: Function and Analogy, Resemblance, and Focal Meaning,” *Phronesis: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy* 20, no. 1 (1975): 51–54. While I agree that friendships are goal-directed, it does not seem that we can come any closer to finding a definition of “friendship” as a result. Moreover, while the different forms of friendship have different goals, as I argue below, the primary source of difference between the forms of friendship is the result of differences between the objects of love themselves, and how those differences are manifested within a friendship.
Equality

The joint pursuit of a common good also seems to include reciprocity in the distribution of that good once it is obtained. Specifically, Aristotle describes this reciprocity in terms of equality, writing that in a friendship, each party “loves what is good for himself and makes an equal return in the good he wishes and in what is pleasant (for friendship is said to be equality), and it is most of all in the friendship of good people that these qualities are found” (1157b34-1158a1). It should be noted that although Aristotle claims here that this sort of reciprocity is found most of all in friendship on account of the good, it is found in the secondary forms of friendship as well. *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.13-14 and IX.1-2, for example, discuss how inequality in the secondary sorts of friendship can cause disputes that can end friendships, and how best to resolve such disputes. Given these considerations, we can say that all three forms of friendship are similar in that they involve an equal return of not only goodwill but the good thing on which the friendship is based.

Based on these passages, it seems as though what the objects of love have in common is that they are all good, and as a result desirable. While this might seem obvious, it has implications for the account of friendship. Because the forms of friendship are each based on an object of love, the nature of the similarity between the objects of love results in certain similarities between the forms of friendship. Specifically, the forms of friendship are similar to one another in that they involve the joint pursuit of something good, which involves conduct appropriate to that pursuit. Although what Aristotle has provided here lacks detail, what we find

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64 The passage at 1157b34-1158a1 is part of a larger discussion of friendship as both an activity and a state, where Aristotle reiterates the claim that the friendship of good people is paradigmatic, and goes on to claim that “in loving their friend they love what is good for themselves, since a good person, in becoming a friend, becomes a good for the person for whom he is a friend” (1157b33-34). Although the claim that friendship involves an equal return seems to be relatively minor, it receives a great deal of emphasis from Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.13-IX.3.
is that friendship on account of the good is paradigmatic, in the sense that mutually acknowledged goodwill and an equal return of the good things obtained in the friendship are found in that sort of friendship most of all. To the extent that these things can be found in the secondary forms of friendship, the secondary forms of friendship are similar to friendship on account of the good.

**Differences Between the Forms of Friendship**

By highlighting the ways in which the secondary forms of friendship differ from friendship on account of the good, Aristotle explains why those features that all friendships have in common are found to a lesser extent in the secondary forms of friendship. I take it that just as the similarities between the forms of friendship are best explained by the ways in which the objects of love are similar, so too are the differences between friendship on account of the good and the secondary forms of friendship best explained by the ways in which the objects of love differ from one another. Aristotle notes that those who are friends on account of pleasure or utility do not love each other for themselves, but rather insofar as something good comes to them from each other (1156a14-16). He concludes that “these friendships are in fact coincidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) friendships, then, since a person who is beloved in that way is loved not insofar as he is precisely who he is but insofar as he provides some good, in the one case, or some pleasure, in the other” (1156a16-19).

Some have argued that what makes the secondary forms of friendship “coincidental” is the fact that being pleasant or useful are coincidental features of who a person is, while having a virtuous character is something intrinsic.65 Aristotle seems to make a claim like this when he

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65 As John Cooper puts it, “whether one person is beneficial or pleasant to another is an incidental characteristic of him: his being so results from the purely external and contingent fact that properties or abilities he possesses happen to answer to needs or wants, equally contingent, that characterize the other person,” John M. Cooper, “Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship,” in *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 324. Michael
describes how wit features in friendships on account of pleasure, claiming that friends in those types of relationships “like witty people not for having a character of a certain sort but because they find them pleasant” (1156a12-14).\(^6\) It is not the character of the witty person in Aristotle’s example that serves as the basis of the friendship, but rather the fact that someone happens to derive pleasure from her wit. This is independent of whether the person possesses the virtue of character known as wittiness or is simply witty in a non-virtuous way. Moreover, this passage leaves open the possibility that whether or not any given person’s wit is pleasant to any other person is entirely coincidental. That is to say, what qualifies as good wit to one person may be considered buffoonery by another, and one’s sense of humor can change over time. As a result, such a relationship depends less on who the friend is and more on the fact that they happen to enjoy each other’s humor at the moment. It seems as though that, in claiming that the secondary forms of friendship are coincidental, Aristotle is emphasizing that the object of love that serves as the basis for these friendships is not something good absolutely, but rather something that is only good to the friends involved.

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\(^6\) I take it that Aristotle’s use of “witty” here is not a reference to the virtue “wittiness,” which is described in *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.8 as applying to “people who are amusing in a gracious way,” since “things of this sort seem to be movements of people’s characters, and just as their bodies are discerned from their movements, so are their characters” (1128a9-12). If Aristotle had the virtue in mind when discussing friendships on account of pleasure, it would seem as though the friends were, in fact, friends because they had a character of a certain sort. Instead, Aristotle might have in mind the use of the term “wittiness” as it applies to those who do not have the virtue. He writes that, “since occasions for causing laughter are prevalent, however, and most people enjoy amusement and jibing more than they should, buffoons are also called ‘witty’ because they are thought sophisticated. But that there is a difference here, and no small one, is clear from what we have said” (1128a12-16). Such people may take some of the same amusing actions that those who have the virtue do, but do not take those actions in a gracious way or as a result of having a particular character state.
The ways in which the secondary forms of friendship differ from friendship on account of
the good also help to show what Aristotle might mean by calling these relationships coincidental
and may help to provide additional support for those who offer interpretations like those noted in
the paragraph above. Based on *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2-6, the secondary forms of friendship
seem to differ from friendship on account of the good in their proclivity to dissolve (1156a19-21,
1156b7-12), their availability to those who are not virtuous (1157a16-20), and their relative
abundance (1158a13-18). As is the case with the ways in which the forms of friendships are
similar to one another, Aristotle provides little detail about how these differences are expressed
in specific relationships. Nevertheless, we can use what is said about the differences between the
forms of friendship to draw some conclusions about what makes friendship on account of the
good paradigmatic and to get a better idea of why the secondary forms of friendship deserve the
name.

The secondary forms of friendship differ from friendship on account of the good by being
more prone to dissolution. Aristotle makes this claim by arguing that in friendships on account of
the good, friends wish good things for one another insofar as they are good, and they do so
because of themselves and not coincidentally (1156b7-11). As a result, “their friendship lasts as
long as they are good—and virtue is something steadfast” (1156b11-12). Compare this to
friendships on account of pleasure and usefulness, which, because they end when one of the
friends is no longer pleasant or useful to the other, do not last as long (1156a19-21). This is a
direct consequence of the coincidental nature of a person’s being pleasant or useful, which is
what causes the friendship to be coincidental, and thus easier to dissolve. The mutual goodwill
that the friends have toward one another is grounded in features that can come and go. When the
feature no longer exists, neither does the goodwill, and so the friendship dissolves.
The forms of friendship are also dissimilar in terms of the sorts of people who are able to partake in them. While only people who are virtuous can be friends with one another on account of the good, Aristotle notes that base people can be friends of the other types, and that decent people can even be friends with base people on account of pleasure or usefulness (1157a16-20). As a result, only friendship on account of the good is immune to slander, since those who are friends on this basis know each other well enough not to put much faith in what others say about the friend, and since the friends have a good deal of trust in one another (1157a20-24).

Friendship on account of the good, then, is paradigmatic in the sense that the friends trust each other due to the virtuous characters of the people involved. The secondary forms of friendship can approximate this trust, but because they are based on something that is only coincidentally good, the trust only lasts as long as the pleasure or usefulness on which the friendships are based.67 Because the objects of love that serve as the basis for the secondary forms of friendship are available to the base and the virtuous alike, so too are these sorts of friendship. The trust that underlies these friendships is more fragile than that in friendships on account of the good, however, for the reasons noted above.

Lastly, Aristotle notes that it is possible to have many friends on account of pleasure or usefulness, but only a few on account of the good. This is because friendship on account of the good requires that a person “actually acquire experience” of the friend “and become intimate with them, which is very difficult,” while in the case of the secondary forms of friendship, “it is possible for many people to please someone, since there are many of the requisite sorts and the services involved take little time” (1158a13-18). This difference between friendship on account

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67 Aristotle’s account of certain types of friendship on account of usefulness suggests that trust is possible in the secondary sorts of friendship. In what he calls “legal” friendship on account of usefulness, repayment is deferred in a way “fitted to friendship” (1162b25-29). Because of the trust involved, Aristotle claims that in some places there cannot be judicial proceedings over these sorts of relationships (1162b29-31).
of the good and the secondary forms of friendship suggests that many, if not most, of our friendships will be of the secondary types. These sorts of friendship require less effort than friendships on account of the good, particularly because the objects of love on which they are based are easier to find in others. Many of the people in one’s life might be pleasant or useful for many different reasons, but only a few will have the sort of character required for friendship on account of the good, and it takes time and effort to determine who those people are. Friendship on account of the good is paradigmatic, then, in that the friendship is in some sense deeper because the friends know one another more intimately.

Aristotle concludes in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.6 that due to the many differences between friendship on account of the good and the secondary forms of friendship, the secondary forms “are apparently not friendships” (1158b8-11). When Aristotle claims that the secondary forms of friendship are “apparently not friendships,” I take him not to be claiming that they are not friendships at all, but rather that these differences are what keep them from being friendships in the paradigmatic sense. There are features of friendship on account of the good that the secondary forms do not share, and as a result, at times they may not look like what we might typically think of when we think about friendship. All of these differences can be attributed to the fact that the objects of the secondary forms of friendship are coincidental features of the friends engaged in such relationships.

Although the similarities and differences between the forms of friendship reflect the similarities and differences between the objects of love that ground them, simply stating these facts about the forms of friendship does little to explain how the forms are related to one another. Friendship on account of the good is primary and friendships on account of pleasure and on account of usefulness are secondary, presumably due to the differences outlined above. These
claims make it seem as though the secondary forms of friendship are diminished, and possibly not even friendships at all. As a result, Aristotle describes the secondary forms of friendship as being so called on account of their “similarity” to friendship on account of the good. But just what does this relationship by similarity amount to?

The “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” Relation

The Greek phrase used to identify the “by similarity” relationship is “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα.” Although the phrase is used in various ways throughout his works, there do appear to be examples of Aristotle using the phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” to compare the different ways a single term can be used in different situations.68 Specifically, “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” can be used to differentiate between one instance of the use of a term in which the definition of the term applies, and another which does not fulfill the definition of the term at all, but seems to fulfill the definition due to some perceived similarity between the two cases. Two examples that relevant to the case of friendship are Aristotle’s discussion of courage and the discussion of lack of self-control (ἀκρατίας). If the application of “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” to friendship is like its application to either of these terms, there would be good reason to think that the secondary forms of friendship are not, in fact, friendships at all and that only friendship on account of the good deserves the

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68 Hermann Bonitz, Index Aristotelicus (Graz: Akademische Druck-u Verlagsanstalt, 1955) identifies seventeen passages in which Aristotle uses the phrase in the Nicomachean Ethics, Eudemian Ethics, Politics, Physics, Parts of Animals, and History of Animals. At times, the phrase is used not to compare the various usages of a single term, but rather to talk about similarities in a general sense. For example, he uses the phrase in the Politics to describe the similarity that citizens hold to one another that make them eligible to hold office under some constitutions (1279a10-16), and in the History of Animals, he describes different methods of reproduction as similar to one another insofar as they are cases of animals giving birth (537b22-25). At other times, Aristotle uses the phrase to identify terms that are used analogously. Examples of this sort of use of the phrase can be found in the discussion of the parts of the soul and their objects in the Nicomachean Ethics (1139a5-11), and the Eudemian Ethics comparison of starting points that are the origins of movement and starting points that do not cause movement, such as the first principles of mathematics (1222b20-29). Lastly, there are places where Aristotle uses the phrase to compare the way that a single term can be used in different situations. Some notable examples include the discussion of animals with “horns” in the proper sense, and those who only have “horns” by similarity in The Parts of Animals (662b27-30), the discussion of courage in the Eudemian and Nicomachean Ethics, and the discussion of lack of self-control in the Nicomachean Ethics. The latter two examples are the two most relevant to the discussion of friendship, and are discussed in greater detail below.
name. In what follows, I argue that friendship is not like courage or lack of self-control in this respect, and that a detailed examination of how “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” applies in those cases can help us to understand why the secondary forms of friendship ought to be considered friendships after all.

Aristotle’s use of “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” as it applies to courage highlights cases of individuals who are called courageous despite the fact that what they possess is not actually courage, since either the fear that they face is either not a proper object of courage, or because their fearlessness does not have the proper motivation. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle claims that only the person who is not anxious about a noble death in war deserves to be called courageous, despite the fact that disrepute, poverty, disease, friendlessness, and death are all things that a person could find frightening (1115a10-35).\(^6^9\) Courage, then, has a proper object, and a lack of fear with respect to frightening things that are not that object does not qualify as courage such that someone’s lack of fear about poverty, for example, would not strictly be courage.

Aristotle makes a similar point in the *Eudemian Ethics*, but there, the discussion concerns the proper motivations behind courage. He identifies five kinds of courage that are so called “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα,” “in that people endure the same things as the courageous but for different reasons” (1229a11-13). These five kinds of courage are: civic courage, military courage, courage

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\(^6^9\) Aristotle’s reasoning here seems to be that while all of these things are frightening, not all of them ought to be feared, because “they are not the results of vice or of ourselves” (1115a17-18). One who does not fear poverty or disease, then, is not courageous, because one ought not be afraid of these things. Moreover, one could be fearless in these cases while still being a coward in war (1115a20-22). Even fearlessness in the face of death at sea or due to disease does not count as courage, because there is neither a possibility for a display of one’s prowess nor nobility in these sorts of deaths (1115a35-1115b6). In cases of those things which are the result of vice, such as disrepute, a person is not a coward for being afraid, because this is something that ought to be feared. Aristotle suggests that one who does not fear these things is more shameless than courageous (1115a12-14). I take it that there is similar reasoning behind his comments on fear in the face of wanton aggression against one’s family or fear of envy (1115a22-23).
on account of inexperience and ignorance, courage generated by hope due to good luck or drunkenness, and courage on account of love or anger (1229a11-32). Each of these sorts of “courage” are motivated by something different, such as shame in the case of civic courage or knowledge of what can mitigate the dreadful in the case of military courage. He concludes that “none of these is courage in strict truth, though they are all useful for urging people on in the face of danger” (1229a30-31). Between these two accounts, we find Aristotle claiming that a lack of fear must be concerned with the right thing and come from the right motivation in order to be considered a case of courage. In both accounts of courage, “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” is used to identify examples of cases of a lack of fear that do not actually count as courage. The person who is fearless in the face of poverty, for example, or due to inexperience is not actually courageous, but is so called by people who do not know any better due to the similarity to actual courage.

If “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” is being used in this way with respect to friendship, it would indicate that Aristotle does not consider the secondary forms of friendship to be friendships at all. One could argue that this use of “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” applies to friendship in one of two ways: either by arguing that the pleasant and the useful are not the proper concern of friendship or by arguing that the motivations behind the secondary forms of friendship are different than the motivation behind friendship on account of the good. An argument about the proper concern of the secondary forms of friendship would have to claim that only that which is good absolutely is the proper concern of friendship, but such an argument does not correspond with Aristotle’s discussion of the proper objects of love in *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII.2-3. As noted above, Aristotle claims that the pleasant, the useful, and the good are all proper objects of love. It would seem, then, that friendship is concerned with the lovable, and because each of these objects is
lovable, friendship is concerned with all three. The motivations behind friendship seem to be the same in all three forms of friendship as well. It is a desire for the object of love that serves as the friendship’s basis that motivates those who take part in it. Insofar as all of the objects of love are desirable, this too remains the same in all three forms of friendship. As a result, we should not look to “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” as it is used in the discussion of courage for guidance on how to interpret the relationship between the forms of friendship. Insofar as the secondary forms of friendship have similar objects and similar motivations, they can be considered friendships.

Aristotle’s discussion of lack of self-control (ἀκρατής) in Nicomachean Ethics VII.4 also makes use of the phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα.” In this passage, Aristotle wonders whether it is possible for someone to lack self-control unconditionally with respect to all things, or whether everyone who lacks self-control does so only partially with respect to certain things, such as wealth or honor. In other words, he wants to know if every actual case of lack of self-control is a case of lacking self-control in a particular sense. This leads to a distinction between unconditional lack of self-control and lack of self-control with respect to wealth, profit, honor, or spirit. He writes of people who lack self-control with respect to wealth, profit, honor, or spirit that “we do not say that they unconditionally lack self-control, on the supposition that they are different and that they are called ‘lacking in self-control’ by similarity to those who unconditionally lack it (like the victor at the Olympic Games called ‘Human,’ since, in his case, the common account differed only slightly from the special one, but was different all the same)” (1147b31-1148a2).

70 Walker cites the discussion of lack of self-control in his interpretation of how “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” is used with respect to the forms of friendship. He argues that the discussions of friendship and lack of self-control parallel one another in their language and in the fact that they “both appeal to evaluational discriminations” in drawing distinctions between cases of things that fulfill a definition in an unqualified way and those that fulfill a definition in a qualified way. Walker, “Aristotle’s Account of Friendship in the Nicomachean Ethics,” 190-192. For reasons I note below, I take it that Aristotle’s discussion of lack of self-control is inconsistent, and as a result not useful in interpreting how the forms of friendship are related to one another.
The “Human” example seems to suggest that Aristotle intends the “κατθ’ ὁμοιότητα” relationship to distinguish between uses of the phrase “lack of self-control” that identify actual cases of lack of self-control and uses of the phrase that do not—or do so only in a qualified or analogous way. One interpretive challenge posed by *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.4, as noted by Hendrick Lorenz, is that this section of the text seems to offer contrary claims about how the different cases of lack of self-control are related to one another. Shortly after providing the “Human” example, Aristotle claims that someone who lacks self-control with respect to wealth, for example, “is like the case of a bad doctor or a bad actor. We would not say that either was unconditionally bad, because neither of these conditions is badness, but only something similar to it by analogy (τῷ ἀνάλογον ὁμοίαν)” (1148b7-10).

C.D.C. Reeve interprets the “Human” example as saying that because “Human” is a human, the account common to all humans applies to him. At the same time, there is an account unique to him, which consists of everything that applies to all humans, plus whatever unique things apply to him. Reeve goes on to suggest that in this case, lack of self-control with respect to things like victory, honor, or wealth—which Aristotle calls intrinsically choiceworthy things—is like “Human,” while those who lack self-control with regard to things like food, drink, and sexual needs—which Aristotle describes as necessary sources of pleasure—are

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71 Hendrik Lorenz, “Nicomachean Ethics VII.4: Plain and Qualified Akrasia,” in Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Book VII, Symposium Aristotelicum, ed. Carlo Natali (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 80. Lorenz cites the “Human” example as one of the primary differences between the presentation of lack of self-control at the beginning and the end of VII.4. Due to these differences, he argues that the explanation in the first part of the chapter is unsuccessful, and was not meant to be included in the final version of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Lorenz, “Nicomachean Ethics VII.4: Plain and Qualified Akrasia,” 92-94.

72 As Lorenz notes, this example suggests that what Aristotle has in mind here is that if someone is a bad doctor, we don’t say that he is bad in an unqualified way because he is not a bad person. Moreover, Lorenz says, neither being a bad actor or a bad doctor is badness simply, but resembles badness by being analogous, such that the qualified forms of badness are to doctors and actors as unqualified badness is to human beings. Lorenz, “Nicomachean Ethics VII.4: Plain and Qualified Akrasia,” 89-90.
unconditionally lacking in self-control and are like the case of human that applies to everyone.\(^73\)

This would suggest that someone who lacks self-control with regard to intrinsically choiceworthy things is also lacking in self-control in the general sense. But as Lorenz argues, based on the examples of qualified and unqualified badness at 1148b7-10, Aristotle seems to think that “whenever the term ‘lack of control’ is used within its proper domain, it is employed in its proper use, and otherwise it is employed in a transferred use.”\(^74\) While the “Human” example suggests that there is some feature or set of features that unqualified lack of self-control and qualified lack of self-control share, the example of the bad doctor suggests that qualified lack of self-control is not like unqualified lack of self-control, except analogically.\(^75\)

Whether we adopt Reeve’s interpretation of “Human” or Lorenz’s interpretation of 1148b7-10, the phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” as it applies to lack of self-control seems to be used to suggest that the qualified senses of lack of self-control are not actual cases of lack of self-control,

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If we take the example of “Human” here as Reeve suggests, then we might think that what Aristotle has in mind here is a sort of lack of self-control in a general sense as opposed to a narrower sort of lack of self-control. If this is the right way of interpreting the example and the passage, then one thing to note is that the way the two types of lack of self-control differ from one another seems to be different than the way that the proper name “Human” differs from “human” in the unconditional sense. Lack of self-control with respect to wealth would differ from an unconditional lack of self-control because it is in some sense limited. Someone who lacks self-control with respect to wealth would not have all of the qualities of someone who lacks self-control unconditionally, in the sense that the person who lacks self-control with respect to wealth would not lack it with respect to the necessary sources of pleasure. The two definitions would differ in that the person who lacks self-control with respect to wealth would be lacking in a more narrowly defined way. The person who is named “Human,” however, has all of the qualities of a human being, plus some additional qualities that make him unique. In this case, it is the qualities that have been added to “Human” that make him different from the general case. Although the proper name “Human” narrowly defines a single human being, “Human,” it is due to the fact that he has all of the qualities of a human being plus some unique qualities specific to him, while “lack of self-control with respect to wealth” would be more narrowly applied than unconditional lack of self-control due to the fact that some qualities of the unconditional definition would not be present in the person lacking in self-control with respect to wealth. As a result, it seems as though “Human” fully meets the definition of a human being in a way that lack of self-control with respect to wealth would not meet the definition of unconditional lack of self-control at all, which makes the two examples seem disanalogous.

\(^74\) Lorenz, “Nicomachean Ethics VII.4: Plain and Qualified Akrasia,” 93.

\(^75\) This poses a problem for Walker’s interpretation. Walker argues that the person who lacks self-control by similarity satisfies the definition of someone lacking self-control, but with a qualification, because the failing does not relate to the same things that unqualified lack of self-control is concerned with. Aside from the difficulties with the “Human” example noted above, the examples of qualified badness at 1148b7-10 seem to suggest that cases of qualified lack of self-control do not really fulfill the definition of unqualified self-control at all, just as a bad doctor is not really bad in an unqualified way.
although they are similar to it analogically. Much as in the case of courage, it seems as though the reason these qualified senses of lack of self-control are not properly lack of self-control is the fact that they have different objects. Lack of self-control with respect to wealth is not lack of self-control, because wealth is intrinsically choiceworthy. In the proper sense, lack of self-control concerns the necessary sources of pleasure. For this reason, the phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” has a different application when it comes to friendship. Aristotle does not give any indication that friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness are only analogically friendships, and, as noted above, the secondary forms of friendship do not have different objects, in the sense that they all aim at something lovable.76

Core-Dependent Homonymy

If the phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” does not help in interpreting the relationship between the forms of friendship, then perhaps Aristotle’s comparison of “friendship” to the term “medical” in the Eudemian Ethics can. Many commentators have noted that Aristotle’s account in the Eudemian Ethics seems to suggest that the forms of friendship are a case of focal analysis, or what Christopher Shields calls core-dependent homonymy.77 These commentators argue that if

76 It is worth noting that even in these two cases, the phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” is being used inconsistently. Although both are instances of the use of a term in a way that does not fulfill the definition of that term, the relationship between the definitional and non-definitional uses of the terms are different in each. In the case of courage, “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” seems to suggest only a superficial similarity between cases of “courage” in the face of poverty and actual courage. In the case of lack of self-control, “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα,” depending on whether we look at the “Human” example or the example of qualified badness, could indicate either shared features between the two uses of the term or an analogical relationship between the two uses of the term. The fact that the relationships being identified by “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” differ in the cases of courage and lack of self-control, along with the fact that neither case seems to capture the relationship that holds between the three forms of friendship, suggest that the phrase itself does not help us to understand how to interpret the case of friendship.

the forms of friendship bear this sort of relationship to one in another in the *Eudemian Ethics*,
this might provide some insight on how to interpret the discussion of this same topic in the
*Nicomachean Ethics*. In what follows, I will first briefly describe the notion of core-dependent
homonymy, then closely examine Julie K. Ward’s application of the concept to the treatment of
friendship in the *Eudemian Ethics*. I argue that friendship is not a case of core-dependent
homonymy by identifying difficulties in describing the causal relation between its core use and
its secondary forms.

According to Shields, in cases of core-dependent homonymy, all non-core instances of a
term bear the following relation to the core, which he calls four-causal core primacy:

“necessarily, if (i) a is F and b is F, (ii) F-ness is associatively homonymous in these
applications, and (iii) a is a core instance of F-ness, then b’s being F stands in one of the four
causal relations to a’s being F.”78 So, to use some of Aristotle’s most frequent examples of this
type of homonymy, a surgical knife is called medical because its final cause—the function it
performs—is related to medicine, and exercise is called healthy because it is the efficient cause
to be referred to as either focal meaning or focal analysis. Owens references a passage of the *Metaphysics* at 1060b36-1061a7 for his discussion of προς ἐν equivocity. There, Aristotle calls a treatise and a knife “medical” because the treatise comes about as the result of medical science, while the knife is something used in medical science. In that same passage, Aristotle notes that things are similarly called “healthy,” either because they are a sign of health, or because they are productive of it. Owens suggests that what this means is that things are either “healthy” or “medical” by their reference to some other thing, noting that “‘health’ is a form or nature which is found only in the disposition of the bodily organism. The form ‘health’ is not in the color or the medicine.” Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian “Metaphysics”* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 119. According to Owens, things like a healthy color or healthy medicine “have some reference to health,” but that all “have their own proper forms.” Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian “Metaphysics,”* 119. I take it that what Owens means by this is that secondary cases of healthy things, such as the color or the medicine, have their own definitions, but that these definitions in some way depend on the primary definition that references a bodily organism. For example, any given medicine cannot be called “healthy” without any reference to a particular dosage, disease, or patient. Too much of a medicine might not be “healthy,” and if the medicine is not meant to treat a disease that the patient has, then it will not be considered “healthy” either. Medicine is only “healthy” insofar as it contributes to the health of a patient, which can only properly be found in a living thing. As noted below, Aristotle’s reference to the term “medical” when discussing the forms of friendship in the *Eudemian Ethics* suggests that he may have a similar analysis in mind for how the secondary forms of friendship are related to friendship on account of the good.

78 Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 111.
of health in a person. This notion of core-dependent homonymy captures both the notions of something being a sign of health and something being productive of health, while giving a clearer picture of just what the relationship is between the primary use of a term and all of its other uses. Core-dependent homonymy offers an explanation of how the primary use of a term relates to the other uses of a term that takes Aristotle’s notion of cause as its basis. If friendship were a case of core-dependent homonymy, we would need to have a clear definition of the term “friendship,” one which applies fully to friendship on account of the good, and to which the secondary forms of friendship have a clear causal relationship.

As noted above, a number of commentators have argued that the discussion of the forms of friendship in the Eudemian Ethics suggests that they are related to one another as either a case of focal analysis or core-dependent homonymy. There, Aristotle writes that “there must be three kinds of friendship; and they are not all friendship in the same sense nor species of one genus, nor are they completely homonymous either. For they are said to be friendships with reference to one particular and primary kind of friendship, as with the term ‘medical’” (1236a17-19). He claims that a soul, body, an instrument, and a procedure are all medical, but that only the primary instance is medical in the proper sense (1236a19-21). He then argues that in the case of friendship, because the different forms of friendship do not all fall under the primary instance, “when one account does not fit they suppose that the other kinds are not friendships—whereas they are, but not in the same sense. When the primary kind of friendship does not fit, they deny that the others are in fact friendships, on the assumption that since it is primary it would be universal. But there are many kinds of friendship” (1236a25-30).

He concludes that “it is impossible for all of them to be friendships in accordance with a single account. So what remains is this: in a sense only the primary kind is friendship, but in
another sense all are, not homonymously and in a merely chance relationship to each other, and also not in accordance with a single form (οὐτε καθε ἐν εἰδος), but rather with reference to a single form (πρὸς ἔν)” (1236b23-26). The claim that the forms of friendship are not completely homonymous, along with the reference to the term “medical” seem to make this a case of core-dependent homonymy, especially given that the term “medical” is one of Aristotle’s paradigmatic examples of core-dependent homonymy. Aristotle’s use of the phrase “πρὸς ἔν” in this passage provides additional evidence for thinking that he has core-dependent homonymy in mind when he discusses the forms of friendship.

On the basis of this evidence, Ward argues that “friendship” is a case of core-dependent homonymy. Generally speaking, she argues that “friendship” is a core-dependent homonym for two reasons: first, from Aristotle’s claim that the good is said in many ways, and second, the fact that the three types of good thing individuate the three forms of friendship. Specifically, she claims that the relation between the core notion of the good and the related notions of good is one in which things that are incidentally good are conceptually dependent on things which are non-incidentally good, in the sense that the real good is primary and the things to which the secondary goods refer to are only apparent goods. Although explaining the core-dependence of friendship in terms of the core-dependence of the term good and the three objects of love on

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80 According to this interpretation, the pleasant and the useful are incidentally good because they only appear to be good to a particular person, whereas that which is good absolutely is good in itself. The notion of something being incidentally good, then, depends upon there being a notion of something that is good in itself. Using the core-dependence of the good as the starting point, Ward argues that Aristotle extends the argument to friendship, suggesting that “the full reasoning is that if there exists a hierarchy of goods such that the incidental goods rely on the non INCIDENTAL goods, and if the secondary kinds of friendship are distinguished by reference to an incidental good, then the secondary kinds of friendship will rely on that of the primary.” Under this interpretation, friendships on account of pleasure and on account of usefulness are posterior to friendships on account of the good because the goods they reference are both qualified and refer to what is good absolutely. Ward, *Aristotle on Homonymy: Dialectic and Science*, 158-163.
which friendships are based seems promising, I argue that such an explanation fails to meet the requirements of core-dependent homonymy.

In order for “friendship” to be a case of core-dependent homonymy, there needs to be a causal relation between the secondary forms of friendship and friendship on account of the good. While in the case of the term “medical,” the medical instrument and the medical operation seem to be efficient causes of the medical art, Ward suggests that in the case of friendship, the secondary forms seem more to be in competition with the primary form than to be the efficient causes of it.\textsuperscript{81} The best candidate for a causal connection between the forms of friendship is the formal cause, but as Ward notes, appealing to the formal cause in core-dependent homonymy

\textsuperscript{81} Ward, \textit{Aristotle on Homonymy: Dialectic and Science}, 165. To solve this problem, she argues that the causal relation between the primary form of friendship and the secondary forms is that of an exemplary cause. On this interpretation, only friendship on account of the good “realizes the character formally,” and friendship on account of pleasure and friendship on account of usefulness “possess the character extrinsically, or in virtue of their relationship to the primary instance.” Ward, \textit{Aristotle on Homonymy: Dialectic and Science}, 165. She uses the notion of the exemplary cause, first developed by Cardinal Cajetan, as a means of avoiding use of the formal cause as a basis for core-dependence. Shields, too, uses Cardinal Cajetan’s account of πρὸς ἑν homonymy in \textit{De Nominum Analogia} as a basis for his notion of core-dependent homonymy. Unlike Ward, Shields rejects Cajetan’s notion of exemplary cause in favor of a type of formal causation (see below). Shields, \textit{Order in Multiplicity}, 110-111. Ward describes the exemplary cause as “an extrinsic cause in the sense that it is external to its effect (unlike the formal cause),” and suggests that it “is related to the thing caused as the model is related to the product made or the thing done.” Ward, \textit{Aristotle on Homonymy: Dialectic and Science}, 85. Ultimately, I find Ward’s appeal to the exemplary cause unsuccessful. It is not entirely clear in what sense friendship on account of the good is external to friendships on account of pleasure or on account of usefulness. Moreover, we might also question how it is that friendship on account of the good serves as a model for either of the secondary forms of friendship. The secondary forms of friendship are less stable than friendship on account of the good because they are based on things that are only coincidentally good. As a result, some of the features that make friendship on account of the good paradigmatic, such as its stability and the trust involved, cannot be effectively modeled for the secondary forms of friendship. Even if one were to think that friendship on account of the good serves as a model in the sense that it models reciprocal goodwill on account of the best type of good thing, and is both pleasant and useful as a result, Aristotle does not give any reason to think that friendships on account of pleasure or on account of usefulness could not generate reciprocal goodwill without the existence of friendships on account of the good, or any reason to think that they generate reciprocal goodwill in the same way as friendships on account of the good. Moreover, while the activities that friends on account of pleasure or on account of usefulness engage in might be more limited than those engaged in by friends on account of the good, there is no reason to think that these activities are modeled after or inconceivable without friendships on account of the good. To put it another way, just because friendships on account of the good happen to also be pleasant and useful does not mean that friendships on account of pleasure or on account of usefulness are either pleasant or useful in the same way, or for the same reasons.
seems to result in the core use of a term and its secondary uses possessing the same form, thus making them synonymous.\textsuperscript{82}

Ward’s objection to using the formal cause as the basis for the core-dependence seems particularly clear in the case of friendship, because Aristotle has not clearly identified a form of friendship in these passages. We might be tempted to use the similarities between the forms of friendship as the basis for its form, but if we do, all three types of friendship will have an identical form, and so the requirements of core-dependence will not be met. Specifically, if all three types of friendship share the same form, then the secondary forms of friendship are not associatively homonymous with the core use of the term. To account for this fact, we could try to develop a form of friendship that incorporates the differences between friendship on account of the good and the secondary forms of friendship, but if we were to do that, the secondary forms of friendship would then not have the form “friendship” at all. In that case, it seems as though there would be no causal relation between the core instance of friendship and the secondary forms. Because the formal cause is the best candidate for the basis of the core-dependence of friendship, and because of the problems associated both with basing core-dependence upon the formal cause and identifying a form upon which such a case could be developed, I take it that friendship is not an instance of core-dependent homonymy.

The difficulties in attributing core-dependence to friendship might help to explain why such references are absent from the \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}.\textsuperscript{83} As Ward notes, although the two

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{82} Shields offers a defense of the use of the formal cause, appealing to Aristotle’s discussion of sense perception in \textit{De Anima}. There, Shields argues, that perception is a case of formal causation because under Aristotle’s account, perception occurs when a sensory faculty receives an object’s form without receiving its matter. Shields does note, however, that Aristotle does not provide any obvious examples of this sort of formal causal relation anywhere in the text. Shields, \textit{Order in Multiplicity}, 114-119. Ward’s response to Shields is found at Ward, \textit{Aristotle on Homonymy: Dialectic and Science}, 81-84.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{83} Despite the fact that there seems to be no explicit reference to focal analysis in the \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, some commentators have attempted to interpret Aristotle’s use of “καθ’ ὧμορτηγα” as a case of focal analysis. Julia Annas, for example, argues that the case for the focal analysis of friendship lies in the fact that the good, the pleasant, and}
works agree that “friendship” is non-synonymous and has three forms, they do not agree on the type of relationship that obtains between those forms. The primary evidence for core-dependence comes from the *Eudemian Ethics* which uses the phrase “πρὸς ἔν” to describe the relationship between the forms of friendship, while the *Nicomachean Ethics* uses “καθ’ ὀμιότητα.” As a result, Ward concludes that since the καθ’ ὀμιότητα relationship and πρὸς ἔν relationships differ from one another, any analysis of friendship as a case of core-dependent homonymy must depend solely on the passages found in the *Eudemian Ethics*. I suggest that the primary reason that there are no references to core-dependent homonymy appears in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is that friendship resists such an analysis.

It seems to me that we can draw similar conclusions about the relationship between the forms of friendship from both the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* without making reference to core-dependence, and the similarities in how the two versions treat that relationship support such a claim. Although the direct comparison to the term “medical” in the *Eudemian Ethics* suggests that Aristotle has core-dependent homonymy in mind, the only clearly stated conclusions in that text are that the primary sense of friendship is not friendship in a universal sense; that there are multiple forms of friendship; and that because of the differences between the secondary forms of friendship and friendship on account of the good, the secondary forms are

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only called friendships due to a dependence they have upon our understanding of friendship on account of the good. The exact nature of the relationship between the forms of friendship is never explained in the way that it is in the case of the medical, and (importantly) the conclusions about friendship do not seem to require that such an explanation be made.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* retains these three conclusions while eliminating references to the “medical” or core-dependent homonymy, and I take it that this is because of the difficulty in appealing to such references to explain how it is that the secondary forms of friendship still qualify as friendships despite their differences from friendship on account of the good. Part of that difficulty stems from the fact that no clear definition of friendship has been established in either of the texts, and this may be due to the fact that the different relationships that Aristotle identifies as friendships do not neatly fit under a single definition. What both texts establish is that friendship on account of the good is friendship paradigmatically, and that other friendships fall short of that standard for any number of reasons. These reasons depend upon the type of friendship being examined and the details of how the friends involved in the relationship engage with one another. An analysis of the relationship between the forms of friendship, then, will need to identify just what makes friendship on account of the good paradigmatic while accounting for the number of ways in which relationships that deviate from the paradigm can yet still be recognized as friendships.

*The Sufficient Conditions of Friendship*

As I noted above, attempts to interpret the relationship between friendship on account of the good and the secondary forms of friendship seem to be motivated by questions of how to classify different types of relationships. I have argued that attempts to interpret the relationship by appealing to the phrase “καθ’ ὁμοιότητα” or core-dependent homonymy fail, in part, because
they attempt to identify a definition of friendship that applies only to friendship on account of the good which can then be used as a standard by which the secondary forms of friendship can be judged. Attempts to identify such a definition are complicated both by the fact that Aristotle does little to provide such a definition and the fact that he seems willing to include a wide variety of relationships in his account of friendship. The friendship found between the members of a dining club and that found between siblings, for example, seem to have little in common, and any strict definition of friendship will either be too narrow to include both or too broad to be useful.

As a result, it seems to me more profitable to interpret *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2-6 not as providing a strict definition of friendship, but rather as providing a list of similarities and differences between the forms of friendship that can be used to identify the sufficient conditions of friendship. Such an interpretation can capture Aristotle’s claim that friendship on account of the good is paradigmatic, while also accounting for the claim that the secondary forms of friendship deserve to be called friendships. Specifically, they are so called insofar as they fulfill the conditions of friendship to some extent. Because these are not necessary but sufficient conditions, different relationships will instantiate them in different ways, so determinations about a relationship’s status as a friendship can be made on a case-by-case basis. What we are left with is an account of friendship that can be flexibly applied while still providing a standard by which relationships can be judged as either better or worse with respect to how closely they resemble the paradigm.

Using the similarities and differences outlined in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2-6, we can see that friendships occur when the people involved have goodwill for and wish good things to one another on account of the good they recognize in each other, and when the friends are aware of these facts and reciprocate this goodwill equally. Friendships can be pleasant, useful, or both
to the friends, and will include some minimal level of trust in each other. A relationship in which all of these conditions obtain is a friendship. What makes friendship on account of the good paradigmatic is the fact that it is the only type of friendship in which all of these conditions are fulfilled and exhibited to the highest degree. Such friendships are only available to those who have virtuous characters and are thus the most stable, but also the rarest. Friendship on account of the good is also paradigmatic in the sense that the friends involved can be relied upon to be both pleasant and useful over a long period of time, in a variety of ways. These friendships exhibit a high level of trust, due to the fact that the friends have taken the time to be sure of the virtuous character of each other, which contributes to the relationship’s stability.

Generally speaking, friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness will fall short in every one of these areas. Although the friends have goodwill and wish good things to one another, that goodwill is restricted to the object of love that serves as the basis of the friendship. The goodwill is restricted in two ways. First, it is limited to only a single object of love—either pleasure or usefulness—but not both. Second, goodwill in the secondary forms of friendship is limited to a specific aspect of the object of love. The friends typically are not generally useful or pleasant to one another, but instead are pleasant or useful with regard to a specific end. A friendship on account of usefulness between people involved in a joint business venture, for example, might have the success of that venture as its basis. The friends have goodwill for one another insofar as they want each other to succeed in the joint venture and will do good things

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86 In fact, it may be the case that all of these conditions are necessary for friendship on account of the good. Nevertheless, Aristotle’s comments on what he calls “friendship in accord with superiority” in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.7 and his discussion of what to do if one grows to become far more virtuous than one’s friend in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.3 suggest that there may be some flexibility even in friendships on account of the good for how much equal reciprocation is required among friends.
for one another to promote that success. If they are no longer useful to one another with respect
to the business venture, the friendship will end.

The fact that the goodwill found in the secondary forms of friendship is more limited than
that found in friendships on account of the good contributes to the other deficiencies found in the
secondary forms of friendship. These friendships do not last as long, are not as trusting, and are
less pleasant or useful than friendships on account of the good. These facts about the secondary
forms of friendship are what Aristotle has in mind when he claims at 1158b8-11 that they appear
not to be friendships. Nevertheless, in that same passage Aristotle notes that these sorts of
relationships also appear to be friendships, insofar as they involve either pleasure or usefulness,
and friendship on account of the good includes those things as well (1158b5-8). This passage
suggests a standard by which relationships can be judged as friendships. A friendship is better
the more pleasant or useful it is, the more trusting it is, or the more stable it is. In other words, a
friendship is better the more closely it resembles the paradigm.

As a result, relationships which seem to have severely limited levels of goodwill can still
be evaluated as friendships. Some of the market transactions that Aristotle discusses in
Nicomachean Ethics VIII.13, for example, seem as though they might hardly register as
friendships given that the goodwill involved is limited to hand-to-hand market transactions
(1162b25-31). Nevertheless, these relationships can be evaluated as friendships. Do the
individuals trust one another? If so, it starts to look more like a friendship. Do they continue to
do business with one another on a repeated basis? If so, the relationship is more stable. The more
trust and stability there is, the greater the usefulness, and the individuals start to seem more like
friends.87

87 Even some of Aristotle’s passing remarks about relationships in which reciprocal goodwill is entirely absent can
be evaluated by these standards. As a result, when Aristotle says that every human being is a friend to every other
Note that in evaluating various relationships in this way, we can start to see how friendship is able to contribute to the good life, and why, as Aristotle claims in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1, it is “not only something necessary, however, but also something noble” (1155a28-29). The good things that friendship can provide—virtue, pleasure, and advantage—enrich our lives. These good things can be gained in a variety of ways, and insofar as we pursue these things with varying degrees of trust and goodwill toward those with whom we associate, any one of our relationships can emulate friendship on account of the good in a way that makes our lives better off.

human being at 1155a16-22, or that a mother who gives a child up for adoption knowing that the child will never reciprocate is displaying friendship at 1159a28-33, we can look at the aspects of these relationships that do fulfill the conditions of friendship in order to determine which aspects of the relationship resemble the ways in which these individuals engage one another as friends.
Chapter 3 – Friendship in Association

Aristotle’s account of friendship includes not only a discussion of friendship between individuals, but also a discussion of friendship as it is found in association (“κοινωνία” in the Greek). The topic of friendship in association appears in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics*, and in both texts is introduced with a note about the similarity between friendship and justice. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle writes “It does seem, though, as we said at the start that friendship and justice are concerned with the same things and involve the same people. For in every association there seems to be some sort of justice and some sort of friendship as well” (1159b25-27). In the *Eudemian Ethics*, he writes that “justice is believed to be a form of equality and friendship to consist in equality (unless the maxim ‘equality is friendship’ is misguided). All political regimes are a kind of justice, since they are an association, and everything that is common comes about through justice” (1241b10-15). Both texts also dedicate much of the discussion of friendship in association to the topic of friendship and justice as they relate to two specific types of association—the political association and the household association. The general account provided in these passages suggests that Aristotle takes the concepts of friendship in association and justice in association to be closely connected, and that an understanding of friendship and justice as they are found in the different types of political constitution help to illustrate the nature of that connection.

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88 All translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2014), unless otherwise noted. Reeve translates κοινωνία as “community.” In addition to using the term κοινωνία to talk about political communities, Aristotle applies the term to other sorts of groups, including sailors on a voyage, soldiers in war, tribesmen, religious societies, and dining clubs (see 1160a14-30, for example). In order to capture the wide range of relationships the term describes, I have chosen to translate it as “association” throughout.

The general focus on the political association in these passages on friendship and justice in association also seems to suggest that friendship in association is primarily a matter for legislators, or perhaps that the friendship that obtains between fellow citizens is the paradigmatic case of friendship in association. If this is correct, we might interpret Aristotle as suggesting not only a sharp distinction between friendship in association and the personal friendships discussed throughout *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1-8 and *Eudemian Ethics* VII.1-8, but also as suggesting that justice differs between the two types of relationship as well. If this interpretation is correct, we are left with two accounts of friendship according to Aristotle. The first account would apply to personal friendship and include a corresponding account of personal justice, while the second account would apply to fellow citizens and their legislators and include a corresponding account of political justice.  

Such an interpretation, however, seems to have little to say about the smaller associations that Aristotle mentions in the discussion of friendship, such as the associations of sailors, soldiers, or dining clubs (1160a14-20). These associations have much in common with personal friendships, in the sense that they come about on account of some advantage or on account of pleasure, and are aimed at some specific goal. They are like the political association in the sense

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90 For examples of interpretations like these, see Julia Annas, “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism,” *Mind* 86, no. 344 (1977): 532–54, Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), and Suzanne Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). Annas argues that friendship requires mutual affection and well-wishing of which both parties are aware, and one does not live with one’s rulers or know anything about their preferences. As a result, she suggests that “there are two different but related sense of *philia*, one used of objectively based social relationships like those between ruler and ruled, merchant and client, etc., and one used of relationships based on personal affection.” Annas, “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism,” 553. Schollmeier divides friendship into genera, including personal friendships and political friendships, which each have three different species corresponding to Aristotle’s threefold division of friendships on account of pleasure, on account of usefulness, and on account of the good, and which each have a corresponding notion of justice. Stern-Gillet draws a distinction between personal friendships on account of the good and political friendship, claiming that the former is governed by perfect justice, while the latter is governed by particular justice. Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*, 155-156. These interpretations and others like them seem to claim that Aristotle’s theory of personal friendship cannot be extended to friendship in larger associations, or that his theory of justice cannot be applied to the interactions of individuals in the way that it can to larger associations. I will address these claims below.
that they are comprised of groups of individuals in pursuit of some common good. In what follows, I argue that an examination of these small associations will lead to an interpretation of Aristotle’s account of friendship that applies equally to personal friendships and friendship in associations of all types. Insofar as this argument depends upon the claim that there is no difference in how Aristotle’s overall account treats personal friendship and friendship in association, it will first be necessary to show the sense in which friendship in association can be considered friendship at all. I argue that it is what the members of an association have in common that makes friendship in association like personal friendship, in the sense that just as personal friendship comes about on account of some good, so too does friendship in association. It is this good that the members of an association have in common, and it is the common good that allows Aristotle to draw a connection between these associations and the political association. Because the political association is concerned with the common good of its members in a way that is more complete than the partial good of friendship in the smaller associations, we can look to the political association to inform our understanding of both friendship and justice in not only the smaller associations, but in personal relationships as well.

**Friendship in Association**

Aristotle’s treatment of friendship in association involves a wide range of organizations with different aims. The associations of family members, fellow citizens, fellow soldiers, and members of a dining club are just some of the examples that Aristotle includes in the discussion (1159b27-29, 1160a19-20, 1161b12-16). Not only do the aims of these various associations differ from one another, but so too do the levels of affection for, amount of time spent with, and familiarity with the association’s other members. The family association, for example, stands out as an association that could potentially include greater affection and familiarity than any of the
others, and Aristotle gestures in this direction when he claims that parents love their children as themselves, that siblings feel affection for one another from birth, and know one another’s character as a result of being jointly nurtured and similarly educated (1161b27-1162a15). The potential affection for and familiarity with a fellow citizen one has never met will be far lower by comparison, and yet both types of association are considered friendships under Aristotle’s account.

Just as members in some of these associations may feel more or less esteem for one another depending on the situation, it seems as though some associations assume a certain level of affection that others do not. If one does not necessarily need to like, spend much time with, or perhaps even know the other people in the association, then the relationship starts to look less like something we might recognize as genuine friendship, and as a result, we might wonder why associations ought to be considered friendships at all. Those who contribute to the same charitable organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, for example, are all members of an association, insofar as they consider themselves members of that organization. If a member engages with that organization solely by contributing money on a regular basis, however, it is not clear that participation in the association will generate the affection and esteem typically found in a friendship. Moreover, it might even be possible for any two members of the same charitable organization to differ enough in their personalities such that they would actively dislike each other should they ever meet. If it is possible for two members of the same association to dislike one another, then it might seem strange to say that the association itself is a case of friendship, or that the two members are friends.

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91 This is a point noted by Suzanne Stern-Gillet. She points out that although members of an association must work together in order to achieve their goals, they need not feel affection or have esteem for the moral or intellectual qualities of the other members, and the members of an association may not even spend much time with one another. Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*, 161-162.
In what follows, I argue that while affection is typically found in paradigmatic cases of friendship—particularly personal friendships—such affection is not necessary, and can be absent from friendships in association. While some friendships in association, such as the household association, may include affection, others, such as the association of business partners, may not. Friends can lack affection for one another and still have goodwill toward one another on Aristotle’s account, and that goodwill can fall short of affection while still being sufficient for qualifying the relationship as a friendship. While it might seem strange to think that it is possible for friends not to feel any affection for one another, I take it that under Aristotle’s account, friendships that do not include affection fall short of the paradigm set by friendship on account of the good. While less desirable than friendships that do include friendly affection, such affectionless friendships can still contribute to the good life insofar as they involve the joint pursuit of something good.

Aristotle offers some brief remarks in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.9 that help to clarify the sense in which he considers associations to be cases of friendship. There, he writes that “in every association there seems to be some sort of justice and some sort of friendship as well,” and that “the extent to which they [the members of an association] have things in common is the extent of their friendship, since it is also the extent of justice” (1159b25-31). Setting aside for the moment the question of how to interpret Aristotle’s comments on justice in associations, we can see from this brief passage that associations qualify as friendships insofar as the members of the association have things in common. He goes on to note that while the members of some associations, such as the association between brothers, have everything in common, in other associations the things that the members have in common are specified. Sailors, for example,

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92 Reeve translates κοινωνέω as “to share communally.” Because of the range of things that individuals within these relationships can share with one another, I have chosen to translate κοινωνέω as “to have in common.”
only seek what is advantageous on a voyage related to commercial endeavor, and soldiers seek to take a city in war (1159b32-35, 1160a14-18). This suggests, then, that brothers are friends to a greater extent than sailors or soldiers, since brothers have more in common with one another. In the case of the association of wildlife conservationists, then, the fact that the members all aim at wildlife conservation is what they have in common, and is the extent of their friendship.

It is possible, then, for two members of an association who do not know one another personally, or who even happen to dislike one another, to be friends under this account as long as they both share the aims of the association and are cooperating with one another to bring about that association’s common good. What constitutes friendship in the association is determined by the common good of that association, and the sorts of actions that constitute the reciprocal goodwill that is found in friendship will be dictated by the good at which the association aims. It seems as though we can interpret Aristotle’s claim that “the various sorts of friendship will follow upon the various sorts of association” to mean that the brotherly association has an attendant brother-friendship, and the association of sailors has an attendant sailor-friendship (1160a29-30). Insofar as the association of brothers differs from the association of sailors, so too do brother-friendship and sailor-friendship. That is to say, because the aims of the association of sailors differ from those of brothers, the sorts of actions that would make someone a good friend in the context of sailor-friendship might fall short of what is required in the context of brother-friendship. While one’s obligations to the association of sailors might be limited to showing up in time for the voyage, doing one’s fair share of the work, and not insisting on taking more than one’s fair share of the profits, because the association of brothers aims at more than profit on a single voyage, one might be expected to do a good deal more, or to have obligations to one’s
brother across a wider range of activities. What determines one’s obligations in different cases is the good thing at which the association aims.

Under my interpretation, then, the members of an association are friends insofar as they are working cooperatively toward some common good. By cooperating to achieve the common good of an association, even a large one like an association of wildlife conservationists, members can have good will toward one another despite not liking each other or even not personally knowing one another. In order for this interpretation to serve as a description of friendship in association, however, it will be necessary to address two potential concerns. First, it must rule out the possibility of every group of people who just so happen to have some common goal from being considered an association. If this were the case, it would be possible for individuals who are actively competing against one another, such as the runners in a race, to be considered friends. Second, the interpretation must rule out the possibility of two people who have the same common goal and are each working independently towards that goal, but who are not aware of each other’s efforts, from either being considered an association or friends. We could imagine, for example, two wildlife conservationist organizations from different parts of the world. We would neither want to say that a member of one such organization is a member of both, nor would we want to say that the members of both are necessarily friends simply by virtue of the fact that they are both working towards some common good. In order to avoid both of these problems, we will need a clearer account of what it means to cooperate toward a common good. We can get such an account by looking to Aristotle’s discussion of like-mindedness (ἡμοῦνα) and goodwill (εὔνοια) in both the Eudemian Ethics and the Nicomachean Ethics.

By drawing parallels to Aristotle’s account of like-mindedness in the Eudemian Ethics, we can see why not just any group of people who have some good in common would qualify as a
Winning is a good common to all of the runners in a race, for example, in the sense that it is something they are all working toward, but that does not necessarily mean that the runners are a case of friendship in association. In order for a common good to result in a friendship in association, the members of the association need to be cooperating with one another in order to achieve that common good. In the discussion of like-mindedness in the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle draws a distinction between the like-mindedness of friends as it compares to other cases of like-mindedness, including the like-mindedness that occurs between base people. He claims that “the like-mindedness of friendship does not deal with everything, but only with the actions of the like-minded parties and the things which pertain to living together” (1241a16-18). Moreover, if base people “decide on and have an appetite for the same things,” and “desire the same things in such a way that it is possible for both to get what they desire,” there is a sense in which even they, too, can be said to be like-minded (1241a25-30). So just as any two people who happen to be like-minded about some course of action are not necessarily friends, so too is it the case with any two people who happen to have some good in common. In order for the common good to serve as a basis for a friendship in association, it has to relate to the actions of the parties hoping to bring it about, and they must

93 The term “ὁμόνοια” is also sometimes translated as concord. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, the discussion of like-mindedness begins after a lacuna in the text, which occurs in the middle of a discussion of whether or not like-mindedness and good will are the same thing. In that discussion, Aristotle argues that “good will is neither altogether different from friendship nor the same,” and that “good will is the starting point for friendship, and every friend has good will but not every person who feels good will is a friend. The person who merely feels good will is like a beginner, which is why it is the starting point of friendship but not friendship itself” (1241a1-3, 1241a12-14). The lacuna occurs immediately after this claim about the difference between good will and friendship, and leads into the discussion of like-mindedness, with the claim, “…for people believe that friends are like-minded and that the like-minded are friends” (1241a15-16). This is where I pick up the discussion, above.

94 Note that Aristotle argues that like-mindedness is not univocal, since the like-mindedness of base people is not the like-mindedness of good people. He argues that “the primary and natural kind,” of like-mindedness possessed by the good is “excellent” (1241a21-25). This is because, in the case of base people, if they cannot both obtain what it is that they desire, then they fight with one another, and people who are like-minded do not fight (1241a29-30).
both be able to attain that common good together. Specifically, it seems from these passages that friends need to cooperate to attain some common good, and be able to both attain it.\footnote{It isn’t necessarily the case that the good can be achieved only through cooperation, although there may be some goods of this sort. While individuals, for example, can attain some measure of profit on their own or with associates, a single citizen is unable to achieve the good of the political association alone (see the discussion of the political association, below, for a more detailed account).}

Like-mindedness is also discussed in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.6. There, Aristotle argues that “it is not agreement in belief, since that might occur even among people who do not know each other,” and that people are not said to be like-minded “when they are of one mind about just anything—for example, on matters related to the heavens,” because like-mindedness in that area is not fitted to friendship (1167a22-26). Like-mindedness is described there as being concerned with “things doable in action,” and of those things, “the ones that have a certain magnitude and where it is possible for both or all parties to attain their goals” (1167a28-30). Aristotle’s primary example of the sort of thing that like-mindedness is concerned with is the decision about how political offices are to be determined, who should rule, and whether or not an alliance should be formed with another city. This is why, Aristotle claims, that like-mindedness “is apparently political friendship, as it is in fact said to be, since it is concerned with things that are advantageous and ones that affect our life” (1167b2-4). Although the *Nicomachean Ethics* emphasizes like-mindedness as it applies to the political association, as I argue above, the discussion of like-mindedness in the *Eudemian Ethics* suggests that the concept can apply to more than just political friendship, and is useful in interpreting Aristotle’s account of how what friends have in common differs from the sorts of things that those who are not friends have in common.

Specifically, if it is possible for two or more people to act together in order to achieve some goal which they share, then the individuals involved can be like-minded in a way
consistent with friendship. Simply sharing a common good or having some goal in common is not enough for the association to be considered friendship, then, since in order for the members of the association to be like-minded, they must both all be able to have a share of the good at which the association aims, and all agree on the course of action that should be taken in order to achieve that good. While the runners in a race might all have the same goal, and might all be acting in order to achieve that goal, their shared activity does not qualify as either an association or a friendship, because it is not possible for everyone involved to achieve that goal.

While this interpretation of like-mindedness in friendship helps to rule out the possibility of those who actively compete with one another from being considered either an association or friends, it still does not rule out the possibility of an association or friendship between those who are working independently of one another to achieve the same common goal, without each other’s knowledge. Aristotle’s notion of goodwill from *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.5 will help to clarify the sense in which we can consider members of an association to be cooperating with one another.

There, Aristotle notes that “goodwill arises even toward people we do not know and without their being aware of it, whereas friendship does not” (1166b31-32). He goes on to add that “it is not possible for people to be friends without first having goodwill, but those who have goodwill are none the more friends. For they only wish good things to those for whom they have goodwill but would never join in their actions or go to any trouble on their behalf” (1167a7-10). This discussion of goodwill places two requirements on a friendship relevant to this notion of cooperation. First, friendship requires some awareness between the parties involved. It might be possible for individuals from two separate wildlife conservation organizations to work toward the same goal independently of one another, and yet if they are unaware of each other’s efforts,
then they are neither an association nor friends. Second, friendship requires that the individuals involved join in each other’s actions or go to some trouble on each other’s behalf. Individuals from two separate wildlife conservation organizations, insofar as they are working independently of one another, neither join in each other’s actions nor go to any trouble for one another. While it seems as though they are both acting towards the same goal and going to some trouble for the sake of a shared cause, their actions do not result in their relationship being classified as either an association or a friendship. Compare this to two members of the same wildlife conservation organization within the same country. While the two members might not know one another personally, they are aware of the fact that the association has other members and that those other members are all working towards the same goal. As a result, there is a sense in which the members of the association are aware of each other’s goodwill, and are aware that they are all joining in each other’s actions and going to some trouble on behalf of one another.

Taken together, like-mindedness and goodwill offer a model for what it looks like for friends, including members of an association, to cooperate toward a common good. If the common good is something that all of the friends can hope to attain, if the friends are aware that there are other people working together in order to achieve that common good, and if the friends are willing to make an effort to help one another achieve that common good, then we can see how the existence of a common good is enough to serve as the basis for the goodwill necessary for an association and for friendship.

Note that the common good at which an association aims serves not only as the basis for the association, but also as a way of determining the extent to which the members of the association are considered friends. The nature of the common good will dictate how members of an association ought to behave in order to be considered members of the association and friends.
As a result, associations can be categorized according to Aristotle’s distinction between the three forms of friendship by examining what the members of an association have in common. The association of fellow soldiers, for example, is an association that comes about on account of usefulness, while the association of a dining club comes about on account of pleasure (1160a14-20).\(^96\) So, just as two individuals can form a friendship on account of usefulness by pursuing some sort of advantage together, a larger group of sailors can organize an association in order to pursue their joint advantage, and in that process become friends.

Friendship in an association based on usefulness or pleasure is like personal friendship based on usefulness or pleasure in other ways, as well. Aristotle argues in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.4 that friendship on account of the good is friendship in the primary sense and friendships on account of pleasure and usefulness are friendships by similarity (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα) to it (1157a30-33). According to this account, the friendship that obtains between virtuous individuals which comes about on account of the good is the paradigmatic case of friendship and other types of friendship are only so called due to their similarity to that paradigm.\(^97\) Insofar as friendship in association can also be based on usefulness or pleasure, I take it that friendship in association is only considered friendship due to its similarity to the paradigm established by friendship on account of the good. Friendships in association, then, can be similar to friendship on account of the good in a number of ways. The greatest similarity these relationships have to the paradigm is

\(^96\) Aristotle makes no reference to associations that might form on account of the good, although nothing he says on the topic of friendship in association rules out the possibility. The members of such an association would all need to be virtuous, and the common good of the association would need to contribute to the virtue of its members. Associations of this sort would be few and far between, given what Aristotle says about the rarity of friendships on account of the good (see, for example, the passage at 1156b24-29).

\(^97\) In Chapter 2, I argued that friendship on account of the good is paradigmatic, in that it is the only form of friendship that fulfills and exhibits all of the sufficient conditions of friendship, and does so to the highest degree. Briefly, these conditions are: mutual, acknowledged, and equally reciprocated goodwill on account of pleasure, usefulness, or both. When compared to the paradigm, other sorts of friendship fall short in every one of these areas. See Chapter 2 for more detail on how I take the forms of friendship to be related to one another.
the fact that they aim at some good, which serves as the source of goodwill between the
association’s members.

We might see how this works by elaborating upon Aristotle’s example of the members of
a dining club. Although Aristotle only mentions the dining club as one example of an association
that comes about on account of pleasure, I take it that the members more specifically participate
in the association in order to take pleasure in the feasts, and that they wish each other well in that
context. The ways in which they might express that goodwill could include contributing money
to the dining club in order to pay for the club’s feasts, for example, or by hosting a feast
themselves. As is the case with personal friendships on account of pleasure, this goodwill would
be limited by the pleasant activities that the friends enjoy together. Members of the dining club
might not spend time with one another outside of a feast, and if a member were no longer able or
willing to contribute to the financing and planning of the feast, that member’s friendship with the
other diners would come to an end. That friendship will also end if the member no longer takes
pleasure in the dining club’s activities or if the other diners take no pleasure in the member’s
attendance at the feast.

Friendships in association may fall short of the paradigm in terms of how much
reciprocal goodwill is involved in the relationship, and could possibly fall short in terms of the
goodwill being either mutual or acknowledged, if the association is large enough that some
members may not even meet. As a result, for associations in which the members may not know
each other personally, and thus do not directly reciprocate or acknowledge each other’s goodwill,
each member’s effort to advance the common good of the organization stands in as a means of
doing and wishing well to her associates. By working towards the goals of the organization, a
member aims at a goal shared by her fellow members, and as a result is doing good for them. I take it that this is what Aristotle means when he says that there seems to be some sort of friendship in every association, and that “it is in association, then, that every form of friendship lies” (1159b26-27, 1161b11). There is a common good in every association and in every friendship, and as long as the individuals involved are working toward that common good, then there is some sort of association and some sort of friendship as well.99 The best way to make sense of these claims is to interpret these relationships in terms of what the members of the association have in common with one another, especially given how far short of the paradigm some instances of friendship in association might fall in terms of mutual goodwill, affection, or esteem.

According to this interpretation, both the common good of the members of an association as well as the fact that each member is contributing in some way to achieve that good is what qualifies these relationships as friendships. As noted above, the members of the association need to be able to achieve the common good of the association together, as in the case of like-mindedness. The like-mindedness of friendship requires that members of an association act in the

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98 I take it that this interpretation is in line with that of A. W. Price, who argues that by calling associations friendships, Aristotle has tightened the “determinable definition” of friendship as mutually recognized mutual well-wishing. While goodwill can be idle, Price notes, mutual well-wishing cannot, and as a result, an instance of friendship occurs whenever a “pair or group of human beings is interacting in a way intended to benefit one another through beneficence or co-operation according to some shared conception of benefit.” A. W. Price, Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 159-160. John Cooper offers a similar interpretation, arguing that when political friendship obtains within the political association, there exists a level of mutual goodwill and mutual trust among the people within that association, so that each citizen in the political association is interested in and concerned for the well-being of each other citizen simply because the others are fellow citizens. As a result, Cooper claims, political friendship requires that citizens behave justly in their mutual relations, since injustice violates the trust that is necessary for political friendship to obtain. This leads Cooper to suggest that when citizens are working toward the common advantage of the political association, what they are doing is wishing for and implementing the individual good of their fellow citizens through their actions. John M. Cooper, “Political Animals and Civic Friendship,” in Reason and Emotion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 370-373.

99 Taken together, these passages seem to suggest that every friendship, including those between two individuals, is an association, and that every association is a friendship. In cases of both individual friendship and friendship in association, the friends cooperate with one another in order to achieve some good.
appropriate way to achieve the goals of the association such that all members are able to get what they desire. We might still worry that this interpretation does not do enough to capture the notion of goodwill that friendship requires. Consider the earlier case of two separate wildlife conservation organizations from separate parts of the world but which both have the same goal. If simply working in similar ways to achieve similar goals were enough for friendship, then we might be concerned about the possibility of members of both groups being friends with one another or the possibility of a member of one group being considered a member of both without even realizing it. If neither group is aware of the existence of the other, then how can members of either organization be friends? I take it that Aristotle’s claim that friendship consists of reciprocal goodwill (εὔνοια) that does not go unnoticed by the friends can help here (1155b34-1155ba5).\textsuperscript{100} While members of large associations may not personally know each of the other members, simply knowing that there are other members working towards the same goal should be enough to meet the requirements of friendship.

If this account of goodwill and cooperation is right, then we can see how Aristotle’s account of friendship in association can be applied to so many different types of association, including those which involve varying degrees of affection. Moreover, we can better understand Aristotle’s emphasis on the political association in the discussion of friendship in association. If associations aim at the common good of their members, and if associations in which the members have more in common are considered friendships to a greater extent than those in which the members have less in common, then it stands to reason that Aristotle would place the

\textsuperscript{100} As Aristotle notes in \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} IX.5, we can have goodwill towards those we do not know and without them being aware of it, while we cannot be friends with anyone without them being aware of it (1166b30-32). If we take the goodwill in an association to be expressed by acting towards an association’s goals, then in order to be considered either a part of the association or friends with any other members of the association, I take it that one must at least be aware of the fact that one is a member of the association, and that the association has other members.
most emphasis on the association in which the members aim at the greatest common good. Aristotle argues that the political association is just such an association in the *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.9, where he writes that “all associations seem to be parts of the political association, however, since people consort together for some advantage and to provide themselves with something for their life. And the political community too seems both to have come together at the start and to remain in existence, for the sake of what is advantageous” (1160a8-12). Moreover, Aristotle argues that the smaller associations, like those of sailors, soldiers, or religious guilds, all “seem to be subordinate to the political association, since it seeks not the advantage that is present at hand but the one that is for all of life” (1160a20-23).

Taken together, these claims seem to argue that the good at which the political association aims is more complete than the good at which the smaller associations aim. But what is the nature of the relationship, and how ought we to interpret the claim that these smaller associations are both part of and subordinate to the political association? One possible interpretation is to take Aristotle’s reference to the advantage “that is for all of life” to be a reference to that which is good in itself. This sort of interpretation would count friendship in the political association as a type of friendship on account of the good. Another possible interpretation is to claim that the political association is what allows individuals to pursue the goods made available by participation in the smaller associations. Under such an interpretation,

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the political association can be viewed as providing for the basic needs of citizens, and as having the general aim of enabling citizens to pursue usefulness or pleasure as members of these smaller associations.

Neither of these interpretations is entirely satisfactory. Aristotle’s references to advantage and usefulness as the origin of the political association give reason to think that friendship in the political association is a type of friendship on account of usefulness. This interpretation gets some support in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where Aristotle makes the claim that “political friendship exists because of utility above all else. People seem to come together because they are not self-sufficient, though they would also have come together just for the sake of living together” (1242a6-9). Nevertheless, there seems to be more to the claim that the political association aims at a more complete good than simply saying that it aims either at the same good as the smaller associations or is more successful in achieving those goods. Aristotle’s claims in this section suggest that there is some good the political association can provide over and above the smaller associations, and that this good goes beyond simply being more advantageous than a sailing expedition or more pleasant than a feast. Aristotle’s discussion of the political association

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103 Michael Pakaluk, for example, argues that Aristotle “wishes to suggest both that (1) the political association has authority over other associations, whereas nothing has authority over it, and also that (2) the political association is the most complete association, since it is composed out of the others.” On Pakaluk’s view, “the forms of constitution of a city-state might reasonably be thought to provide the basic patterns of association to which any association whatsoever would have to conform” Aristotle, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX*, trans. Michael Pakaluk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 116.
in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10-11, which I discuss in greater detail below, does not provide any more specific guidance on how to conceive of the more complete nature of the political association and instead focuses on the different ways in which the political association can be organized.

The good of the political association is considered most directly in the *Politics*. In *Politics* III.9, Aristotle writes that the “political association exists for the sake of noble actions, and not of living together” (1281a2-4). This reference to noble actions might suggest that the good at which the political association aims is, in fact, virtue. In *Politics* III.4, however, Aristotle draws a distinction between the virtue of a good person and a good citizen by comparing the political association to the association of sailors. There, Aristotle writes that although sailors have different functions, such as a rower, a pilot, or a lookout, they all have safe navigation as a common goal. As a result, even though the precise definition of each sailor’s virtue is different, insofar as the activities of an excellent rower differ from those of an excellent lookout, there is also a more general virtue that consists of excellence pertaining to safe navigation (1176b20-27).

Citizens in the political association are similar, Aristotle claims, insofar as citizens differ from one another while at the same time working toward the preservation (σωτηρία) of the association. I take it that what Aristotle means here is that each person within the political association has a different task when it comes to participating in the association. Some will be rulers and others will be subjects, and among subjects some may be farmers, sailors, soldiers, or any other role that can contribute to the association’s preservation. To be an excellent citizen, then, will depend upon what one does within the political association and how one’s contributions help to preserve the association itself. What is involved in being an excellent

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citizen will differ from what it takes to be an excellent person. Moreover, because there are multiple forms of government, the virtue of a good citizen will differ depending on the constitution of the political association, while the virtue of a good person will be the same for everyone (1276b27-34). As Aristotle notes, we can draw the same conclusion by considering the same issue from the opposite direction. If the political association cannot be entirely composed of good people, but each person could still be a good citizen, then the virtue of a citizen and a good person must differ, “unless we assume that in the good state all the citizens must be good” (1276b37-1277a5).

Taken together, these passages claim that while the good at which the political association aims is noble action, the virtue of a good citizen differs from that of a good person. The suggestion seems to be that the good of the political association will depend upon the association’s constitution. The smaller associations differ from the political association, then, in that the goods at which they aim are not noble, but instead limited to the goals of the association. The smaller associations are subordinate to the political association, then, in the sense that they aim at subordinate goods. The noble actions that result from the political association allow citizens to live well in a way that the smaller associations alone cannot, and are available to members of the association even if not every member of the association is a virtuous person. That is to say, even those who are not virtuous can still be good citizens, and insofar as the good of the political association aims at noble action, the non-virtuous citizen can still act in noble ways.

**The Common Good and the Political Association**

Aristotle covers the topic of friendship in the political association in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10-11, where he also covers the topics of justice in the political association as well as
friendship and justice in the household.\textsuperscript{105} The political association receives relatively little attention when compared to the discussion of the household association and is primarily concerned with cataloging the types of friendship and justice that can be found within the different sorts of political regime. Given the ways in which these associations seem to differ from other sorts of association, it may seem as though this section of the text can offer little guidance in interpreting friendship in either the other associations or in personal relationships. Nevertheless, these passages provide the most detail on Aristotle’s thoughts about how the common good functions in determining the health of a political association. Specifically, in this portion of the text, Aristotle makes the claim that there is justice in a political association to the extent that there is something in common between the rulers and subjects, and that this is the source of the friendship found in the political association, as well. If, as I argued above, associations can only be considered friendships to the extent that the members of the association are working together for some common good, then what is said here about friendship and justice in the political association will be broadly applicable to the smaller associations. Moreover, what is said here can inform our interpretation of justice in personal friendships as well, to the extent that personal friendships also involve a cooperative effort to achieve some good.

Aristotle introduces the discussion of friendship and justice in the political association with a statement about the three types of constitution that guide the different sorts of political association and the three corrupted versions of these types of constitution. The three types of constitution are kingship, aristocracy, and timocracy (1160a32-35).\textsuperscript{106} The corrupted versions are

\textsuperscript{105} The topics of friendship and justice in the political and household associations are also covered in \textit{Eudemian Ethics} VII.9-10. The discussion there is similar to that in the \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, though the \textit{Eudemian Ethics} version is far more compressed and is less organized.

\textsuperscript{106} According to Aristotle, timocracy consists of rule “based on property assessments, which it seems proper to call ‘timocracy,’ though most people usually call it ‘polity’” (1160a32-35).
tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy, which are the corruptions of kingship, aristocracy, and timocracy, respectively (1160b10-19). What distinguishes the types of constitution from their corrupted versions is the way in which the rulers of a political association approach the common good. For example, tyranny is a corruption of kingship because “though both are monarchies, they differ greatly, since the tyrant targets his own advantage, a king that of the ones he rules,” and oligarchy is a corruption of aristocracy because the rulers “allocate what belongs to the city contrary to worth, giving all or most of the good things to themselves and offices always to the same people, considering the acquisition of wealth to be their most important concern” (1160a36-1160b2, 1160b12-15). The corrupted constitutions, then, are those in which the rulers do not look after the good of all of the members of the association, but rather pursue their own self-interest (as individuals or perhaps as a ruling class).

The common good of the political association not only serves as a means of determining whether its constitution is corrupt, but also as a means of assessing how much friendship and justice are found within that political association. Aristotle claims that “in each of the constitutions there is evidently friendship to the extent that there is justice,” and provides the example of the friendship found in a king for his subjects, which exists to the extent that the king treats his subjects well and directs them such that they can do well (1161a10-14). We can compare this to the corrupted constitutions, in which “just as justice is found only to a small extent, so too is friendship, and it is found least in the worst one, since in tyranny there is little or no friendship. For in cases where there is nothing in common between ruler and ruled, there is no friendship, since there is no justice either” (1161a30-34). The distinction between the king and the tyrant, then, is a distinction between a ruler who is cooperating with his subjects in pursuit of some common good and a ruler who is looking to take advantage of his subjects. If the common
good is what qualifies an association as a case of friendship, then there is no friendship between
ruler and subjects in a tyranny, because rather than a joint pursuit of some common good, the
tyrant, who has the greatest say in how the common good of the association is achieved and
distributed, is looking to gain some advantage for himself over the others.

Given what Aristotle says here we might wonder if, even though there is little or no
friendship between the ruler and citizens in a tyranny, there can still be friendship between
citizens. I take it that Aristotle thinks that just as there is little or no friendship between a tyrant
and his citizens, there is also less friendship between citizens in a tyranny than in any other type
of constitution. Aristotle’s comments on the difference between a timocracy and a democracy
suggest that even in a corrupt constitution, friendship between citizens is possible, even if the
rulers are only looking out for their own advantage. He claims that democracy is the least
depraved of the corrupted constitutions because it only deviates slightly from timocracy, since
both involve majority rule, and those who rule are considered equals (1160b16-20). As a
result, Aristotle claims that friendship and justice are found to a greater extent in democracies
than they are in a tyranny, “since in the case of those who are equal, the things they have in
common are many” (1161b8-10). It seems as though there are two features of a political
association that can contribute to the amount of friendship found within the association. The first
feature is the type of constitution which governs the association, and the second is the relative
equality of the association’s members. The type of constitution has a greater influence on the
amount of friendship found in a political association than the level of equality, because the rulers
of the association have the most control over how the association’s goods are distributed.

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107 The primary difference between the two types of constitution is that in a timocracy, only those who meet the
property assessment are considered equal to one another (1160b18-19).
If inequality between the rulers and citizens of a political association were enough by itself to reduce the amount of friendship and justice found in the association, then there would be just as little friendship in a kingship as there is in a tyranny, since the king is not considered equal to his subjects. Aristotle does seem to take it to be the case that when members of an association are more equal to one another they have more in common, and as a result might be more likely to cooperate with one another to achieve some common good. Equality in a corrupted constitution, then, might be like the case of like-mindedness in base individuals, mentioned above. Insofar as citizens in such a political association can both achieve something good for themselves, and can cooperate with one another in order to achieve it, they can be friends. If this is the case, then why think that there is less friendship overall in a tyranny or oligarchy than there is in a democracy? The subjects under a tyranny would presumably be relatively equal to one another, which would seem to increase the possibility of becoming friends. The lack of friendship among citizens in a tyranny, then, is primarily the result of the differences between the corrupt constitutions. Because the distribution of the association’s goods in a democracy is determined by all of the citizens, their equality provides more opportunity for cooperation in the various pursuits that the citizens have in common with one another. Far fewer opportunities for the joint pursuit of the common good are available to those who are not the rulers in oligarchies or tyrannies because the subjects, while relatively equal to one another, have little or no control over how the association’s common goods are distributed.

**Political Friendship and Personal Friendship**

Given Aristotle’s emphasis on a political association’s constitution and how it relates to the friendship found in that association, some interpreters have argued that Aristotle takes
friendship in the political association to be a function of the association’s laws.\textsuperscript{108} Those who give such an interpretation often argue that political friendship differs from personal friendship, and requires a separate account.\textsuperscript{109} Aristotle’s comments at the beginning of \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} VIII.12 seem to support an interpretation like this. There, he repeats the claim that every form of friendship lies in association, but that familial and companionate friendship ought to be distinguished from other sorts, since “political friendships, by contrast, as well as tribal friendships, friendships between fellow sailors, and all friendships of this sort do seem to be more like association ones, since they seem to be in accord with some sort of agreement” (1161b11-15).\textsuperscript{110} Before examining the household association in greater detail, I would first like

\textsuperscript{108} Michael Pakaluk, for example, suggests that the friendliness and affection found in associations “must involve law, or at least the assignment of duties and obligations to members as holding specified offices, in contrast to the informal relationships between pairs of friends.” Under an account like this, Pakaluk argues, the relationship between friendship and justice has to do with the justice in the governance of the association and how duties and activities of the members of the association are assigned. Aristotle, \textit{Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX}, trans. Michael Pakaluk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 107-109.

\textsuperscript{109} Paul Schollmeier, for example, claims that political friendship is a matter of unanimity among people with regard to the principle of justice for their constitution. Specifically, according to Schollmeier, political friendships are good and altruistic when the constitution of a city is healthy, and the rulers are looking out for the good of the citizens, and are egoistic when the constitution is corrupt, and the rulers are looking out for their own good. Schollmeier goes on to describe political justice as a mark of political friendship, insofar as both political justice and political friendship involve wishing and doing what is good for the sake of another. Schollmeier, \textit{Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship}, 77-84, 97-111. Terence Irwin suggests that each person’s self-realization includes concern for the interests of others, and that a friendship formed by the concern for others constitutes an association. Associations are “regulated by principles of justice aiming at its common interest; and to the extent that someone has reason to form such a community, she has reason to accept the principles of justice for it.” Irwin goes on to argue that political friendship can only support justice if it extends beyond a limited circle of people who are friends on account of the good, so that even though a fellow citizen may not be a virtuous person, and even though a virtuous person does not share her life with a fellow citizen to the extent she does with a virtuous friend, because fellow citizens are virtuous enough to share some similar aims, the virtuous person can treat her fellow citizens in the same way as she does virtuous friends. Terence Irwin, \textit{Aristotle’s First Principles} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 353, 398-399. Kazutaka Inamura argues that for Aristotle, the political relationship is one in which citizens share or exchange political authority for the common benefit, and political friendship is defined by citizens looking after another’s good by taking turns at exercising political authority. Under this interpretation, political friendship is a type of friendship on account of usefulness, although it is one in which “a legislator should design the constitution, educational system and other social arrangements in a polis so that they cultivate citizens’ virtue to develop friendly relationships among them.” Kazutaka Inamura, \textit{Justice and Reciprocity in Aristotle’s Political Philosophy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 176-177.

\textsuperscript{110} Reeve translates the phrase “κοινωνικάς ἐοίκας μάλλον” as “more like communal ones.”
to suggest that the distinction drawn here between personal friendship and friendship in
association is not as significant as it may seem.

If my interpretation so far is correct, then the most important feature in determining the
amount of friendship in an association is the extent to which the members of an association
cooperate to pursue some common good. This is the case whether the association aims at some
partial good, like the association of business partners, or something greater, like the good at
which the political association aims. Although the specific obligations that friends have to one
another will vary depending on the type of association, there should be no fundamental
difference between the friendship found in the political association and the other sorts of
association. Nevertheless, political friendship is often discussed in the secondary literature as
separate from the other sorts of friendship, and is often seen as requiring a different account.\footnote{111}
While Aristotle explicitly refers to political friendship in only three places in the \textit{Nicomachean
Ethics}, I take it that two features of his discussion of friendship in the political association lead to
the conclusion that it differs significantly from the other sorts of friendship.\footnote{112} First, Aristotle’s
account of friendship in the political association is based on his account of the different types of
constitution, which draws attention to the relationship between rulers and citizens. Because these
relationships are discussed in greater detail than the relationships involved in the other
associations, then one might think that political friendship has something special about it in
virtue of which it is singled out for discussion.

Second, Aristotle draws a distinction between political friendship and the friendship
corresponding to smaller associations on the one hand, and familial and personal friendship on

\footnote{111}{See footnote 22, above.\footnote{112}{Aristotle refers to political friendship at 1161b13 as a contrast to familial and personal friendship, at 1163b34 to describe the relationship between a shoemaker and customers, and at 1167b2, where he claims that concord is apparently political friendship.}}
the other. The former sorts of friendship, he claims, are based on some sort of agreement, while the latter are not, which suggests that the two might require separate accounts (1161b11-15). Although Aristotle does not give any additional details about the sort of agreements he has in mind here, I take it that in many cases, the agreement is implicit. While the constitution of a political association is formalized through laws, an association of sailors or merchants could be as formal as a written contract or as informal as a verbal promise. Even in some of the less formal associations, there must be some sort of agreement in place so that the goals of the association can be achieved. In a dining club, for example, agreements would need to be made about how much to contribute to the association so that the feast can be held. We can contrast this with friendship in the household and personal friendship, which arise without any explicit agreement. In the case of the household association, Aristotle makes the claim that the friendship between spouses is something that comes about by nature, and that “human beings share a household not only for the sake of reproduction but also for the sake of various things necessary for life” (1162a16-22). In the case of personal friendship, the friends realize that they have something in common insofar as they are both useful to one another, pleasant to one another, or are both virtuous, and as a result, they develop the reciprocal goodwill that comes along with friendship.

Despite the fact that some friendships are based on an agreement and others are not, I take it that friends have certain obligations to one another in every sort of friendship whether or not there is an agreement in place, and that we can evaluate political friendship or friendship in an association based on an agreement just as we would friendship in the household or between

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113 See, for example, Aristotle’s reference to what he describes as “ethical” types of friendship on account of usefulness, which corresponds to an unwritten form of justice (1162b21-23). I discuss this passage in greater detail in the next chapter.
two individuals. We can see that this is the case based on Aristotle’s discussion of the political constitutions and their parallels within the household. Aristotle introduces the notion of friendship in the household association as he describes the different sorts of constitution that can govern political associations. There, he makes the claim that “resemblances—and, as it were, paradigms—of these constitutions can also be found in households” (1160b22-24). He goes on to claim that the association of a father in relation to his sons is like a kingship, the association of man and woman is aristocratic, and the association of brothers is like a timocracy, and that they can resemble the corrupted constitutions if a father is a tyrant and treats his sons as slaves, if either the man or woman attempt to run the entire household by themselves, or if a household is masterless (1160b24-1161a9).

Note Aristotle’s claim that the household serves as a paradigm for the various constitutions. The similarity is based on the organizational structure of the association, and the way in which members of the household can seek to achieve the good of each of its members. If the household is managed well, then parents govern the business of the household together and look out for the best interests of the family as a whole. If it is not, then at least one member of the household is putting personal benefit ahead of the best interests of the family as a whole. Aristotle has argued that, despite the fact that the political association is based on some agreement and the household association is not, they both have the same organizational structures, and can be corrupted in similar ways. Both the political association and the household association become corrupted when those in charge work to benefit themselves at the expense of the other members of the association. Since this is the case in both the political association and the household association, it seems as though there is no reason to think that the standard we use
to evaluate political friendship is any different than the way we evaluate any other sort of friendship.\(^\text{114}\)

Rather than thinking of the account of political friendship as being somehow different than other types of friendship, then, I take it that we can use the additional detail provided by the discussion to better inform our interpretation of friendship in the other associations and between individuals. For example, Aristotle’s claims about the healthy and corrupted political associations reflect the claim in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1 that lawmakers seek out friendship to prevent faction and to drive out enmity (1155a25-26). Enmity between citizens and factions is more likely to develop in one of the corrupted constitutions because there individuals compete with one another in order to achieve something good for themselves rather than cooperating. These consequences of a lack of friendship are clearest in the case of the political association because the political association has a clear organizational structure, and is based on a constitution that clearly identifies the agreement that the members of the association have with one another. Nevertheless, as we see in the passages on the household association, we can

\(^{114}\) Ann Ward draws a similar connection between the political association and the household association, although she does so for different reasons, and in a more limited way. In trying to determine how to classify political friendship according to Aristotle’s distinction between friendship on account of usefulness, on account of pleasure, or on account of the good, she argues that because Aristotle views the political association as one for the sake of usefulness, a significant problem with political friendship is that citizens often view its purpose as the pursuit of material gain, and the purpose of the city as economic prosperity. Where this is the case, political friendship becomes more like a commercial transaction, and disputes are likely. She goes on to claim that this conception of political friendship shifts as Aristotle starts to analyze the various types of political regime and conceives of the citizens under these regimes not as artisans but members of families. With this shift, Ward argues, Aristotle leaves open the possibility for political friendship in a timocratic regime to resemble friendship on account of the good between two equals. Ann Ward, *Contemplating Friendship in Aristotle’s Ethics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 111-112, 115-118. While it seems right to suggest that Aristotle’s discussion of the political association and the household association help us to better understand the friendships found in each, and that there is no reason to think that political friendship differs substantially from the other sorts of friendship in association, I disagree with the claim that there is anything about the household association that makes us think that it or any of the political associations qualify as friendships on account of the good. As noted above, different associations can resemble friendship on account of the good more or less closely than others, but all will fall short of the paradigm in some way.
evaluate other sorts of relationships in terms of how well the members of the association cooperate in order to achieve the common good.

There is no agreement in place that serves as the basis of the household association, but we can still evaluate it along the same lines. If parents exploit their children for their own personal gain, or if one parent refuses to share the responsibilities of managing the household or raising children with the other, enmity seems just as likely to arise in the household as it does in the political association. Although Aristotle does not do so himself, we can extend this method of evaluation to other sorts of friendship in association, such as the association of work colleagues, volunteers at a charitable organization, or a local neighborhood association. Enmity and factions are just as likely to arise in any of these associations if some members seek out their own best interest at the expense of the common good of all of the association’s members, and it is reasonable to think that in cases where all of the members of the association are cooperating to achieve the association’s ends, the members would consider one another friends even if their interactions were limited only to the activities of the association.

_Friendship in the Household Association_

Given the comparisons that Aristotle draws between the political association and the household association, it is worth considering how his discussion of friendship in the household can inform our understanding of other types of friendship. While, as noted above, we can use our understanding of the political association to better understand friendship in the household, Aristotle seems to argue in the _Eudemian Ethics_ that the household serves as something of a model for understanding both friendship and the political association. There, he argues that because human beings, unlike other animals, form households, there would be a sort of association among human beings even if there were no cities, and as a result, there would also be
a sort of justice (1242a26-27). He concludes that “thus it is in the household that we first see the origins and sources of friendship, political regimes and justice” (1242a40-41). Although Aristotle’s argument in the *Nicomachean Ethics* seems to suggest that the smaller associations, such as those of soldiers, sailors, or dining clubs would not exist without the political association, this passage of the *Eudemian Ethics* suggests that even in the absence of the political association, humans would still cooperate with one another and form associations. While the basis of these other associations is clear—they come about on account of some good such as usefulness or pleasure—the basis for the reciprocal goodwill that occurs between members of a household is not entirely obvious from these passages.

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115 Lorraine Smith Pangle argues that both the political and household associations are rivals, in the sense that they both provide in the most complete way for the good of their members. She notes that Aristotle views parents as the greatest benefactors, and that he views the family more natural than the political association. She also argues that the family involves greater affection and involves unconditional bonds in a way that other sorts of friendship do not. Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, 81, 85-89. I take it that *Eudemian Ethics* 1242a26-27 and 1242a40-41 lend some support to her claim that both the political and household association aim to provide for the good of their members in a way that is more complete than the other types of association, even if Aristotle’s claims in the *Nicomachean Ethics* would suggest that all other associations are merely parts of the political association. Even if it is the case that Aristotle argues that the household association only aims at some partial advantage, that partial advantage would still seem to be more complete than the advantage aimed at in an association of fellow-sailors.

116 Aristotle himself claims that the friendship of children towards parents includes pleasure and utility more than the friendship of strangers, since family members have more of a common life, and that the friendship between a man and a woman includes both utility and pleasure insofar as both are working together toward a common enterprise, and can even be based on virtue if both parties are virtuous (1162a7-9, 1162a22-27). As Price notes, the family association defies classification according to Aristotle’s division of friendships into those on account of the good, pleasure, or usefulness, in part due to the fact that until children become adults there can be neither justice nor friendship towards them, and in part due to the fact that it is not clear which of the three objects of love serves as the friendship’s basis, since the relationship seems to be “grounded on love of mere existence.” He ultimately suggests that family relationships ought to be considered friendship on account of the good that take place between unequal parties. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, 166-167. I discuss the distinction between friendships between equal parties and those between unequal parties in greater detail in the discussion of justice, below.

Elizabeth Belfiore offers a similar interpretation, arguing that friendship on account of the good and family friendship are two different paradigms of the “other self” relationship. Under her interpretation, friends on account of the good become “other selves” to similarly virtuous individuals because of a deliberate choice on account of that virtue, and family members become “other selves” to one another naturally because of a biological and ethical sameness. She goes on to argue that family friendships are a type of friendship on account of the good in which the people involved are unequal in virtue, and yet the relationship exemplifies characteristics of friendship on account of the good to a high degree, since family members normally habituate one another to virtuous behavior, love one another, and act as friends toward one another. She bases her interpretation of family friendship on what she takes to be Aristotle’s account of a natural human instinct to reproduce, to naturally care for offspring, to form household associations, and to love one another. Elizabeth Belfiore, “Family Friendship in Aristotle’s Ethics,” *Ancient Philosophy* 21, no. 1 (2001), 114-115. If both parents happen to be virtuous, then it seems plausible to think that
That the household association might come about without the political association could suggest that they aim at different goods. That is to say, just as the aims of an association of sailors differs from those of an association of the dining club, we may think that the fact that the household can come to be independent of the political association would suggest different aims. Nevertheless, Aristotle’s comparison of the household to the political association suggests that they both aim at something that other associations do not. Just as the political association aims at the sorts of noble actions that will allow its members to live well, so too does the household association, and so the aims of these associations are more general in scope. Aristotle spends much of *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.12 emphasizing the education and nurturing of family members as one of the primary functions of the household association. He notes that the friendship of children toward their parents is the result of the parents being “the producers of the greatest goods and the cause of their existence and nurture as well as of their education, once born,” and the friendship between siblings is stronger than other sorts of companionate friendship because the siblings “have been jointly nurtured and similarly educated” and so “are more similar in character” (1162a4-7, 1162a9-14). As noted above, the household associations can resemble the deviant constitutions when parents aim to use their children to their own advantage, or when spouses fail to cooperate with one another in the management of the household. In cases like these, it would seem that the shared genealogy of the association’s members is all that holds the association together, and the association is diminished in its ability to provide its members with what they need in order to live well.

友谊在家庭中的存在可能部分是由于那些事业上的需要，或者由于那些事业上的成就。正因如此，阿那哈德就将家庭与政治联盟进行了比较，说明了它们各自追求的目标是不同的。尽管政治联盟的目的是通过追求高尚的行为来使得其成员能够过上美好的生活，但是家庭联盟的目的是更为广泛的，因为它不仅仅是教育孩子们，而是让孩子们在家庭中得到更好的关爱和培养。阿那哈德在《尼各马科伦理学》第八卷中强调了家庭联盟的教育和培育功能。他指出，孩子们对父母的友谊来源于父母是“生产者”、“原因者”以及“教育者”，而且兄弟姐妹之间的友谊比其他伴侣类型的友谊更加强烈，因为兄弟姐妹是“共同培育”和“同样教育”出来的，因此“更加相似”（1162a4-7, 1162a9-14）。如上所述，家庭联盟有时可能会出现一些不正常的情况，比如父母想利用孩子来为自己谋利，或者配偶之间无法合作管理家庭。在这种情况下，家庭联盟的存在主要依靠的是成员之间的血缘关系，而这种联盟的影响力也因此受到了削弱。
Keeping in mind Aristotle’s claim at 1159b24-31 that associates are friends to a greater extent the more they have in common, we can perhaps see why the household and political associations receive such great emphasis in these passages. Living well is a good common to everyone, and so there is a sense in which there is more at stake for members a household or citizens of the political association than there is in the other associations. While a failed business venture might mean a loss of some profit or other advantage, being raised in a household or being a citizen of a political association that is structured according to one of the corrupted constitutions could prevent an individual from living well or performing fine actions. Aristotle’s description of friendship in the family reinforces the idea that Aristotle sees the common good as the source of friendship in an association. Overall, we can determine the health of an association by judging to what extent it provides for the common good of its members. Whether the association comes about in order to provide some profit, as in the case of an association of sailors, or in order to provide for other aspects of a person’s life, as in the case of the political association or the household association, as long as the members of the association are cooperating with one another to achieve some good, then the members of the association are friends.117

117 My interpretation largely agrees with that of Howard Curzer. Rather than drawing a sharp distinction between personal friendships and friendships in association, Curzer argues that the decision-making arrangements within a friendship serve as an axis along which the forms of friendship can be divided. Drawing upon Aristotle’s discussion of political constitutions and family associations, Curzer claims that friendships can be categorized as relationships in which decisions are shared equally (e.g. a polity, among siblings), decisions are made by a single party (e.g. a monarchy, a parent over children), or decisions are made by different individuals with respect to their areas of expertise (e.g. an aristocracy, a husband and wife). Under this account, friendship aims not at the benefit of the friends involved, but rather at attaining and maintaining some common goal that all of the friends have in common, and as a result, opens up the possibility of viewing friendship as a multilateral relationship rather than a bilateral one. Howard J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 249-252. While I think the suggestion that we think of friendship in terms of the common goal that the friends share is a good one, the idea that friendships should be categorized in terms of who has decision-making authority is largely unnecessary. Moreover, according to my interpretation, the friends do individually benefit as a result of this cooperative effort, and it is this benefit that serves as the basis for the reciprocal goodwill of the friends.
Aristotle’s discussion of friendship in the political and household associations also help us to interpret his claims about justice as it applies to friendship. As I noted above, he claims in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that every association includes both some sort of friendship and justice, and that the extent to which members of an association have things in common is the extent to which they are friends as well as the extent of justice in their relationship (1159b25-31). He makes similar claims in the *Eudemi* *an Ethics*, where he argues that there are as many types of justice and association as there are types of friendship, and that “they all border on each other and have virtually the same differentiating characteristics” (1241b13-17). Aristotle elaborates on these claims in both works when he discusses the different types of constitution. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.11, he writes that “in each of the constitutions there is evidently friendship to the extent that there is justice,” and that “in cases where there is nothing in common between ruler and ruled, there is no friendship, since there is no justice either” (1161a10-11, 1161a32-34). In *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9, he writes that “all political regimes are a kind of justice, since they are an association, and everything that is common comes about through justice”

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118 The phrase “border on each other” translates the Greek “σύνορος,” which can also be translated as “conterminous with.” According to Hermann Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* (Graz: Akademische Druck-u Verlagsanstalt, 1955), Aristotle uses the word “σύνορος” in two other passages. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle writes that a democratic constitution is the deviant form of the timocratic constitution, “since these are neighbors (σύνοροι). For timocracy too is meant to be rule by the majority, and all those meeting the property assessment are equal” (1160b16-19). In *On Youth, Old Age, Life and Death, and Respiration*, trans. by G.R.T. Ross in Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), he writes that both the physician and the natural scientist must give an account of the causes of health and disease, and that “the extent to which these two differ and investigate diverse provinces must not escape us, since facts show that their inquiries are, to a certain extent, at least co-terminous. For those physicians who are cultivated and learned make some mention of natural science, and claim to derive their principles from it, while the most accomplished investigators into nature generally push their studies so far as to conclude with an account of medical principles” (480b21-30). In the former passage, the term “σύνορος” seems to indicate that both timocracy and democracy share the feature of majority rule, and in the latter case the term seems to indicate that despite the fact that they are different fields, the study of both medicine and natural science can inform those who are interested in health and disease. Neither use of the term seems to apply to the passage in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where Aristotle seems to be suggesting that there is little difference between the various types of justice, association, and friendship.
(1241b13-15). From these passages, we can see that just as the common good is the standard for evaluating friendship in an association, so too is it the standard for evaluating justice.

Aristotle’s discussion of the political and household associations also provides some indication of how we should conceive of the common good as it relates to friendship and justice. His account of the political and household associations makes reference to the distinction between arithmetic and proportional equality, which are terms also used in his discussion of fairness in *Nicomachean Ethics* V. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.11, it is claimed that the friendships between the rulers and subjects in both kingship and aristocracy are friendships in accord with superiority, as are the friendships between parents and children and between men and women in the household (1161a20-25). As a result, he argues, “what is just, then, in these relationships is not what is the same for the two parties but rather what is in accord with their worth, since the friendship is that way too” (1161a21-22). Aristotle makes a similar point in *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9, where he claims that “since some equality is arithmetic and some proportional, there will also be different forms of justice, of friendship and of community” (1241b32-34). He goes on to identify timocracy and the friendship of companions as being arithmetic, since justice in these cases uses the same standard, and identifies aristocracy and kingship as being proportional, since “it is not the same thing that is just for the superior and the

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119 I discuss this distinction and its relevance to fairness, justice, and friendship in greater detail in the chapter on justice and friendship, below.

120 Suzanne Stern-Gillet argues that associations, including the political association, are primarily concerned with fairness, or what she calls particular justice. She offers an interpretation of friendship in associations whereby the association “gives rise to certain definite, though limited, ties and obligations, and its maintenance requires the cooperation of all its members.” Under her account, such associates need not include any affection or involve esteem for the moral or intellectual qualities for the other members, and the members of an association may not even spend much time with one another. She goes on to claim that the health of such associations “is directly proportional to the amount of fairness and honesty that characterize the interpersonal relations which prevail between the members,” and that the grounds for the relationship are the benefits that participation in the association will provide along with the demands that the common good of the association makes on its members. Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*, 155-156, 159, 161-162. In the next chapter, I argue that the concern with fairness is not just limited to friendship in association, and that the function of justice in a friendship is to preserve the friendship by preserving the equality of the individuals taking part in the friendship.
inferior, but rather what is proportional” (1241b34-38). These claims seem to be based on a view articulated at the beginning of *Eudeman Ethics* VII.9, where he writes that “justice is believed to be a form of equality and friendship to consist in equality (unless the maxim ‘equality is friendship’ is misguided)” (1241b11-13).

Taken together, these passages suggest that Aristotle conceives of the common good of an association to be something that the members of the association can all possess to a greater or lesser degree, depending on their status as either superior to, inferior to, or equal with the association’s other members. In order to interpret Aristotle’s claims about the connection between friendship and justice, then, we need a clear account of how to determine equality in a friendship, as well as the distinction between arithmetic and proportional equality. Some of what Aristotle has said up to this point suggests that, to a certain extent, equality in an association is a matter of having something in common with the association’s other members. For example, he argues that even though democracy is one of the corrupted constitutions, friendship is possible between citizens due to the fact that they are equals in the relationship, which is why they have more in common than citizens in a tyrannical political association (1161b8-10). In this sense, having something in common with one’s fellow citizens seems to mean that the goods of the association are equally available to each of its members. That is to say, each citizen has an equal claim to the advantages provided by the political association. If this is the case, then Aristotle’s concept of equality is what connects friendship and justice, and his account of the common good as it applies to friendship in association can help in interpreting the notion of equality more generally. Moreover, if it is correct to think that both friendship in association and personal friendship rely on a similar notion of the common good, then justice in associations is no different than justice as it applies to personal friendship.
Conclusions

Aristotle’s account of friendship in association expands on the notion of personal friendship by showing how the reciprocal good will we find in personal friendships can be extended to larger groups of individuals who share our aims. Although these relationships may fall short of the paradigm set by friendship on account of the good in terms of the affection we feel for the other members of larger associations, they still contribute to the good life by providing their members with some benefit or pleasure. In some cases, these associations might even provide opportunities that a pair of friends might not be able to achieve on their own. In addition, Aristotle’s discussion of both the political and household associations provide us with some insight on the sorts of obligations that friends have to one another, as well as the standard by which friendships can be judged. Specifically, a healthy friendship is one in which friends cooperate to achieve their common good. This standard can now be used to inform our interpretation of justice as it applies to friendship more generally.
Chapter 4 – Friendship, Justice, and Equality

In his opening remarks on friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle draws a connection between friendship and justice, writing that “it also seems that friendship holds cities together and that legislators take it more seriously than justice” (1155a22-24). He adds that “if people are friends, there is no need for justice, whereas people who are just need friendship in addition to justice. Also of just things the most just of all seem to be fitted to friendship” (1155a26-28). The first of these claims might suggest that the connection between friendship and justice is explicitly political, or perhaps most relevant in the context of political friendship. The friendship between the owner of a business and one of her customers does not seem to be the sort of thing that will hold cities together, and it is not clear why legislators should be less concerned with justice than with the relationship between two people who enjoy golfing with one another. The second claim, however, gives us reason to think that there is a connection between friendship and justice in friendships of all sorts. A business owner will not cheat her customers if she considers them friends, and golfers will not play together for long if they lie to one another about their scores.

The introduction to friendship in the *Eudemian Ethics* also notes the importance of taking friendship and justice together. There, Aristotle writes that one of the topics to be investigated is “how one should interact with a friend and what the justice associated with friendship is” (1234b20-21). He suggests that the investigation into friendship is just as important as the investigation into character, because “it is a particular function of the political art to produce friendship; and people say that virtue is useful for this reason, since those who are treated

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unjustly by one another cannot be friends to each other” (1234b22-25). He also claims that “we all say that justice and injustice have a particular bearing on friends,” and that “if one wants to bring it about that people not commit injustice it is a good idea to make them friends to one another, since true friends do not commit injustice” (1234b25-30). Taken together, this leads Aristotle to conclude that “justice and friendship are either the same thing or nearly so” (1234b31).

These passages suggest that justice is both similar to friendship and at the same time performs a particular function within friendships. I will argue the two are similar in that they require individuals to behave in similar ways toward others, so that friendly actions and just actions are one and the same. I will also argue that the function of justice in a friendship is to preserve that friendship by preserving the equality between the individuals taking part in it. This function of justice is detailed in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.13-IX.3, where Aristotle discusses both the origins of and means of resolving disputes in friendships. While the discussion of disputes seems to be most relevant to friendships on account of usefulness, I will argue that these recommendations apply to all forms of friendship.

*Fairness (ἰσος), Lawfulness (νόμιμος), and Friendship*

My argument is motivated by Aristotle’s claim that “it does seem, though, as we said at the start, that friendship and justice are concerned with the same things and involve the same people. For in every association there seems to be some sort of justice and some sort of friendship as well” (1159b25-27). One indication that Aristotle has equality in mind when he

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123 Reeve translates κοινωνία as “community.” In addition to using the term κοινωνία to talk about political communities, Aristotle applies the term to other sorts of groups, including sailors on a voyage, soldiers in war, tribesmen, religious societies, and banquet clubs (see 1160a14-30, for example). In order to capture the wide range of relationships the term describes, I have chosen to translate it as “association” throughout. This passage could refer back to the passage at 1158b29-35, where Aristotle begins his discussion of friendships in accord with superiority. There, he writes that “what is equal, though, does not seem to be the same in matters of justice and in friendship,
says that friendship and justice are concerned with the same things is a claim made in the
*Eudemian Ethics*, where he writes that “justice is believed to be a form of equality and friendship
to consist in equality (unless the maxim ‘equality is friendship’ is misguided)” (1241b12-14).
From these starting points, Aristotle develops an account in which both friendship and justice are
concerned with equality, and as long as equality is maintained between friends, the requirements
of friendship and justice are satisfied. Note that because this is the case whether the inequality is
in virtue or in the resources necessary to be useful or pleasant to one’s friend, this sort of justice
is just as necessary in friendships on account of the good as it is in the secondary forms of
friendship.

The sort of justice that is most concerned with inequality, and thus most relevant to the
discussion of friendship, is what Aristotle refers to as fairness (ἴσος). This is described by
Aristotle as “the justice that is a part of virtue,” and is often referred to in the secondary literature
as partial justice or particular justice (1130a14-15). The other form of justice identified by
Aristotle is lawfulness (νόμιμος), which is described as “virtue as a whole,” and is often referred
to as complete justice or perfect justice in the secondary literature (1130a8-10). Aristotle gives
his account of these different types of justice in Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he
claims that although justice and injustice are said of things in more than one way, “the

since in matters of justice equality is primarily equality in worth and secondarily equality in quantity, whereas in
friendship equality is primarily equality in quantity and secondarily equality in worth,” which is “made clear when a
great disparity in virtue, vice, resources, or something else comes about, since then the parties are no longer friends
and do not even claim that they deserve to be” (1158b29-35). The particular passage to which Aristotle is referring
when he says “at the start” is not entirely clear. Michael Pakaluk suggests the passage at 1155a22-28 (cited above).
But Pakaluk also notes that a reference back to this passage seems implausible, because we would have to read it as
implying that friendship between persons implies justice between them, and that justice implies friendship, which
would seem to contradict the claim made in that same passage that people who are just still need friends. Pakaluk
also goes on to suggest that the earlier passage at 1155a22-28 seems to only be about friendship and justice among
passage I have identified as a possible reference appears in *Nicomachean Ethics VIII.7*, which is far from the
beginning of the treatment of friendship, the passage does serve as a turning point in the discussion and introduces
the new concept of friendships in accord with superiority.
homonymy escapes notice because of their closeness” (1129a26-28). That is to say, because fairness and lawfulness result in similar behaviors, the distinction is not always obvious.¹²⁴ In addition to the original distinction between lawfulness and fairness, fairness is itself divided into two different types: fairness in allocations and fairness in rectification in transactions. The latter type is further broken down into voluntary transactions and involuntary transactions. In order to argue that fairness is the form of justice that is most relevant to friendship, a brief examination of the different types of fairness and of how fairness is distinct from lawfulness will be helpful.

In general, Aristotle describes fairness as “productive of a mean,” and writes that the just person allocates things either to himself or to others “not in such a way that too much of what is choiceworthy goes to himself and too little to his neighbor; and the reverse with what is harmful” (1133b32-1134a6). Fairness, then, is about allocating the correct amount of some good thing to the correct people. Fairness in allocations, or what we might call distributive justice, has to do with “the allocation of wealth, honor, or anything else divided among members of a constitution, since, in the case of these things, it is possible for one person to have a share that is equal or unequal to another’s” (1130b30-33). Voluntary fairness in rectification in transactions is so called because the transactions involved are undertaken voluntarily. Such transactions include things like selling, buying, lending without interest, giving free use of something, and hiring out.

¹²⁴ Aristotle illustrates this point by providing some examples of behavior that is unjust in the complete or lawful sense that is not unjust in the partial or fair sense. He notes that a person who throws down his shield because of cowardice, who engages in verbal abuse because of harshness, or does not help someone out with his wealth because of acquisitiveness (ἀνελευθερία, also translated as “stinginess”) is being unjust in the complete or lawful sense but not necessarily greedy (πλεονέκτης, also translated as “one who claims more than his due”), which is the term Aristotle uses to describe a person who is unfair. Moreover, if someone does something greedy, that person is not guilty of any of these other vices—cowardice, harshness, or acquisitiveness—but is still being guilty of being unjust (1130a16-22). For example, we could imagine someone who does not help someone out with his wealth because of greed rather than acquisitiveness. According to Aristotle, the fact that unjust actions are driven by these different motivations shows that one can be unjust in the complete or lawful sense without necessarily being unjust in the partial or fair sense, yet one cannot be unjust in the partial or fair sense without also being considered unjust in the complete or lawful sense. In both cases, however, the actions taken are the same, making the distinction difficult to detect.
Involuntary fairness in rectification in transactions is so called because the transactions involved are undertaken involuntarily by one of the parties. Such involuntary transactions include things like theft, adultery, enticing away slaves, assault, murder, abduction, verbal abuse, and insulting treatment (1131a1-9). In the case of involuntary transactions, Aristotle is concerned primarily with the restitution made to the victims of the involuntary transactions described. Involuntary fairness in rectification in transactions is not about being fair when assaulting someone, for example, but rather fairness in compensating the victim of the assault for their injuries.

Fairness, according to Aristotle, has to do with achieving a mean between too much and too little between two or more people and their share of some good thing, such as wealth or honor (1131a10-20). How this mean is achieved, however, is not the same when it comes to the allocation of good things on the one hand, and rectification on the other. Fairness in allocations, Aristotle argues, is achieved proportionally, according to the worth of the people receiving the shares (1131a24-26). Aristotle does note that a person’s worth will be determined differently by different societies. He writes that “to supporters of democracy, worth lies in freedom; to some supporters of oligarchy, in wealth; to others, in good breeding; and to supporters of aristocracy, in virtue” (1131a26-29). So, in an aristocracy, for example, fairness dictates that the most virtuous members of society receive the most public wealth or honor, and the least virtuous members of society receive the least.

Rectification, however, is concerned with what Aristotle calls arithmetic equality. In cases of rectification, whether voluntary or involuntary, what is just is that the people involved receive an equal amount. Moreover, in cases of rectification, the worth of the individual does not

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125 As David Bostock points out, this runs contrary to contemporary intuitions about distributive justice, which suggest that state benefits be distributed to those who most need them, regardless of worth. David Bostock, *Aristotle’s Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 58-59.
matter. As Aristotle puts it, “it makes no difference whether a decent person has defrauded a base person or a base person has defrauded a decent one,” since “the law looks only to the difference created by the harm done but treats the people involved as equals, if one is doing an injustice and the other is suffering it; that is, if one is doing a harm and the other is suffering it” (1132a2-6). In cases of voluntary rectification, the mean is achieved by making sure the exchange between parties is equal (1132b9-20). In cases of involuntary rectification, the mean is achieved by looking to what the injured party lost and what the person committing the unjust action gained through that action, and returning to the injured party something equal to what was lost (1132a6-14). This arithmetic equality is described in terms of a line divided into unequal segments from which someone subtracts from the larger segment the amount by which it exceeded the half line and then adds that to the smaller segment (1132a24-29). In other words, the goal of involuntary rectification is to remove what was gained by the person committing the unjust action in order to restore what was lost by the injured party.126

Aristotle uses the language of proportional and arithmetic equality in his discussion of friendship as well, as a means of both noting a similarity and drawing a contrast between friendship and justice. Aristotle begins *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.7 by talking about a form of friendship that occurs between people who are unequal, which is “in accord with superiority,” such as the friendship between a parent and child, or a ruler and subject (1158b11-14). As noted above, Aristotle claims that “what is equal, though, does not seem to be the same in matters of justice and in friendship, since in matters of justice equality is primarily equality in worth and

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126 Bostock notes that one of the consequences of this view seems to be that there is no deterrence or element of punishment in Aristotle’s account of involuntary rectification. One could simply return a stolen wallet to one’s victim and then continue to steal wallets hoping that no one will notice. Bostock, *Aristotle’s Ethics*, 61. While Bostock seems right about this, I take it that concerns about deterrence and punishment are beyond the scope of Aristotle’s intent in this section. Here, Aristotle is only attempting to give an account of how the different types of fairness are defined and how to determine what is fair.
secondarily equality in quantity, whereas in friendship equality is primarily equality in quantity and secondarily equality in worth” (1158b29-33). Equality in worth corresponds to fairness in allocations, in which someone who is deemed more worthy of some good thing receives more of that good thing. Equality in quantity corresponds to fairness in rectification, in which it does not matter whether someone is worthy or base as long as a mean between profit and loss is achieved.

Aristotle’s suggestion here, then, is that justice is primarily concerned with fairness in allocations, while friendship is primarily concerned with fairness in rectification. This claim is central to my interpretation of Aristotle’s account, and I argue that it helps to explain the similarities that he finds in justice and friendship while at the same time identifying what prevents the two concepts from being identical to one another. Were it the case that justice and friendship simply shared a concern for fairness and equality, then it would seem that we could not draw much of a distinction between the two. Since the two concepts prioritize equality differently, I argue below that they are for the most part coextensive with—but not identical to—one another. A more detailed explanation of how individuals and friendships can be unequal, found below, will help us to understand what Aristotle means in drawing this distinction.

Another similarity between the discussions of fairness and friendship lies in their concern to show how to make seemingly incommensurable objects in a transaction commensurable. In the case of friendship, Aristotle argues that in all friendships in accord with superiority, “the loving should be proportionate too—for example, the better person should be more loved than loving, as should the more beneficial one, and similarly in each of the other cases. For when loving is in accord with worth, a sort of equality comes about, and that seems to be characteristic of friendship” (1158b23-28).\textsuperscript{127} That is to say, for Aristotle, when a relationship involves some

\textsuperscript{127} The term “φιλήσις” is translated as “loving” here. It is also sometimes translated as “affection” or “friendly feeling.”
sort of inequality that cannot be resolved directly, it must be made up another way. These inequalities can come about when one person is more useful or more pleasant, for example, and Aristotle is suggesting that the one who receives more from the relationship ought to respond with more love. This discussion of how to produce equality in friendships in accord with superiority brings to mind the discussion of justice in rectification in transactions. There, Aristotle notes, it is necessary that there be some single measure by which things can be made equal. To use Aristotle’s examples, there needs to be some way of making sure that a carpenter, doctor, and a shoemaker can be fairly compensated for their work. He argues that money is this common measure, saying that “money makes everything proportionate, since everything is measured in money” (1133a19-22). In a sense, loving is the currency of friendships in accord with superiority. Aristotle’s position seems to be that a parent, for example, provides more material benefit to a child than the child can repay in kind, so the child must equalize the relationship by loving the parent even more in return. While in the case of the carpenter and the shoemaker, the value of the carpenter’s product can be expressed in terms of a monetary value,

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128 Specifically, Aristotle notes that the builder must get shoes from a shoemaker, and the shoemaker must get a house from the builder. He argues that if there is no way to equalize that work proportionally, there will be no exchange. This exchange occurs on the basis of need, and money comes about as a “sort of exchangeable representative of need” (1133a5-1133b10). Aristotle illustrates this with an example. If a house is worth five minae and a bed is worth one mina, then five beds are equal to one house (1133b20-28). Presumably, someone who makes beds could either trade five beds to the carpenter if the carpenter needs them, or, if the carpenter does not need five beds, the bed maker could pay five minae. This passage of the text, along with the rest of Nicomachean Ethics V.5, has received attention in the secondary literature as a potential source for an Aristotelian theory of economic analysis. For a discussion of some of the problems that arise when thinking about this passage in these terms, see M.I. Finley, “Aristotle and Economic Analysis,” in Articles on Aristotle: 2. Ethics and Politics, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, and Richard Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1977), 140–58, Kazutaka Inamura, Justice and Reciprocity in Aristotle’s Political Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 183-190, and Scott Meikle, “Aristotle and Exchange Value,” in A Companion to Aristotle’s Politics, ed. David Keyt and Fred D. Miller (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1991), 156–81. For the purposes of my interpretation, the questions of whether or not this actually is a scientific economic analysis, precisely what sort of need it is that money comes to represent, and how the value of an object is determined do not need to be settled in order to get a general picture of how Aristotle thinks that proportionate and arithmetic equality function in just and friendly interactions with others.
in the case of the parent and child, Aristotle seems to think that the value of the material benefits a parent confers on a child can be expressed in terms of loving.\textsuperscript{129}

There is a link between fairness and friendship due to the fact that both are concerned with equality, and the fact that this equality can be calculated either proportionally or arithmetically. We might also wonder what connection, if any, there is between lawfulness, the other type of justice, and friendship. We might think that lawfulness and friendship are connected for a number of reasons. First, if friendship and justice are connected, and lawfulness is a type of justice, then there could be a potential connection between lawfulness and friendship. Second, Aristotle notes a type of friendship which he calls legal in character. By defining such friendships as “legal,” we might think that lawfulness has some bearing on friendships of this type. As I argue below, however, there is no particular connection between lawfulness and friendship. Although the virtuous individual will behave lawfully towards a friend, lawfulness seems to be concerned with the good of others in a way that is distinct from the way in which friendship is concerned with the good of others.

Lawfulness is described by Aristotle as “complete virtue—not unconditionally but in relation to another person” (1129b25-27). This is because, as he puts it, “all lawful things are somehow just,” in that they “produce and safeguard happiness and its parts for the political community” (1129b12, 1129b17-19). The laws do this, according to Aristotle in two different ways. The first is by “aiming either at the common advantage of all or at that of the best people or of those who—in accord with their virtue or in accord with some other such thing—are in control” (1129b14-17). The second is by prescribing that citizens behave virtuously. Aristotle

\textsuperscript{129} Although how this might actually work in a relationship between a parent and child is not entirely clear. It seems strange to think that a parent either does or should love a child less than the child loves the parent due to the child’s inferiority. This might be why Howard Curzer calls this a “repugnant” view. Howard J. Curzer, \textit{Aristotle and the Virtues} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 259.
notes as examples laws that require someone be courageous by not breaking rank, fleeing, or throwing down one’s weapons, laws that require moderate actions, by prohibiting adultery or wanton aggression, and laws that require mild-mannered actions by prohibiting physical and verbal abuse (1129b19-23). As a result, Aristotle claims that lawfulness is not a part of virtue, but virtue as a whole (1130a8-9). I take it that what Aristotle means here is that because the laws are concerned with promoting behaviors that conform to the requirements of all of the virtues, someone who obeys the law will necessarily take actions that exhibit each of the virtues.130

I take it, then, that lawfulness does not have any special connection to friendship. It seems as though the virtuous person will also happen to be lawful, because in exhibiting each of the virtues she is also conforming to the requirements of the law. Such a person will be virtuous in relation to all of her fellow citizens, whether they are friends or not. Lawfulness would have no more bearing on her actions toward her friends than it does on any other action that she might take toward a stranger. Moreover, it seems as though friendship is not concerned with the common advantage of the city as much as it is with the common advantage of the friends involved, and there do not seem to be any laws that require citizens to behave in ways toward their friends any differently than they would any other citizen.131 The thought that there are no

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130 Ann Ward suggests that lawfulness habituates a citizen to virtuous behavior, which is why Aristotle claims in Books I and II of the Nicomachean Ethics that the task of the legislator is to make citizens virtuous and noble. Lawfulness, on her account, results in the law-abiding citizen acquiring each of the moral virtues. Ann Ward, Contemplating Friendship in Aristotle’s Ethics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 69-72. While this does seem to be what Aristotle has in mind, it also seems as though there are some virtues which are not the subject of legislation. It is not clear, for example, if a law promoting wittiness and prohibiting boorishness or buffoonery is necessary, and if turns out to be necessary, what such a law might look like. Bostock notes another objection. Aristotle presumes that the laws are good laws and as a result only prescribe virtuous actions and prohibit vicious actions. As a result, Bostock sees it as a mistake to associate complete justice with lawfulness, and suggests that if lawfulness is a virtue, it is a matter of treating the law with respect and conforming to it unless there are good reasons not to. He notes, however, that this would make lawfulness a particular virtue and not virtue as a whole. Bostock, Aristotle’s Ethics, 55-57.

131 Paul Schollmeier sees this as a difference between political and personal justice, claiming that “we define our obligations to our fellow citizens by means of a constitution and laws and set legal penalties for failing to meet these obligations. But we hardly define our obligations to our personal friends and penalize them in this way.” Paul Schollmeier, Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 69-72.
special laws concerning friendship receives some additional support from a passage in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where Aristotle notes that “the private justice that deals with our friends is the only one that is up to us, while that which involves other relationships is subject to legislation and is not up to us” (1235a2-4). Our obligations to people who are not our friends are dictated by the laws, while our obligations to our friends are not.

Despite the fact that friendship appears to have little to do with the law, in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.13 Aristotle does refer to a type of friendship on account of usefulness that he describes as legal in character, which takes place on specified terms. These terms come in two types, which Aristotle describes as consisting either “entirely in businesslike hand-to-hand exchange,” on the one hand, or as being “freer as to time, albeit based on a quid-pro-quo contract” on the other (1162b21-28). In the latter case, Aristotle says that the debt is not disputable, but that the terms of repayment are “fitted to friendship” (1162b29). While this reference to a “legal” type of friendship seems like it might be a matter for lawfulness, Aristotle does not seem to think that it is. He goes on to add that with respect to the type of “legal” friendship that is freer as to time, “in some places there cannot be judicial proceedings over these, but, rather, people think that those whose transactions were based on trust should be content with that” (1162b29-31).

I take it, then, that in calling these friendships “legal,” Aristotle does not, in fact, mean that they are the subject of legislation, but rather that they, like the laws, occur on specific terms which can be violated. What makes the legal friendship that is freer as to time fitted to friendship
is the fact that the terms of repayment are not as specific as in the hand-to-hand exchange, but what makes it legal is the fact that the debt is clear and based on a quid-pro-quo contract. That the terms of the friendship have been laid out in advance means that any violation of the terms is clear. This point is made clearer when Aristotle draws a contrast between these “legal” forms of friendship on account of usefulness with a type that he calls “ethical in character.” It is “ethical” because it is not on specified terms, but instead “each gives a gift or whatever as to a friend, yet he claims that he deserves to get back an equal amount or more, on the supposition that he was not giving but making a loan” (1162b31-34). In this “ethical” sort of friendship on account of usefulness, although the parties do not keep as close track of the various debts that are incurred, they still expect any benefits conferred on a friend to be repaid at some point in time.\footnote{In fact, this is why these sorts of friendships are prone to dispute. How justice assists in resolving these disputes is discussed in greater detail below.}

According to Aristotle, the “legal” and “ethical” friendships also correspond to types of justice. He writes that “just as justice is twofold, one sort unwritten and the other in accord with the law, so in the case of friendship in accord with utility, one sort is ethical in character and the other sort legal in character” (1162b21-23).\footnote{Pakaluk notes that this reference to “unwritten” justice is not made anywhere else, and suggests that it could relate to the distinction between “conventional” and “natural” justice in *Nicomachean Ethics* V.7. Aristotle, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX*, 137-138.}

This discussion of the different types of friendships on account of usefulness helps to clarify why fairness and not lawfulness is the form of justice most relevant to friendship. Despite the fact that they are called “legal” and may involve contracts or clearly stated debts, neither type of “legal” friendship is a matter of lawfulness; both are rather governed by fairness. When one party violates the terms of an agreement in these relationships, rectification is required. Although
it goes unstated in the “ethical” types of friendship, there is still the expectation of rectification there as well.

One last point to note as it relates to lawfulness is Aristotle’s claim that “justice, alone of the virtues, seems to be the good of another, because it is in relation to another person, since it does what is advantageous for someone else, whether ruler or community member” (1130a3-5). Because friendship is also concerned with doing good things for another person, there is a similarity between our lawful actions and the things we do for our friends. But Aristotle also seems to think that lawfulness differs from the other virtues in its impartiality, since he claims that “many people are able to use their virtue in what properly belongs to themselves but unable to do so in issues relating to another person,” and that “the worst sort of person, then, is the one who uses his depravity both in relation to himself and in relation to his friends, whereas the best sort is not the one who uses his virtue in relation to himself but the one who uses it in relation to another person, since that is difficult work” (1129b33-1130a1, 1130a5-8). Lawfulness, then, entails that one act in ways that are best for the community as a whole as well as the rulers who institute the laws, and as a result entails that one uses one’s own virtue in relation to others, whether they are friends or not.

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134 While it might seem obvious that a virtue like moderation, which is primarily directed at oneself and one’s attitudes towards bodily pleasures, is more advantageous to oneself than to others, it seems as though many of the other virtues, such as courage or magnificence, are of at least some benefit to others. Those whose lives are saved by the sacrifice of a courageous soldier, for example, benefit from the soldier’s death. Why not think of courage as a virtue that is the good of another? I take it that what Aristotle means here is that only justice is solely concerned with what is advantageous for someone else. Take, for example, the virtue of generosity, which is the virtue that has to do with the receiving and giving of one’s wealth. While the virtue has to do with spending one’s money appropriately, Aristotle also claims that “a generous person will give for the sake of what is noble and will do so correctly. He will give to the people he should, in the amount he should, when he should, and so on for all the other things that correct giving entails” (1120a24-26). In these cases, generosity seems to be advantageous to another, namely the beneficiary of one’s generosity. But generosity is also advantageous to the giver as well, who receives gratitude and praise, since “of all virtuous people, generous ones are pretty much the most loved, since they are beneficial and their being so lies in their giving” (1120a21-23). As a result, generosity is not solely directed at the advantage of others in the way that justice might be.
I take it, then, that lawfulness does not have any special connection to friendship. That is not to say that there is no place for lawfulness in a friendship, but rather that the explicit link that Aristotle sees between justice and friendship lies in friendship’s concern for fairness. Lawfulness will have a place in friendship when one or more members of the friendship also happen to be virtuous. Insofar as a virtuous person is lawful, that person will treat her friends lawfully. Since this is the case, we might think that lawfulness has a special connection to friendships on account of the good, where each participant in the friendship is virtuous and wishes the other well on account of that virtue. But, what, if anything, does lawfulness contribute to such a friendship? Lawfulness in such a friendship might mean that the participants will necessarily treat each other well and fairly, but these seem to be requirements of the other sorts of friendship as well.\textsuperscript{135}

\textit{Inequality and Disputes in Friendship}

That Aristotle has fairness in mind when he notes the strong connection between justice and friendship is most obvious in his discussion of friendship on account of usefulness. During that discussion, Aristotle describes how disputes can arise within friendships on account of usefulness, and how justice determines the best resolution to those disputes. If the disputes can be resolved, equality is achieved, and the friendship remains. If they cannot, the inequality in the relationship causes the friendship to dissolve. Although the discussion here is primarily focused on friendships on account of usefulness, it turns out that what Aristotle says here also applies to the other two forms of friendship. Insofar as the bases of these sorts of friendship are different,

\textsuperscript{135} Suzanne Stern-Gillet suggests that virtuous friends will not need to appeal to fairness in their dealings with one another as they will when interacting with their fellow citizens and colleagues, because friendship on account of the good makes fairness redundant. As she puts it, “not only are those capable of primary friendship fully virtuous by definition, but, more relevantly, their mutual affection is such that it precludes the need to keep their egoistic drives under control.” Suzanne Stern-Gillet, \textit{Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship} (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 163-164.
their inequalities are different than those found in friendships on account of usefulness, but, if left unresolved, these inequalities can still lead to the dissolution of the friendship.\footnote{My interpretation shares some similarities with that of Curzer. Specifically, Curzer argues that justice and friendship are both concerned with equality. On his interpretation, however, distributive justice seems to be the only sense of justice that applies to friendship, and each friendship “fleshes out Aristotle’s right rule for distributive justice in a different way.” Another key difference between my view and Curzer’s is Curzer’s claim that “by ‘justice,’ Aristotle means general justice [what I call ‘lawfulness’] rather than particular justice [what I call ‘fairness’] within his account of friendship.” On this view, general justice consists of “those aspects of the first order virtues which pertain to other people,” and particular justice “is the first-order virtue whose opposite is graspingness.” One consequence of this view seems to be that rectificatory, reciprocal, and distributive justice are all forms of general justice. Based on my interpretation of \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} V, above, these forms of justice can only be considered as particular justice, or fairness. Curzer, \textit{Aristotle and the Virtues}, 276-278.}

The discussion of disputes in friendships and how best to resolve them occurs in \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} VIII.13-IX.3. It begins with a discussion of disputes in friendships on account of usefulness, which is followed by a discussion of disputes in friendships in accord with superiority. Aristotle next turns to a general discussion of how to determine what is owed in friendships between those who are dissimilar, which leads to a series of puzzles about how to prioritize our obligations to different sorts of friends. He concludes the section with a discussion about when and how to terminate friendships with those whose characters significantly change. An examination of Aristotle’s claims about disputes and their resolution will show that fairness is the primary concern when it comes to disputes in a friendship. In fact, these problems only come about because fairness is central to friendships of all types.

This section of the text starts with Aristotle reminding us that there are three forms of friendship, and that each sort of friendship can occur in accord with equality or in accord with superiority. Good people can become friends with people who are better or worse than them, and some people are friends with those who are more or less pleasant. In cases of friendships on account of usefulness, some people are able to provide more benefits than others. As a result, Aristotle concludes that “equal partners, then, must equalize their loving and everything else in
accord with equality, while unequal ones must return what is proportionate, given the sorts of superiority involved” (1162a34-1162b4). Aristotle’s reference to friendships in accord with equality and in accord with superiority at the beginning of this section indicates that he views inequality in a friendship as the source of the problems and puzzles that result. In order to solve these issues, Aristotle tackles the most obvious problem first, that of unequal exchanges in contractual or quid-pro-quo relationships. Once we see how justice, in the form of fairness, can solve the obvious problem, it becomes clearer how justice can solve the more difficult problems of friendships among those who are unequal and how to discharge our different obligations in a fair and just manner. By the end, we will also see that even in cases of dispute, there are opportunities for the good person to exercise virtue.

Aristotle starts the discussion of disputes by claiming that complaints arise in friendships on account of utility because friends who are “making use of each other for their own benefit” either think that they have less than they deserve or are unable to provide as much as their friends need (1162b16-21). The complaint is rooted in the belief that the parties to the friendship are contributing to it unequally. As a result, one person is left thinking that the other ought to do more. To explain how this might occur, Aristotle turns to the distinction, detailed above, between “legal” and “ethical” types of friendship on account of usefulness. Aristotle goes on to explain that what causes complaints in friendships on account of usefulness is the fact that the partners do not begin and end their associations on the basis of similar sorts of friendship (1162b23-25). For example, if one person in the exchange thinks that the two are engaged in a legal sort of friendship on account of usefulness and the other thinks that the exchange is of the ethical sort, then disputes will arise with respect to how long one expects to have to wait before repayment, or even what sort of repayment will be made.
Another problem with the “ethical” sort of friendship is identified in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where Aristotle claims that the reason friendships on account of usefulness are more prone to accusations is the fact that “utility friends do not break up immediately if their interactions are comradely and not merely legal” (1243a4-6). Aristotle suggests in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that this confusion about the sort of friendship a person is engaged in may come about because “all or most people, while they wish for what is noble, deliberately choose what is beneficial. And while it is noble to provide benefits not because they will be repaid, it is being the recipient of a benefaction that is beneficial” (1162b34-1163a1). This claim appears in the *Eudemian Ethics* as well, where he says that “the cause of quarrels is that character-based friendship is more fine but utility friendship is more essential” (1243a34-35). In these cases, “they start out as character friends, being friends because of virtue. But when the results are detrimental to their own interests then they are unveiled as being different” (1243a35-37).

The situation that Aristotle describes seems to correspond with his notion of fairness in voluntary rectification. One friend has received more than the other, and as a result, the relationship can be equalized arithmetically. In order to resolve the dispute, Aristotle recommends that the recipient of the benefit should make a return of equal worth if he is able, and that “he must suppose, then, that he was in error at the start and received a benefit from someone he should not have received it from, since it was not from a friend or from someone doing it because of itself” (1163a1-5). Moreover, Aristotle suggests that “he must dissolve the association as if the benefaction had been provided on specified terms and agree that he will

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137 Lorraine Smith Pangle suggests that as a result, “ethical” friendships suffer from conflicting intentions, in that “a weak attempt to be noble soon collapses and the friendship shifts grounds, because one or both friends lack self-knowledge and clear-sightedness.” As a result, she claims, there is a question as to whether a good deed is worth doing for its own sake or whether it needs to be rewarded. Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
make repayment when he is able’’ (1163a5-6). In this case, justice not only resolves the dispute, but also seems to end the friendship if there is no other business to be conducted. What makes these sorts of disputes a good starting point is the fact that they are more easily quantifiable than inequalities in virtue or pleasure. A monetary value can be placed on the benefits received in a contractual or quid-pro-quo relationship, and as a result, what is fair is a matter of making sure that each party has received a similar monetary value.

That is not to say that coming to an agreement on the value of the benefits conferred is always a simple matter. As Aristotle notes, “recipients say that they got from the benefactors the sorts of things that were small things for the benefactors and that they could have gotten them from someone else—minimizing the matter. The givers, conversely, say they were the biggest things for them, could not have been gotten from others, and were given in times of danger or of similar sorts of need” (1163a12-16). The solution, according to Aristotle, is to measure the value of a benefit by how much benefit its recipient received. This is because the friendship “exists because of utility,” so the value of any benefits should be evaluated in terms of how beneficial they were, not how easy or difficult they were to provide. Moreover, because “the giver assists him on the supposition that he will get an equal return,” he suggests that the recipient should repay “as much as he got out of it—or even more, since that is a nobler thing to do” (1163a16-21). Repaying as much as one received is the fair thing to do, and satisfies the requirements of justice in rectification. Paying more than that is nobler, because, as Aristotle noted above, it is nobler to provide benefits that will not be repaid.

The question of how to set the value of what one receives in a friendship also causes difficulties in friendships in accord with superiority. In these sorts of friendships, the concern is for proportional, not arithmetic equality, and yet Aristotle gives advice similar to that provided in
cases of the contractual exchanges discussed up until this point. In friendships in accord with superiority, both parties claim to deserve more out of the relationship, and Aristotle claims that when this happens, “the friendship is dissolved” (1163a24-26). The “better party” in the relationship believes that more should be allocated to someone who is good or provides more benefit, “since then it becomes a charity and not a friendship, if what results from it is not in accord with the worth of the parties’ functions” (1163a26-30). The “person in need, or the worse party,” believes that “the function of a good friend is to assist those who are in need, since what, they ask, is the benefit of being the friend of an excellent person or one in a position of power if you are going to get nothing out of it?” (1163a32-35).  

Note that the difficulty discussed here is different than the one previously addressed, in that the question is not one of how to assign value to the benefits received, but rather one of how much a person in a relationship deserves. While the previous question was one of fairness in rectification, the current question is one of fairness in allocation. This calls to mind Aristotle’s introduction of the concept of fairness in allocation in Book V. There, Aristotle noted that people tend to agree that goods should be allocated according to the worth of the recipients, but that different sorts of societies will judge that worth differently. In other words, what Aristotle seems to be arguing here is that while there is widespread agreement that those who deserve more should receive more, there is disagreement about how to determine who deserves more. Friendship in accord with superiority faces a similar problem. In friendships of this sort, we have a case of individuals agreeing that one person in the relationship deserves more of some good

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138 Reeve translates “ὁ δ’ ἐνδεχὴς καὶ ὁ χείρων” as “the person in need, or the worse party.” The two are not necessarily identical, but rather seem to be two ways in which a friendship can be in accord with superiority. In the first sense, one person is inferior in terms of how much benefit they can provide, while in the second, the person is inferior in terms of virtue. While this section frequently uses the language of usefulness and benefit, Aristotle also seems to have differences in virtue in mind here, as well. This is why he makes the distinction between being friends with an excellent person or one in a position of power, and why he later discusses the rewards for virtue and beneficence.
thing than the other, but disagreeing on the criteria by which someone is judged deserving. To solve this problem, one will have to determine the fair allocation criteria. Aristotle suggests that “the thought of each party about his deserts are correct, and that more should be allocated to each of them from the friendship—not more of the same thing, however, but more honor to the superior party and more profit to the one in need. For honor is the privilege appropriate to virtue and beneficence, whereas profit is the assistance appropriate to need” (1163b1-5).

Here, Aristotle suggests that honor is the appropriate response, comparing the situation to that of constitutions, “since someone who contributes nothing good to the common good is given no honor. For a common good is given to a person who benefits the common good, and honor is a common good” (1163b5-8). He suggests that generally when dealing with relationships in which there is a superiority, “the party who is benefited in regard to wealth or in regard to virtue should give honor in return, making what repayment he can. For friendship seeks what is possible, not what is in accord with worth, since that is not even possible in all cases, such as in cases of honor to the gods or to parents” (1163b12-17). The idea here is that parents, both in conceiving and providing for the upbringing of a child, confer such great benefits that it is impossible to ever pay them back. As a result, “no one could ever make a return of equal worth, but someone who serves them as far as he can seems to be decent” (1163b17-18).

This solution to disputes in friendships in accord with superiority is consistent with what Aristotle has said throughout the treatment of friendship. He repeatedly makes the claim that friendships in accord with superiority are equalized by a proportional return. As noted above, at 1158b27-28 he says that when loving is in accord with worth, there is a sort of equality in these relationships, a claim that is repeated at 1159a35-1159b2. This is restated in his introduction to the discussion of disputes in friendships at 1162b2-4, where he writes that unequal partners must
return what is proportionate given the sort of superiority involved in the relationship. The repetition of this point emphasizes the importance of equality in preserving friendships, as well as the similarity between friendships in accord with superiority and justice in allocation.

So far, the disputes under consideration are associated with friendships on account of usefulness. This is not surprising, since Aristotle argues that complaints and grievances arise “only or mostly” in friendships on account of usefulness, because in friendships on account of the good, friends are eager to provide benefits for each other, and in friendships on account of pleasure, both parties get what they desire “at the same time, if they enjoy passing the time together” (1162b5-14). Aristotle makes similar claims in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where he argues that most accusations occur in friendships on account of usefulness because virtue does not provoke accusations, and friends on account of pleasure just give and receive pleasure and move on (1243a2-4). In friendships on account of usefulness the benefits exchanged are more easily quantified, and the nature of the relationship is such that unequal contributions are more easily noticed. Note, however, that just because there are fewer disputes in friendships on account of the good and on account of pleasure, it does not mean that equality is any less important. In friendships on account of pleasure, rather than engaging in a dispute due to inequality, the friendship simply ends, because “a person who complained about someone who did not delight him would appear ridiculous, when he is free not to spend his days with him” (1162b14-16).139

In friendships on account of the good, the friends “are eager to provide benefits for each other, since this is characteristic of virtue and friendship, and when *that* is what people are competing about, there can be no complaints or quarrels” (1162b6-9). Aristotle argues that this is the case because no one would complain about being loved by or receiving benefits from

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139 This may be why, as Pakaluk notes, Aristotle does not discuss unequal friendships for pleasure. Aristotle, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX*, 135.
someone, and “the one who excels the other does not complain about his friend, because he gets what he is seeking, for each of them desires what is good” (1162b9-13). The inequality that seems likely to cause disputes in friendships on account of the good, then, is not an inequality in benefits conferred, but rather an inequality in the virtue of those participating in the relationship. If the inequality had to do with one party receiving more than could be repaid, it would be more like the friendships on account of usefulness mentioned above, and the inequality could be resolved by reciprocating with an appropriate amount of honor. But because friendship on account of the good involves each person being more or less equally virtuous, an inequality in these sorts of friendship will require a different resolution.

Aristotle raises the prospect of inequality in friendships on account of the good in Nicomachean Ethics IX.3. There, he poses the question of whether one ought to remain friends with a person who started out as a friend on account of the good, but subsequently becomes depraved. Friendships on account of pleasure and on account of usefulness end when a person no longer has those qualities, and Aristotle suggests that it is no different in the case of virtue. While up to this point he has claimed that friendships on account of the good are steadfast and not prone to dispute, here, he argues that if inequality does develop, “a person who did dissolve such a friendship, however, would seem to be doing nothing strange, since it was not to a person of that sort that he was a friend” (1165b20-22). Aristotle’s advice in this situation is to help friends improve their character as long as there is a chance of rehabilitation, because “we should aid

140 Pangle notes that neither friendships on account of the good nor friendships on account of pleasure are as free of conflict as we might expect. Virtuous people compete to do noble things, and pleasant people do feel hurt when someone who once seemed to love them now neglects them. The source of conflict in friendships on account of the good is due to what she calls a dual motivation, in that “they seek to benefit one another both out of friendship and out of a desire to be and to prove themselves virtuous.” When this latter desire dominates, if “one perceives that another is trying to put him in his debt and monopolize the position of benefactor and superior, he resists. To be sure, the would-be benefactor does seek to give his friend something good, but he seeks to take something even better, the noble, for himself.” Smith Pangle, Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship, 124.
them more with their character than with their property, inasmuch as that is a better thing and more properly belongs to friendship” (1165b19-20).

Inequality can also develop in friendships on account of the good if one happens to become more virtuous than a friend who is only somewhat virtuous. The example here is a children’s friendship in which one friend remains “a child in thought” while the other becomes more virtuous (1165b25-29). Such a friendship will end, Aristotle argues, because the two no longer share any interests, and thus will not share a life with one another (1169b29-31). Given that it is possible for friendships on account of the good to end, Aristotle raises the question of how one ought to treat a former friend, suggesting that “he should recall their former intimacy, and just as we think we should do a favor for friends rather than strangers, so we should allocate something to former friends too, because of our former friendship, when the dissolution does not occur because of extreme depravity” (1165b32-36). In either case, however, inequality in virtue leads to the dissolution of the friendship.

Aristotle’s account of the origins of disputes in friendship may strike the reader as highly plausible, since we can observe friendships becoming strained if one party feels as though she is being used by the other, and the experience of losing touch with a childhood friend as we mature is a familiar one. But there is a worry that his theory’s emphasis on equality in friendship makes the relationship seem more like a transaction. I take it that the sort of strict accounting that would make friendship little more than a transaction is only a concern in a limited set of friendships on account of usefulness. Specifically, it is the “legal” sort of friendship on account of usefulness that is concerned with strict valuations and terms of repayment. While the “ethical”

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141 I take it that those who find Aristotle’s theory of friendship to be objectionably egoistic have a similar concern. If we end friendships when they are no longer personally pleasant or useful, our friends are only valuable as long as they remain pleasant and useful.
sort of friendship on account of usefulness is concerned with fairness in rectification, disputes only come about when a benefit has gone unreciprocated after a long time. It seems reasonable to think that a good friend would give the other party enough time to return a favor before causing a dispute or ending the friendship.

It should come as no surprise that Aristotle would view this sort of strict accounting as only being a concern in a narrow set of friendships, since, after all, friendship is about wanting to do good things for one’s friend, and as he has already mentioned, it is more noble to do good things without expecting anything in return. A good friend, then, will not end a friendship over slight imbalances. Aristotle’s view can account for our intuitions about the exchanges of benefits that occur in a friendship. Moreover, his discussion of friendships in accord with superiority can account for our intuitions about what happens when a friend feels that she is being used or underappreciated. As we have seen, slight imbalances may not end a friendship, and a friendship can even survive a permanent disparity in usefulness, as long as these good deeds are reciprocated with loving or honor. As Aristotle puts it, if there is no reciprocation at all, the person conferring those benefits starts to view the relationship less as a partnership and more as a charity. In these cases, it seems reasonable to think that one party would want to end the relationship.

Aristotle’s comments on loving, honoring, and being loved or being honored can help make sense of the claim that loving or honor can equalize a friendship based in inequality. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.8, he notes that “ordinary people, because of their love of honor, seem to wish to be loved more than to love,” and claims that “being loved, though, seems close to being honored” (1159a12-17). For “ordinary people,” Aristotle compares this love of honor to a relationship with a flatterer, who is described as “a friend who is inferior, or pretends to be so
and to love more than he is loved” (1159a14-16). Aristotle goes on to claim that for “ordinary people” this desire to be loved is not for the honor itself, but because these individuals view the honor as “an indication of benefits to be received” from those in positions of authority (1159a17-21). This is in contrast to those who want to be honored by “decent and knowledgeable people,” Aristotle argues, who “are seeking to confirm their own beliefs about themselves,” and enjoy the knowledge “that they are good” (1159a22-24). While he seems to think that being honored and being loved are relatively similar, Aristotle does contrast them at the end of this section by claiming that “being loved, though, is something people intrinsically enjoy” (1159a25).

While “ordinary people” and the virtuous seem to want to be honored for different reasons, honor seems to equalize an unequal friendship by serving as something good—either the promise of some future benefit or confirmation that one either is or has done something good. I take it that in these sorts of cases, honoring someone involves something like an expression of gratitude for a friend. The person being honored gets recognition for her contributions to the friendship and the gratitude could lead to some future benefit or feelings of satisfaction. As a practical matter, one might worry that such honoring would eventually need to be accompanied by some sort of reciprocal benefit for the friendship to continue, but I take it that for Aristotle, the honoring will be enough to maintain the relationship for as long as those being honored continue to expect some future benefit or have their own beliefs about their goodness confirmed. The way that loving might equalize an unequal friendship seems a bit more straightforward. If Aristotle is right that being loved is intrinsically enjoyable, then that enjoyment can serve as some sort of return for the effort put into the friendship. I take it that in the case of loving, there is also a sense that one’s efforts are appreciated, which, while perhaps not as desirable as an
equal return, can help to mitigate any feelings that one is being taken advantage of by one’s friends.

The disputes that arise in friendships in accord with superiority show that equality is a necessary condition in each of the three types of friendship, and that fairness determines what a person owes to her friends. The requirements of fairness will differ from relationship to relationship. Fairness in rectification is most relevant to friendships on account of usefulness, in which the benefits exchanged can be easily quantified and expressed as monetary value. Attempts to quantify the amount of pleasure a person gets out of a relationship would be difficult, and, if Aristotle is right, people will simply end a relationship they are not enjoying instead of waiting for the levels of pleasure to balance themselves out. It is also difficult to see how fairness in rectification is relevant to friendships on account of the good. Aristotle has argued that virtuous people will do good things for one another because it is the right thing to do, and will not complain if they provide more benefits than they receive in return. As a result, the inequality in these relationships will be inequality in the character of the friends involved. If this inequality in character does not cause the friendship to end, then it will be a friendship in accord with superiority.

In friendships in accord with superiority, fairness in allocations is the guiding principle, and those who are less virtuous or less useful are able to respond appropriately with increased affection or honor for the party that contributes more to the relationship. But the fact that inequalities can be resolved with different sorts of goods seems to give rise to another set of difficulties for friendships in accord with superiority. After claiming that “in all friendships between dissimilars, what is proportionate equalizes and preserves the friendships,” Aristotle notes that “disputes arise when the things the parties get are different and not what they desire,
since it is like getting nothing at all when we do not get what we seek” (1163b32-33, 1164a13-15). Aristotle’s examples in this portion of the text suggest that he has in mind people who are mistaken about the basis of the friendship, in that one party expects to receive benefits while the other expects pleasure.\textsuperscript{142} In situations like this, Aristotle claims that if a gift was given “with a view to some return, presumably the return should ideally be one that each of them thinks to be in accord with worth” (1164b6-8).

Unlike the previous cases of proportionate equality, in which loving or honor are able to bring equality to the relationship, Aristotle seems to have money in mind here. Just as money is able to make beds and houses proportional to one another for the bedmaker and the carpenter, pleasure and usefulness can be made proportional using money. In fact, Aristotle mentions commercial transactions twice in this section of the text. The first mention is at the beginning of the argument, when he writes that “in political friendship a shoemaker gets a payment for his shoes in accord with their worth, and so do a weaver and the rest. Now in these cases, money is provided as a common measure, and so it is this, then, that everything is referred to and measured by” (1163b33-1164a2). The second is at the end, when, after discussing how to assign a value to some benefit or some pleasure, he writes that “this is apparently what happens with buying and selling things” (1164b12-13). Note that again, we find Aristotle arguing that “it would seem to be not only necessary but also just that the one who got first should fix its worth. For if the other gets in return as much benefit as he did, or as much as he would have given for

\textsuperscript{142} Specifically, Aristotle discusses examples of relationships in which one person is expecting pleasure while the other expects utility. The clearest of these examples is a pair of lovers, one who is upset that his love is not being equally reciprocated, while the other is upset that he has not received all of the benefits that have been promised (1164a2-8). The example of the lyre player is less clear. In this example, a lyre player is told that the better he performs the more he will receive, but when it is time to pay the lyre player, he is told that he received pleasure in exchange for pleasure. Whether Aristotle has in mind the pleasure of playing the lyre well, or, as Reeve suggests, the pleasure of anticipating a larger payment, or something else entirely, what is clear is that the lyre player was expecting money, not pleasure in return (1164a15-18). Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, 325.
the pleasure, he will have gotten a worthy return” (1164b8-12). Consistently, whenever there is a question as to how to determine the value of some benefit or service, Aristotle argues that it is not up to the person providing the benefit or service to determine its value, but rather the person receiving it.

**The Difference Between Friendship and Justice**

From the discussion in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.13-IX.1, we see that disputes arise in a friendship whenever there is some sort of inequality in the relationship. The inequalities involved are of three types, and the resolutions of those inequalities depend on the type of inequality involved. The first sort of inequality discussed is material. This is most obvious in friendships on account of usefulness when one party has contributed a greater quantity of benefit to the relationship than the other. It is resolved through Aristotle’s notion of fairness in rectification, when the party who has contributed less makes a return of equal value to the party who has contributed more. The second sort of inequality lies in the nature of the friends themselves. This occurs when one friend is more pleasant, has more access to resources, or is more virtuous than the other. There is one sense in which this sort of inequality can never be resolved, as Aristotle’s example of parents and children is meant to show. In another sense, the inequality is resolved through Aristotle’s notion of fairness in allocations, when the inferior party in the relationship offers love or honor in exchange for the benefits received. The third sort of inequality is not so much an inequality as it is a dissimilarity in expectations for the friendship. While one person expects pleasure from the relationship, for example, the other expects something useful. This sort of inequality is also resolved proportionally, by money rather than loving or honor.

In all three cases, the disputes are resolved by appealing to either fairness in rectification or fairness in allocation, and what we find is that the friendly thing to do is a matter of doing
what is just. Because friendship can only exist when there is equality, and friends must either preserve that equality through their actions or risk ending the friendship, justice seems to coincide with friendship. This could be what Aristotle has in mind when making the claims that “if people are friends, there is no need for justice, whereas people who are just need friendship in addition to justice,” and that “justice and friendship are either the same thing or nearly so” (Nicomachean Ethics 1155a26-27, Eudemian Ethics 1234b31). One thing to note here is that despite Aristotle’s claim that if people are friends, there is no need for justice, it seems as though justice is in fact necessary for a friendship’s continued existence. Instead of claiming that friends have no need of justice, perhaps what Aristotle should have said is that, within a friendship, considerations of justice do not figure explicitly in deliberations about what to do. We only become aware of the need for justice in our friendships when something has gone wrong.

If this is the case, then why not say that friendship and justice are identical? While Aristotle suggests that friendship and justice might be identical, he stops short from saying that they are. Based on the discussion of disputes, I take it that the two are for the most part coextensive with one another, but not identical. By coextensive, I mean that both friendship and justice result in a person treating others fairly. In most cases, the actions taken by the just person and the friend are the same. Justice is a necessary condition for friendship, because without it, inequality develops, disputes arise, and the friendship dissolves. One reason to think that the two are not identical is Aristotle’s claim, discussed above, that friendship and justice prioritize equality differently. If friendship and justice were identical, then this distinction would not be necessary. Another reason to think that the two are distinct from one another is the claim that a
just person is still in need of friends. If the two were identical, it would seem that the just person would also have friends.\textsuperscript{143} What, then, does Aristotle see as the difference between the two?

I take it that the difference between friendship and justice can be seen by evaluating what Aristotle says about how to prioritize the different obligations they place on us. While in most cases the function of justice in a friendship is straightforward, there may be some cases in which fairness and friendship are in tension with one another. In \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} IX.2, Aristotle asks whether one should allocate everything to his father and obey him in everything, whether one should do a service for a friend rather than an excellent person, and whether one should return a favor to a benefactor rather than do a favor for a companion (1164b22-27).

Considerations of fairness seem to be what drive these questions, since there is a potential conflict between the demands of fairness and the demands of friendship in each of these cases. If, as Aristotle claimed at 1163b12-17, our parents have provided us with benefits that can never be repaid, then we might think that fairness in rectification requires that we allocate everything we have to them. Fairness in allocations suggests that the excellent deserve greater benefits than everyone else by virtue of their excellence, but friendship requires that we do good things for our friends, even if they may be less excellent—and so less deserving—than others. Lastly, friendship requires that we provide benefits to our friends, but fairness in rectification requires that we repay those from whom we have received favors.

\textsuperscript{143} Curzer offers an alternate interpretation, arguing that justice can be defined only with respect to friendship, and that justice does not exist apart from friendship. Consequently, he claims, we have no duties to anyone who is not a friend. Moreover, Curzer claims, nothing but justice governs all of the actions of friends toward each other. He appeals to the virtue of liberality to explain how we might have duties to non-friends. Curzer, \textit{Aristotle and the Virtues}, 275-277, 285-288. While I agree with Curzer that justice, specifically fairness, is what governs the actions of friends toward one another, I disagree with the claim that justice cannot exist apart from friendship. Specifically, I do not think that Curzer’s interpretation does enough to differentiate the two, particularly given Aristotle’s claim that the two prioritize equality differently.
These questions are difficult, Aristotle suggests, because “they involve all sorts of
differences both in greatness and smallness and in nobility and necessity” (1164b28-30).
Generally, he recommends that we not give everything to one person, and we should return
benefits before doing favors for friends, and likewise, should repay loans before giving the
money to friends (1164b30-33). There are exceptions to these general rules if “giving would
greatly exceed repaying either in nobility or in necessity,” or if “the return of a previous service
is not equal to it, namely, when one party knows he is benefiting someone excellent, whereas the
other would be returning it to someone he thinks is depraved” (1165a2-7). As an example of the
former, Aristotle claims that one ought to ransom one’s father from pirates before repaying a
loan if one is unable to do both (1164b33-1165a2). Fairness dictates that we repay the loan first,
but the claims of friendship, along with Aristotle’s claim that we owe more to our parents than
can ever be repaid, make ransoming one’s father either more noble or more necessary.

The fact that there are exceptions to the general rule suggests that the distinction between
friendship and justice lies in how we ought to treat others within society. Aristotle claims that
different things should be repaid to parents, brothers, companions, and benefactors, and that one
ought to allocate to them “what properly belongs to them and is fitting” (1165a16-18). He sees
examples of this sort of behavior in the fact that people invite their relatives to weddings and
funerals, “since these have a share in the family and so, then, in the actions that concern it”
(1165a18-21). To parents, Aristotle thinks that we should assist them most in matters of
sustenance since we owe them for our upbringing, and they should be honored as is appropriate
(1165a21-27). In these cases, what one owes to others is determined by the nature of the

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144 Specifically, he suggests that fathers and mothers should be honored differently from one another, and each
should be honored differently than one honors a wise person, which is different than the honor appropriate to a
general (1165a24-27).
Aristotle claims that “as for how a man should live his life in relation to a woman, and generally speaking a friend in relation to a friend, there is apparently no difference between inquiring about this and inquiring about how he will do so justly, since this is not the same, apparently, for a friend toward a friend as toward a stranger, a companion, or a classmate” (1162a29-33). He makes a similar claim in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where he writes that “to investigate how one should associate with a friend is to investigate a certain kind of justice. Indeed all of justice taken as a whole has a bearing on friendship. Justice is relative to certain people, that is, to those with whom we have something in common and a friend has something in common (family in some cases, daily life in others)” (1242a19-23).

Aristotle goes so far as to claim in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that “injustice toward each of these [different types of friends], then, is also different, and grows when it is toward those who are more fully friends—for example, it is a more terrible thing to rob a companion of his money than to rob a fellow citizen or not to give aid to a brother than not to give it to a stranger or to strike one’s father than to strike anyone whomever” (1160a3-7). He concludes that “justice too naturally increases along with the friendship, since it involves the same people and has an equal extension” (1160a7-8). Not only is it the case that friendship and justice are for the most part coextensive, but the demands of justice increase as the friendship becomes closer. We can draw distinctions between how we are expected to treat strangers, fellow citizens, family members, and friends. To use one of Aristotle’s examples, while it would be unjust to rob a fellow citizen, it is far more unjust rob a friend. In both cases, the robber is being unfair to the victim, and justice requires that the robber make restitution to the victim, so why should we think that one state of affairs is worse than the other?
Although Aristotle does not provide an argument for the claim, I take it that what makes the mistreatment of our friends and family worse than the mistreatment of strangers is the fact that we receive more from our friends than we do strangers, and thus owe them more in return. A friend not only wishes me well, but also does good things for me. As a result, it is far more unjust to rob from a friend than from a stranger. This also seems to be the underlying reason for why it is better to ransom one’s father than to repay a loan, and why striking one’s father is worse than striking any other person. According to Aristotle, we owe our parents more than we owe anyone else, so an action that helps them in a meaningful way is better than simply discharging a debt, and an action that harms them becomes far worse than harm done to others. Aristotle’s claim that justice requires that we treat people differently depending on our relationship to them may help to explain why arithmetic and proportional equality are prioritized differently in friendship and justice, as well as why those who are just still have need of friends.

Recall that Aristotle claims that in justice, proportional equality is the priority, while in friendship, the goal is arithmetic equality (1158b29-33). I take it that the difference in priority is due to the fact that friendships are paradigmatically between those who are equal in pleasantness, usefulness, or virtue, while our relationships with others either may or may not be between equals. What Aristotle seems to have in mind here is that what I owe to a stranger will be

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145 According to Curzer’s interpretation, the reason one violation is worse than the other is the fact that our comrades belong to two groups of friends to whom we have obligations, while citizens only belong to one. A comrade is both a comrade and a fellow citizen, so by robbing from a comrade I have committed a violation against comrade-friendship and citizen-friendship. In the case of robbing a fellow citizen, I have only violated my obligations toward that person as a fellow citizen. Curzer, Aristotle and the Virtues, 281. I disagree with this view, for the reasons provided above.

146 This does not mean, however, that we owe everything to our parents, something that Aristotle explicitly rejects at 1160b30-34. Curzer’s suggestion that Aristotle is leaving room for practical wisdom to determine how to settle conflicts in what we owe others is a good one. I disagree, however, with Curzer’s claim that by ransoming one’s father instead of paying back a loan justice has been violated. Instead, it seems to me as though, in this particular case, practical wisdom has determined that it is more noble and thus more just to ransom one’s father. Curzer, Aristotle and the Virtues, 283.
determined by her worth, which he previously claimed is determined by whatever standards have been established by our society (1131a26-29). I treat strangers fairly, first and foremost, by participating in a system that fairly allocates the goods of society to those who most deserve them. If I happen to treat a stranger unfairly by stealing from her, then I am subject to the requirements of involuntary fairness in rectification. This is a secondary concern when it comes to justice because it only comes into effect when something has gone wrong with our interactions.

As Aristotle has repeatedly argued, we treat friends fairly whenever we reciprocate the benefits or pleasure that we receive from a friendship. Ideally, this reciprocation is a matter of fairness in rectification, because friendships typically occur between those who are equal in pleasantness, usefulness, or virtue. As a result, friendship prioritizes arithmetic equality. It is only when something in the relationship is less than ideal that fairness in allocations becomes a consideration. If a person is unable to provide the same level of benefit or is simply less virtuous than her friends, then she somehow needs to make up the difference, either through loving or honoring them. Because friendships in accord with superiority are not standard friendships, proportional equality is less of a concern than arithmetic equality. This further helps to explain why the obligations of justice increase along with friendship.

If this is correct, the just person is still in need of friends because friends contribute to the good life in a way that justice on its own cannot. Justice, in the sense of lawfulness, will protect one from being harmed by one’s fellow citizens. As John Cooper notes, “justice can exist perfectly well among those who care nothing for one another and who would not lift a finger to help anyone else, except insofar as rules of justice might require. The sense of justice, understood as respect for fairness and legality, is compatible with a suspicious, narrow, hard, and unsympathetic character.” John M. Cooper, “Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship,” in *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 333.

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will make sure that one receives some portion of the good things that it is up to society to distribute. But, depending on one’s place in society and how that society determines how many of these goods one is eligible to receive, one will still need friends to provide things that society cannot. Friendship also presents the opportunity to use the things that society provides for others. Or, as Aristotle puts it in the opening chapter of the discussion of friendship, “what benefit is such prosperity once the opportunity to be a benefactor—which occurs most and is most praiseworthy when it is toward friends—is removed? Or in what way could their prosperity be protected and safeguarded without friends?” (1155a7-10). The benefits of friendship go beyond the benefits of justice in friendships of all types, since “friends are necessary to young people with a view to the avoidance of error, to old ones with a view to being taken care of and being given aid with the actions they have to leave unaccomplished because of their weakness, and to those in their prime with a view to doing noble actions—for when ‘two go together’ they are better able both to understand and to act” (1155a12-16).

**Conclusion**

Aristotle’s initial comments on the connection between friendship and justice suggest a close relationship between the two. I have argued that friendship and justice are for the most part coextensive with, but not identical to one another. Specifically, they are coextensive in that they are concerned with equality and require that we treat others fairly. Fairness is a necessary condition for friendship, and when a friendship is unfair, the friendship becomes open to disputes and will eventually dissolve if not equalized. Justice, then, functions within a friendship by holding it together, and by resolving disputes should they arise. It is the latter function of justice which gives an indication of friendship’s contribution to the virtuous life. At multiple points during his discussion of how to resolve disputes in a friendship in a fair manner, Aristotle claims
that doing so is the noble thing to do (1163a16-21, 1165a2-7). Friendship, then, because it takes multiple forms and is open to the virtuous and non-virtuous alike, is an opportunity for both virtuous and non-virtuous people to perform noble actions and be just.
Chapter 5 - Conclusions

In his survey of the reputable opinions about friendship in the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes a number of claims about the importance of friendship for living well. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he writes that friendship is “most necessary as regards living. For no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all the other good things,” and that it is “not only something necessary, however, but also something noble, since we praise those who love their friends and many-friendedness seems to be something noble” (1155a4-6, 1155a29-30). In the *Eudemian Ethics*, he notes that “we hold that a friend is one of the greatest goods and that friendlessness and isolation are most dreadful, since our whole life and our voluntary associations are bound up with friends” (1234b31-34). In addition to the reputable opinions about the apparent necessity of friendship for the good life, Aristotle makes a number of claims about the relationship between friendship and justice, noting in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that it “seems that friendship holds cities together and that legislators take it more seriously than justice,” and that “if people are friends, there is no need of justice, whereas people who are just need friendship in addition to justice. Also, of just things the most just of all seem to be fitted to friendship” (1155a21-28). He makes similar statements in the *Eudemian Ethics*, going as far as to say that “justice and friendship are either the same thing or nearly so” (1234b31). Taken together with his overall account of friendship, these claims invite a number of interpretive questions.

Given Aristotle’s classification of friendship into three categories based on the three different objects of love, and his claim that friendships on account of pleasure and usefulness are

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only so called because of their resemblance to friendship on account of the good, we might wonder whether the claims about the necessity and nobility of friendship apply to friendships of every type. We might also wonder why, if the secondary forms of friendship are only friendships by resemblance to friendship on account of the good, Aristotle spends so much time discussing how they both come together and fall apart. The discussion of friendship and justice raises some additional questions about how the two relate to one another. What does friendship add to a relationship that cannot be accomplished by two just strangers? Is justice a necessary precondition for friendship or is it the other way around? Lastly, how does the discussion of friendship in association relate to the overall account of friendship?

In the previous chapters I have argued that instead of providing a definition of friendship, Aristotle has provided a set of sufficient conditions for friendship. While friendship on account of the good is paradigmatic, in the sense that it fulfills and exhibits the conditions of friendship to the highest degree, the secondary forms of friendship on account of usefulness or pleasure can be judged as better or worse depending on how well the conditions of friendship are fulfilled. The secondary forms of friendship will always fall short of friendship on account of the good in one or more ways, and I take it that this is primarily because of how the objects of love that serve as the bases of these relationships differ from that which is good for its own sake. Because the conditions of friendship can be instantiated in a variety of ways, a wide range of interpersonal relationships can be classified as friendships under Aristotle’s account. I have also argued that friendships in association can then be judged according to the same paradigm as personal friendships. That is to say, friendship in association comes about for the sake of something good, just as personal friendship does, whether that good is profit in a business venture, the pleasure associated with a feast, or the good of the political community. Moreover, some friendships in
association will be better than others, in the sense that they do a better job of resembling the paradigm set by friendship on account of the good. Lastly, I have argued that justice serves as a means of preserving friendship insofar as it preserves the equality of those participating in the relationship. If friendships arise as a result of something good, then friendships can fall apart when those taking part in the friendship do not receive their fair share of that good thing.

In what follows, I will apply this interpretation of Aristotle’s account of friendship to the questions raised above. I argue that the secondary forms of friendship receive as much attention as they do both because they are the most prevalent relationships in a person’s life and because they are the sort of external good that contribute to happiness in the individual. This is because the blessedly happy individual, although more self-sufficient than others, is not entirely self-sufficient and some relationships on account of usefulness or pleasure will be unavoidable. Since associations—both personal and political—are a regular part of daily life, they too can contribute to happiness and warrant additional discussion. I will conclude that although justice and friendship are for the most part coextensive, insofar as they require the fair treatment of others, they are not identical. Justice seems to be necessary for friendship under this account, insofar as equality is one of the conditions of friendship. While two friends and two just strangers will treat each other fairly, friendship enriches a relationship in ways that contribute to happiness over and above simple fair treatment.

Why Have Friends on Account of Utility or on Account of Pleasure?

Aristotle addresses the question of why a virtuous person needs friends in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9 and identifies the sorts of friends that the virtuous person should aim to have. On the one hand, he claims, it would seem that those who are blessed and self-sufficient have no need of friends since they already have everything that is good, but on the other hand it seems strange not
to grant the happy person friends since friends are “the greatest of external goods” and it also seems strange to require the happy person to “live a solitary life, since no one would choose to have every good thing yet be by himself, since a human being is a political being and one whose nature is to live with others” (1169b3-19). Aristotle resolves the question by noting that the happy person will only need friends of a certain sort. The happy person will have no need of friends on account of usefulness, “since he already has the things that are good. Nor, then, will he need (or only to a small extent) the ones who are friends because of pleasure (for his life, being pleasant, has no need of adventitious pleasure)” (1169b24-27). He goes on to add in this section that the happy person will need excellent friends, then, since excellent friends allow the happy person to both engage in and contemplate excellent activities. Aristotle argues that “for a solitary person life is difficult, since it is not easy for him, when all by himself, to be continuously in activity, whereas together with others and in relation to others it is easier,” that “an excellent person, insofar as he is excellent, enjoys actions that are in accord with virtue but is repelled by those that stem from vice,” and that “a sort of training in virtue also comes about from living together with good people, as Theognis says” (1170a5-13). This is consistent with

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150 Julia Annas discusses the arguments of *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9 as a response to a question first raised in Plato’s *Lysis*, and as part of a larger discussion of altruism and friendship in both works. She argues that the claims made in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9 provide an argument that at least some altruism is necessary in the good life, although she finds his reasons unconvincing. Julia Annas, “Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism,” *Mind* 86, no. 344 (1977): 544–551. In his commentary on this section, Pakaluk identifies three distinct stages of the argument at 1169b8-22, 1169v22-1170a13, and 1170a13-1170b19. Each of the latter stages, Pakaluk argues, improves upon or corrects flaws in the previous stage. The second stage improves upon the first, he claims, insofar as it explains the connection between happiness and having friends. The third stage, he argues, improves upon the prior two stages by justifying friendship non-instrumentally and by explaining why the improvement that friends make on one’s life is relevant to one’s happiness. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX*, trans. Michael Pakaluk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 202-217. My interest in this section lies primarily in the distinction being drawn between friendship on account of the good, on the one hand, and the secondary forms of friendship on the other, and how they contribute to the happiness of the virtuous person.

151 Reeve notes in a footnote that this is a reference to Theognis, Ln. 35. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2014), 336. Theognis, Ln. 31-38 read, “So that’s the lesson. Next, do not consort with knaves, but hold fast always to the men of worth: drink among those, and eat, and sit with those, and seek their favor, who have wealth and influence. From sound men you will learn sound lessons: if you mix with rogues, you’ll even lose what sense you have. Take this to heart, keep worthy company.
Aristotle’s comments in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.8, where he notes that part of what makes friendship between virtuous individuals so stable is the fact that they are stable in character, and “neither need base services nor provide such services themselves, but even prevent them, so to speak” (1159b2-6). This is because “it is characteristic of good people neither to commit errors themselves nor to allow their friends to do so” (1159b6-7). Virtuous friends, unlike friends who are simply useful or pleasant, can help virtuous individuals to remain virtuous.

Aristotle also addresses the topic of whether friends are necessary for the virtuous in the *Eudemian Ethics*. There, he makes a similar argument, noting that on the one hand it seems as though the self-sufficient person needs neither useful people nor people who provide pleasure, drawing a comparison to the case of a god who has no need of anything else. He notes that “the man who is happiest will least of all need a friend, except to the extent that it is impossible for him to be self-sufficient. So necessarily the person whose life is best will have fewest friends, and these should be reduced to even fewer” (1244b5-13). Nevertheless, Aristotle goes on to note that it also seems as though one should want to live together with others, and that “we all participate in good things with greater pleasure when in the company of friends—ínsofar as it pertains to each person to share in as good an object as possible; but some participate in bodily pleasures, others in listening to music, others in philosophy” (1245a18-22). He concludes that “by nature a friend is what is most kindred, but one is similar in body and another similar in soul, and within each group one is similar in respect of one part, another in another,” and that “it makes sense that sharing base pleasures and living with one’s friend should be pleasant, since at the same time there is always a perception of him, but it is even more so with the more divine pleasures” (1245a31-34, 1245a37-39). Ultimately, he claims “each person wishes to share a life

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engaged with the goal which he is able to achieve. And if that isn’t possible, they choose most of all to benefit friends and be benefited by them” (1245b7-9).

Taken together, the passages in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics* argue that the virtuous person is the most self-sufficient, and so has no apparent need for the secondary forms of friendship. That is to say, it is clear that Aristotle does not think that the virtuous person is so self-sufficient as to have no use for friends at all. Such individuals will still benefit from friends on account of the good, since such friends will help one to do virtuous things and contemplate virtuous actions. But if this is the case, then why does Aristotle spend as much time as he does in the treatment of friendship discussing the secondary forms of friendship? If the virtuous person has no need of these sorts of friends, why spend so much time discussing how such friendships come about and the conditions under which they dissolve? These claims also seem puzzling in light of the discussion of friendship in association. If a virtuous person has no need of the secondary forms of friendship at the personal level, we might think the same of associations based on pleasure or usefulness. Will a virtuous individual not engage in profitmaking enterprises with others unless they are virtuous, or only feast with other virtuous individuals? Should a virtuous person not engage in the political association unless every citizen in the association is also virtuous? Or is it the case that participation in such associations has no impact on the happiness of the virtuous individual?

Given Aristotle’s claim that the virtuous person is not entirely self-sufficient, I take it that the secondary forms of friendship still provide some benefit to the virtuous person. In the passages cited above, Aristotle seems to waver between claiming that these friendships provide no benefit at all and claiming that they provide relatively little benefit. In what follows, I argue that the benefit of these relationships is more significant than it might seem, even if that benefit
is mitigated by the availability of friendship on account of the good. Since the non-virtuous are unable to have friendships on account of the good, the secondary forms of friendship will clearly be more beneficial to them. Nevertheless, even the virtuous can benefit from such relationships in non-negligible ways.

One possible interpretation is to say that while the virtuous person will have little need of friendships or associations for the sake of usefulness or for the sake of pleasure, such relationships do benefit those who are not yet virtuous, and so the discussion in these texts is warranted insofar as it provides a path to virtue. Those who are not yet virtuous will learn how to treat their friends in a virtuous way and will be able to either avoid disputes, or if disputes are unavoidable, resolve them in a virtuous way. Moreover, the discussion of friendship in association explains the virtuous ways in which one can engage with one’s associates. Participating in friendship in the political association, for example, might help someone who is not yet virtuous to understand the importance of fairness and the common good when dealing with fellow citizens and to act accordingly. The importance of friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness under such an interpretation is the way in which such relationships provide examples of virtuous action for those who are not yet virtuous. Friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness can serve as models of virtuous behavior in addition to the other benefits of the secondary good being pursued, to the extent that such friendships resemble friendship on account of the good. Since each friendship requires that friends be treated justly for the relationship to continue on good terms, friends will need to act in the ways that justice requires, which will lead to virtuous actions towards friends. Such an interpretation, then, supports three views. First, friendship provides a benefit even to those who are perfectly just, insofar as it provides opportunities for acting virtuously and engaging in a sort of training for virtue. Second,
the only significant benefit of friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness for those who are already virtuous are the opportunities for virtuous behavior that these relationships provide, since virtuous individuals are self-sufficient and have little need for additional pleasure or usefulness. Third, those who are not yet virtuous, and so cannot establish friendships on account of the good, can benefit in this way from the secondary forms of friendship, which involve the sorts of actions that resemble the virtuous behavior associated with friendship on account of the good.

Insofar as the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics* are meant to be a guide for those who aim to be virtuous, the idea that the secondary forms of friendship provide opportunities to develop the virtues is appealing. The goodwill and fairness that occur in friendship are opportunities for those who are not yet virtuous to act virtuously, and so we might think that a thorough account of how such relationships form and end is warranted, even if the virtuous person has no need for them. But if these relationships serve relatively little purpose once a person has already become virtuous, we are still left with questions about what value the secondary forms of friendship hold for the virtuous. If such friendships hold no value for the virtuous, then the virtuous will only benefit from a handful of relationships. This is because friendships on account of the good will be few and far between and likely to develop slowly. As Aristotle notes in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.3, friendships on account of the good “are likely to be rare, however, since there are few such people. Furthermore, time and intimacy are needed in addition. For as the proverb says people cannot know each other until they have ‘eaten the canonical amount of salt together’” (1156b24-28).

To say, then, that the virtuous person sees no benefit from friendships on account of usefulness and pleasure is to say that the virtuous person sees no benefit from most of her relationships, which seems unlikely to be Aristotle’s view, given the claims made above about
the limits of the virtuous person’s self-sufficiency. Moreover, even if the virtuous person should find someone who will eventually become a virtuous friend, that relationship would not immediately start as a friendship on account of the good. Their interactions would be limited to some other sort of relationship and develop into a friendship on account of the good. Before that point, Aristotle claims, “they cannot accept each other, then, or be friends until each appears lovable to the other and gains his trust” (1156b28-29). We might imagine two virtuous individuals becoming friends with one another on account of usefulness or pleasure, and eventually becoming friends on account of the good once they each realize each other’s character and come to trust one another. It seems reasonable to think that those who are virtuous will see some benefit from developing friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness with other virtuous individuals, even if it is only insofar as these relationships will eventually develop into a friendship on account of the good. In this case, the lengthy treatment of the secondary forms of friendship can be justified on the grounds that the virtuous will still need to navigate such relationships in order to develop the types of friendship that do provide a benefit. Under an interpretation like this, the secondary forms of friendship can be viewed as a sort of transitional stage which are instrumentally beneficial to the virtuous individual only as means to discovering potential candidates for friendships on account of the good.

It should also be noted that Aristotle not only claims that friendships on account of usefulness or pleasure can occur between base individuals, but also that virtuous individuals can develop such friendships with those who are base (1157a16-20). Since this is the case, we might think the discussion of the secondary forms of friendship is warranted for that reason alone. If the virtuous person plans to interact with those who are base, then a discussion of the secondary forms of friendship is required, since those are the only relationships possible between the
virtuous and the base. Unlike secondary friendships between those who are virtuous, however, there is no hope that these relationships will develop into friendships on account of the good, so they seem not to hold even that instrumental benefit to the virtuous person. Nevertheless, I take it that given the possibility of such friendships, they do serve some purpose in the life of the virtuous individual. Although they are not as beneficial as friendship on account of the good, there may still be good reasons for thinking that the virtuous person will want to engage in friendships on account of usefulness or on account of pleasure. Any benefit these friendships provide, however, will depend upon how well they can provide things which the virtuous are unable to obtain through other means. If the virtuous individual is able to develop enough friendships on account of the good to meet her needs, then she will have far less use for secondary friendships with those who are base.

All of which is to say that even if friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness are not as desirable as friendship on account of the good, it seems wrong to think that the virtuous person receives only minimal benefit from such relationships. Given the rarity of friendship on account of the good, and the length of time required to develop such relationships, it would seem as though the virtuous will begin nearly all of their interactions with others on the basis of usefulness or pleasure. A virtuous person who avoided relationships or associations that form on the basis of either usefulness or pleasure, thinking that they would be of little or no benefit, would seem not only to limit the opportunities to take part in virtuous activities, but also limit the opportunities to get to know other virtuous individuals and engage in the lengthy process of developing a friendship on account of the good. The fact that virtuous individuals are relatively rare and the fact that even the most virtuous individual is not completely self-sufficient could
also shed some light on the sort of value the virtuous can find in the secondary forms of friendship.

Aristotle’s comparison of the virtuous person to the case of a god in the *Eudemian Ethics* can help to explain why the virtuous person still needs friendships on account of pleasure and usefulness, and may in fact still need to maintain friendships in associations based on these secondary goods. Referring to the potential objection that the virtuous person does not need friends at all, Aristotle notes that the “claim is that since god is not such as to need a friend someone like god does not either. Yet by this argument the good man will not even think. For *this* isn’t god’s good condition, but he is in such a good condition that he does not think of anything except for himself. The reason is that for us being in a good condition depends on something else, while, as for god, he himself just is his own good condition” (1145b15-19). The argument here seems to be that although there is a sense in which both a god and the virtuous person are in some sense self-sufficient, the cause of the god’s self-sufficiency is part of the god’s nature, whereas self-sufficient human beings still have external needs. That is to say, even the most virtuous person is not entirely self-sufficient in the way that a god is self-sufficient, and so will have some need of external goods. The most virtuous person will still have need of the external goods that friendships provide.

One might respond by noting that virtuous friends are just that sort of external good. Aristotle has argued that these relationships are both pleasant and useful, and if that is the case, friendships on account of the good should be enough to satisfy all of the external needs of a self-sufficient, virtuous individual. But imagine the case of a virtuous individual who has not encountered anyone else who is virtuous. Would such a person be better off living without friends than seeking out friendships on the basis of usefulness or pleasure? The passages cited
above offer some reasons for thinking that the virtuous person in this situation would still benefit from friendship on account of pleasure or usefulness. Given Aristotle’s claims that human beings are by nature political and that it is easier to take virtuous actions in the company of others, it seems as though the virtuous individual ought to prefer the secondary forms of friendship to complete friendlessness (1169b3-19, 1170a5-13). Usefulness and pleasure are goods, even if they fall short of what is good absolutely, and as noted in the passage from the Eudemian Ethics, friendship aims at the goals which it is able to achieve (1245b7-9).

If my interpretation is correct, then the secondary forms of friendship will be beneficial to both the virtuous and those who are not yet virtuous. The latter category will benefit from these relationships both insofar as their lives will be improved by the usefulness or pleasure that the relationships provide and insofar as these relationships provide opportunities to treat their friends fairly and well. These behaviors resemble those of virtuous individuals involved in a friendship on account of the good and serve as examples of the sort of activity that virtue requires. While the virtuous will see less benefit from the secondary forms of friendship than they see from their friendships on account of the good, such relationships would still be preferable to friendlessness. Even if one has friendships on account of the good, given that virtue is rare and that friendships on account of the good are still more rare, it seems reasonable to think that the virtuous person will primarily find themselves interacting with those who are not virtuous, and it also seems reasonable to think that at least some of these interactions could develop into friendships. This might seem to be even more likely in the case of the various associations that are a part of the virtuous person’s life, since the likelihood of a large group of virtuous individuals forming an association with one another seems even lower than that of developing a large number of
personal friendships on account of the good. While friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness are inferior to friendship on account of the good, they are still able to provide a non-negligible benefit to even the virtuous. The amount of attention these relationships receive in the treatment of friendship is warranted, then, since they are more common and available to the virtuous and non-virtuous alike.

How Does Friendship Improve Upon Justice?

The question about the benefits of the secondary forms of friendship raises a related question. As noted above, one of the reputable opinions about friendship is that those who are friends have no need for justice, while those who are just still have need of friends (1155a26-28). In the previous chapter, I argued that justice and friendship are coextensive with one another, and yet differ in how they prioritize the obligations they place on us. The two are coextensive insofar as both friendship and justice require that we treat others fairly but differ in how they prioritize arithmetic and proportional equality. Aristotle argues that justice prioritizes proportional equality, which is a matter of giving someone what is deserved according to worth, while friendship prioritizes arithmetic equality, which is a matter of rectification and returning precisely what is owed. I have interpreted this distinction as meaning that our obligations to strangers are determined by the standards established by the society in which we live, and our obligations to friends are determined by reciprocating the benefits or pleasure we receive from the relationship. If this interpretation is correct, then the claim that those who are just still have need of friends will need to explain how friendship, which seems to require actions identical to those required by justice, is still necessary for those who are just. If justice requires that I treat another person fairly, and fairness is defined in terms of justice, then how do my actions to a

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152 I develop this argument in more detail in the section on friendship in association below.
friend differ from my just actions toward a stranger? I take it that they can differ in two main ways. First, in the types of good that are owed to a friend, and second in how those goods are prioritized. Depending on one’s place in society and how that society determines which (and how many of) these goods one is eligible to receive, one will still need friends to provide things that society cannot. Any argument for how friendship is still necessary for those who are just will need to answer the questions of why this is the case both for arithmetic and proportional equality. That is to say, how does the fact that friendship is primarily concerned with arithmetic equality benefit a person who receives a fair allocation of society’s goods and is properly compensated when wronged?

Aristotle seems to address these sorts of questions in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.2, where he discusses the question of just how much we owe to a friend. As I argued in the previous chapter, there seems to be a tension between the requirements of fairness and the requirements of friendship in some cases. Aristotle writes that situations may arise when one must decide between doing a good deed for a friend or returning a favor to a benefactor, or between doing a service for a friend or a service for an excellent person (1164b22-27). Fairness in allocations can conflict with friendship when I cannot both do good deeds for my friend and provide greater benefits to excellent strangers. While fairness in allocations would suggest that I ought to provide benefits to strangers who are more excellent than my friends, friendship requires that I do good deeds for my friends. Fairness in rectification can conflict with friendship when I cannot both do good deeds for my friend and repay my debts to strangers. Aristotle notes that these are difficult questions, and suggests that one can determine what to do by determining what is either more noble or more necessary (1165a2-7). Aristotle does not provide clear criteria as to how to make determinations about nobility or necessity, although I argued that we might be able to
make some determinations about these questions based on the nature of the relationship we have to the individual. Our actions towards strangers will differ from our actions to friends, and the nature of the relationship will dictate what is appropriate for different sorts of friendship. My interactions with friends on account of the good will differ from my interactions with family members, which will differ from my interactions with fellow citizens.

Because what we owe to others is determined by the type of relationship we have with those individuals, it could be argued that those who are just will still find friendship necessary because justice will not provide all of the things that one can gain through friendship. This is perhaps clearest in the case of friendships on account of the good and friendships on account of pleasure. I argued in the previous chapter that Aristotle’s claim that justice is primarily concerned with proportional equality and secondarily with arithmetic equality should be taken to mean that justice is primarily concerned with the fair distribution of societal goods, and secondarily with rectifying any injustices between individuals. Arithmetic equality is only a concern when something has gone wrong and someone must be compensated for that wrong as a result. If this is correct, it is not entirely clear how justice is concerned with the sorts of things that are gained from friendship on account of the good or pleasure. That is to say, virtuous activity or pleasure do not seem to be the sorts of goods that can be distributed by the state, and so if justice is primarily concerned with allocating goods to those who are worthy of those goods, then those who are just will still be missing out on the virtue or pleasure that result from engaging in friendships on account of those goods. Moreover, if one has been wronged and

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^153 Aristotle might think that justice is concerned with virtuous activity or training in virtue insofar as lawfulness is concerned with prescribing that citizens behave virtuously. He notes as examples laws that require someone be courageous by not breaking rank, fleeing, or throwing down one’s weapons, laws that require moderate actions, by prohibiting adultery or wanton aggression, and laws that require mild-mannered actions by prohibiting physical and verbal abuse (1129b19-23). Even if this is the case, the sorts of actions prescribed by these laws are different than the sorts of benefits Aristotle notes as being part of friendship on account of the good above. Lawfulness could have
requires compensation, it is not clear how we might compensate that individual either with virtue or with pleasure. As a result, it would seem that justice alone does not provide all of the good things that one can gain through friendship, and so those who are just would still benefit from having friends on account of the good or on account of pleasure. I take it that the argument for this would look much like the one Aristotle provided above for thinking that the virtuous, self-sufficient person still needs friends. Just as the self-sufficient person still has a need for friendship on account of the good to provide opportunities to engage in virtuous activity and training in virtue, the just person will also have a need for friendship on account of the good. The just individual will also have a need for friendship on account of pleasure, insofar as pleasure is not the sort of societal good that can easily be distributed, and is not the sort of thing that can be used to compensate a person who has been wronged.

While we can make a case for thinking that justice and friendships on account of either the good or pleasure are not concerned with the same sorts of goods, it does seem as though friendship on account of usefulness and justice are. Fairness in allocations, or what we might call distributive justice, has to do with “the allocation of wealth, honor, or anything else divided among members of a constitution, since, in the case of these things, it is possible for one person to have a share that is equal or unequal to another’s” (1130b30-33). Fairness in rectification can be voluntary or involuntary, and involves either selling, buying, lending without interest, giving free use of something, and hiring out, in the case of the former, or paying fines in the case of the latter (1131a1-9). These sorts of voluntary transactions sound like the sorts of things that are involved in the typical examples of friendships on account of usefulness.\textsuperscript{154} As I noted in the

\textsuperscript{154} Note, however, that this does not mean that such inequalities never occur in friendships on account of the good or pleasure. As I argued in the previous chapter, *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.3 discusses friendships on account of the good
previous chapter, Aristotle’s discussion of the dissolution of friendships and causes of dispute seem to focus primarily on friendships on account of usefulness. In order to resolve these disputes, Aristotle recommends that the recipient of the benefit should make a return of equal worth if he is able, and that one must dissolve the friendship, act as if the benefits were conferred on specified terms, and repay those benefits when able to (1163a1-6). That is to say, when there is a dispute in a friendship on account of usefulness that can be resolved through no other means, Aristotle seems to suggest that one must end the friendship and resolve the dispute as the just person would.

Nevertheless, even if justice and friendship on account of usefulness are concerned with the same sorts of goods, it seems reasonable to think that there are some types of thing that a person would find useful that are not included either in the goods distributed by society or the types of voluntary transactions mentioned above. Individuals who share some political or charitable cause can be useful to one another, for example, and as Aristotle himself notes, friendship can be useful to those who are in poverty or experiencing misfortunes. In situations like these, there are no goods to be distributed fairly, and so the type of justice that deals with fairness in allocations will not be relevant. Nevertheless, we might think that the voluntary transactions that are governed by fairness in rectification can handle these sorts of situations. One might be able to help a friend in poverty by granting a loan without interest, for example, or

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for which the individuals involved are unequal in terms of virtue, and we can imagine situations in which one person derives more pleasure from a friendship on account of pleasure than her counterpart.

155 In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1, he writes that “in poverty too, as in all other misfortunes, people think friends to be their only refuge,” and in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.11, he writes that “the unfortunate need assistance,” and that “friendship is more necessary, then, in bad fortune, which is why useful friends are needed there” (1155a11-12, 1171a22-25). Nevertheless, he goes on to add that when people suffer misfortune, friends are a sort of mixed blessing, since to see our friends pained at our misfortunes “is painful, since everyone tries to avoid being a cause of pain to his friends” (1171b4-6). He makes similar claims in the *Eudemian Ethics*, noting that if we think that our friends aren’t going to improve things we wish that they not be present or not to feel distress, and when we think that they will improve the situation we will want them to be present (1246a10-12).
agree to hire a friend to help accomplish some goal. If this is the case, friendship on account of usefulness appears to be purely transactional, and if it is purely transactional, then one could argue that those who are just have little need for friendship on account of usefulness.

Even if there are no goods unique to friendship on account of usefulness, we might think that Aristotle finds some benefit in the fact that friendship prioritizes arithmetic equality over proportional equality. As I noted in the previous chapter, Aristotle describes a type of friendship on account of usefulness as being “ethical in character,” since it is not on specified terms, but instead “each gives a gift or whatever as to a friend, yet he claims that he deserves to get back an equal amount or more, on the supposition that he was not giving but making a loan” (1162b31-34). In this “ethical” sort of friendship on account of usefulness, although the parties do not keep as close track of the various debts that are incurred, they still expect any benefits conferred on a friend to be repaid at some point in time. Friendship on account of usefulness, then, provides the opportunity for friends to be equally useful to one another, without the sorts of constraints that one would find in a typical quid-pro-quo transaction. In relationships like these, justice is only a concern when the friends are unable to resolve a dispute, and as long as the friends are fair to one another, such a situation will not arise.

I take it, then, that all three forms of friendship can benefit someone who is just. The benefits of friendships on account of the good or pleasure might be clearer, since those relationships are concerned with goods that are not easily distributed by the state, but friendship on account of usefulness may also be beneficial insofar as there are useful things which cannot be easily divided between members of a constitution or which can benefit those suffering misfortune or who are in poverty. The difference in the prioritization of proportional and arithmetic equality is important, too, insofar as friends can expect more from one another than
they can from strangers. Nevertheless, justice is coextensive with friendship despite this
difference prioritization, since friends will treat each other fairly. If they do not treat each other
gently and the inequality is not rectified, the friendship will dissolve.

**How do Friendships in Association Contribute to the Good Life?**

In previous sections, I have argued that friendship in association expands on the notion of
personal friendship by showing how the reciprocal goodwill found in personal friendships can be
extended to larger groups of individuals who share our aims. Under my interpretation,
friendships in association are judged by the same standards as personal friendship, such that
these relationships can be judged better or worse based on the extent to which the members of
the association share in the good on which the association is based. I argue that Aristotle’s
account of friendship in the various constitutions and various household relationships offers
some insight on the sorts of obligations that friends have to one another, as well as how to make
sense of the way in which relationships that are necessarily based in an inequality can be
reconciled in a way that allows them to continue to be considered friendships. This interpretation
of friendship in association can also help to explain the ways in which friendship in association
contribute to the good life.

For Aristotle, the term friendship applies to more than just a personal relationship
between two individuals, and one can find elements of friendship in many areas of one’s life.
Aristotle claims in the *Eudeman Ethics* that there are as many types of justice and association as
there are types of friendship, and that “they all border on each other and have virtually the same
differentiating characteristics” (1241b13-17). I have argued that this suggests that one’s personal
friendships and associations can be based on a wide range of good things, whether they be
similar recreational interests or the joint pursuit of a shared cause, and that what all of these
relationships have in common with one another is that the individuals taking part in the
relationship have some notion of a common good at which the friendship is aimed. Associations,
then, provide an opportunity for individuals to pursue those goals which they are unable to
pursue on their own. As a result, every benefit of friendship I have mentioned above would apply
equally to friendship in association, and associations are concerned with justice in all of the same
ways as personal friendships.

In many ways, friendship in association seems to amplify the benefits of friendship.
Friendship is beneficial insofar as even the virtuous person is not entirely self-sufficient, and
associations are more capable of accomplishing some larger goals than the individual members
would be able to accomplish on their own. Aristotle’s examples of the associations of sailors,
soldiers, or feast planners are all examples of activities that cannot be completed individually,
and for which success requires the cooperative efforts of each member of the association. Even
the virtuous, then, would benefit from friendships like these when attempting to accomplish
these sorts of goals. There are also two types of association which Aristotle would argue are for
the most part unavoidable—the household association and the political association. Whether
or not one benefits from being a part of any of these associations will depend to some degree
upon how friendly the association happens to be. As I argued in earlier chapters, Aristotle seems
to suggest that friendship in association is a matter of each of the association’s members working
for the common good on which the association is based. One could benefit from an association
by aiming at one’s own good at the expense of the association’s other members, much as a tyrant

156 The political association, in particular, seems to be one that Aristotle would find to be difficult for a person to
avoid. He argues in the Politics that “man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere
accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity” (1253a1-4). In the Nicomachean Ethics he claims
that “all associations seem to be parts of the political association, however, since people consort together for some
advantage and to provide themselves with something for their life” (1160a8-11). All translations of the Politics are
does in a tyrannical political association, but if one does so, disputes will arise within the association and the association runs the risk of falling apart. One benefits from being a part of various associations, then, by treating the other members of that association as friends.

I take it that friendship in association provides a particularly good illustration of the importance of the secondary forms of friendship, since it seems that most, if not all, of the associations to which one belongs will be on the basis of either pleasure or usefulness. As I noted in earlier chapters, Aristotle makes no specific reference to any associations that might form on account of the good, although nothing he says on the topic of friendship in association rules out the possibility. The members of such an association would all need to be virtuous, and the common good of the association would need to contribute to the virtue of its members. As I noted above, Aristotle argues that friendship on account of the good is rare, and it would seem that if it is difficult to form such a relationship with a single individual, it would be even more difficult to find enough such individuals to form an entire association. While it might be difficult for the virtuous to take part in friendship in associations on account of the good, they are still able to take part in associations on account of pleasure or usefulness, just as virtuous individuals can engage in individual friendships on these bases. If these sorts of associations are the ones that are the most available to the virtuous, and they are better able to achieve some of the goals that the virtuous may have, then there may be additional evidence that both friendship in association and the secondary forms of friendship are beneficial.

Even if one were not to join any association aimed at some particular good, one would still be part of the political association. In earlier chapters, I argued that the political association seems to be formed on the basis of usefulness, and so political friendship is a type of friendship
As was the case with individual friendship on account of usefulness above, we might also wonder whether or not there is a sharp distinction between justice and political friendship. That is to say, if justice primarily governs our interactions with strangers and the distribution of societal goods, what more can political friendship add? Aristotle considers the claim that political friendship is more desirable than simple just relations, noting in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1 that “it also seems that friendship holds cities together and that legislators take it more seriously than justice. For like-mindedness seems to be something like friendship, and this is what they seek most, whereas faction, because it is enmity, they most seek to drive out” (1155a22-26). If this is the case, then friendship must add some benefit over and above what is found in the fair distribution of the state’s goods.

As noted in earlier chapters, Aristotle discusses like-mindedness in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.6. There, he claims that “we do say that a city is like-minded when people are of one mind about what is advantageous, deliberately choose the same things, and put into action the things they have resolved in common,” and such that it is possible for “both or all parties to attain their goals” (1167a26-30). He goes on to argue that “like-mindedness is apparently political friendship, then, as it is in fact said to be, since it is concerned with things that are advantageous and ones that affect our life” (1167b2-4). Moreover, he claims that “this sort of like-mindedness

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157 As noted in that chapter, my interpretation is based largely on claims made in the *Eudemian Ethics* at 1242a6-9 and in the *Politics* 1176b20-1277a5. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle claims that “political friendship exists because of utility above all else. People seem to come together because they are not self-sufficient, though they would also have come together just for the sake of living together” (1242a6-9). In the *Politics*, Aristotle argues that what is involved in being an excellent citizen differs from what is involved in being an excellent person, and that if the political association cannot be entirely composed of good people, but each person could still be a good citizen, then the virtue of a citizen and a good person must differ, “unless we assume that in the good state all the citizens must be good” (1276b37-1277a5). As also noted in that chapter, some commentators take the view that political friendship is a type of friendship on account of the good, while others take the view that it is a type of friendship on account of usefulness (see Chapter 3, fn. 13 and fn. 14).

158 Reeve translates the term “οὐχόνωσε” as “concord.” I have used “like-mindedness” here to remain consistent with the discussion of the term in earlier chapters.
is found among decent people, since they are in accord with themselves and with others—out for
the same things in a word,” and so “they wish for just things as well as advantageous ones, and
these they also seek in common” (1167b4-9). Compare this to what he says about the base, who
“seek a greedy share in benefits, but in labors and charitable services a deficient one. And since
each one wishes these things to himself, he keeps an eye on his neighbor and stands in his way,
with the excuse that if people do not keep watch, the common good gets ruined” (1167b9-14).
Aristotle concludes by claiming that the result of the actions of these base individuals is “that
they factionalize, compelling each other to do just things but not wishing to do them themselves”
(1167b14-19).

These passages about like-mindedness and political friendship seem to support the
interpretations I have provided above about the nature of the difference between justice and
friendship, as well as the claim that friendship is primarily concerned with some common good
at which the individuals involved aim. According to these passages, it seems as though like-
mindedness is concerned with what is both just and what is beneficial, and that these two things
can be considered independently of one another. Moreover, those who are base, and thus not
like-minded can still insist on justice from others even if they themselves will seek out an unfair
portion of benefit for themselves. This suggests that there can still be some concept of justice in
the absence of political friendship, even if some citizens aim at an unjust outcome. Friendship’s
prioritization of arithmetic equality might be seen in the fact that citizens who are like-minded
are out for the same thing, and seek what is advantageous in common with one another, and aim
for all to achieve their goals, while justice’s prioritization of proportional equality leaves open
the possibility that citizens make unfair claims on one another even when societal goods have
been fairly distributed.
If my interpretation is correct, then friendships in association function no differently than personal friendships and can be judged by the same criteria. Just like personal friendships they are formed on the basis of some good thing, and can be judged as better or worse by how well they fulfill the paradigm set by friendship on account of the good. The virtuous and non-virtuous alike will benefit from friendships in association, particularly in the pursuit of those goods which require the cooperation of others to achieve. As is also the case with personal friendship, justice in an association and friendship in an association are coextensive, insofar as friendship in association aims at what is fair for the association’s members as they pursue some common good. This is the case in the political association, as well, where those who are like-minded pursue what is both just and advantageous for all citizens.

**General Conclusion**

In both the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle provides an account of the different relationships a person can have, and the ways in which friendship contributes to a virtuous life. Rather than developing a definition of friendship, he provides a list of conditions that obtain between friends, and a framework for classifying these relationships on the basis of the type of good on which they are based. While friendship on account of the good is the paradigm, and is as a result superior to friendship on account of either pleasure or usefulness, the secondary forms of friendship are also worthy of consideration, and contribute in meaningful ways to the lives of those who are virtuous and those who strive to be virtuous. What we find on Aristotle’s account is that there are opportunities for friendship in every relationship we have, and that each of these relationships is an opportunity to enrich our lives. Not only do we benefit from the various good things that serve as the bases for our friendships, but even friendships on account of pleasure or usefulness provide opportunities to engage in virtuous activity with others.
Friendship involves acting in the interests of one’s friends, and in treating them fairly while pursuing the common good at which the relationship aims. This is the case with one’s personal friends, business associates, colleagues, family members, and fellow citizens. Even if one ought to strive to cultivate friendships on account of the good, the secondary forms of friendship provide significant benefit to those who are not virtuous, and a non-negligible benefit to those who are. Moreover, anyone who engages with others in any capacity will belong to some association, and associations are more beneficial the more they resemble friendship on account of the good.

Aristotle’s claims that justice and friendship are concerned with the same sorts of things are perhaps clearer when we apply them to the account of friendship in association, particularly the political association. What is just in those relationships involves fairness in the pursuit of the common good of the association by its members. Nevertheless, Aristotle’s claims about justice apply equally to personal friendship, and the idea that friendships fall apart when the inequality that develops between friends is not reconciled. If these disputes cannot be resolved and friendship becomes impossible, then the possibility for justice remains. Ultimately, both the virtuous and non-virtuous have the opportunity to direct noble actions toward their friends, and thus cultivate both virtue and justice.

With this interpretation in mind, I would like to turn to some additional passages to see how friendship might fit into Aristotle’s larger ethical project. While I have discussed the connection between justice and friendship at length above, I take it that if I am correct that Aristotle’s account can be broadly applied, and that friendship is available to the virtuous and non-virtuous alike, then we can start to see why the topic receives as much attention as it does in both the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*. Specifically, friendship seems to fit into Aristotle’s
broader ethical theory in two ways. First, Aristotle notes that friendship and virtue are closely
connected. He makes the claim that friendship either is a sort of virtue or involves virtue in the
opening lines of *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1, and in *Eudemian Ethics* VII, he claims that “we
think that the same man is both good and a friend, and that friendship is a state connected to
character” (*NE* 1155a3-4, *EE* 1234b26-28). Second, he argues that friends are necessary for the
good life. Friendship is identified as being both necessary and noble in *Nicomachean Ethics*
VIII.1, and in *Eudemian Ethics* VII, he claims that “we hold that a friend is one of the greatest
goods and that friendlessness and isolation are most dreadful, since our whole life and our
voluntary associations are bound up with friends” (*NE* 1155a28-29, *EE* 1234b31-34). I take it
that the opportunities for noble action that friendship provides are what cause it to be connected
to virtue and good character, and I take it that friends are the sort of external good that make
happiness possible.

Aristotle discusses the relationship between virtue, noble actions, external goods, and
happiness in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.8-11. One of the concerns raised in this section of the text is
the connection between happiness, virtue, and external goods. If happiness is defined as virtuous
activity, then it would seem as though the virtuous person needs nothing else to be happy.
Nevertheless, Aristotle notes that happiness “apparently needs external goods to be added, as we
said, since it is impossible or not easy to do noble actions without supplies. For just as we
perform many actions by means of instruments, we perform many by means of friends, wealth,
and political power” (1099a31-1099b2). Moreover, he notes a number of factors which can
interfere with a person’s happiness, including “living a solitary life, or childless,” and noting that
we can have happiness even less “if our children or friends are totally bad or were good but have
died” (1099b3-6). While, on the one hand, noble actions themselves are enough for happiness,
not all such activities can be pursued as an individual, such that “happiness is a certain sort of activity of the soul in accord with virtue, while of the remaining goods, some are necessary conditions of it, others are by nature co-workers (συνεργὰ) and useful as instruments” (1099b26-28).

Based on these passages, one might take friends to be only an instrumental good. Friends, wealth, and political power are all mentioned together and compared to the instruments that one uses to perform actions. According to such an interpretation, there is nothing particularly noble about friendship aside from the noble actions that cannot be taken without the presence of friends. If my interpretation of Aristotle’s account of friendship is correct, however, we can take friends to be literal co-workers in our various pursuits. While wealth or political power are tools that are used, our friends are cooperative partners in achieving our ends. What makes a friend distinct from something like wealth or political power is the reciprocal goodwill that is one of the conditions for friendship. While one cannot wish wealth well for its own sake, one can do that for one’s friends, and while political power cannot share an interest in one’s projects, one’s friends can. For these reasons, we might see why, as noted above, Aristotle identifies friends as the “greatest of external goods” (1169b10).

Still, one might wonder why the noble actions that friendship facilitates are any more virtuous than noble actions taken towards strangers. That is to say, while it is clear that under Aristotle’s view that virtue requires a person to perform noble actions and that friendship also involves acting on behalf of one’s friends, there does not seem any reason to think that in the absence of friends one’s noble actions are any less virtuous. Aristotle does claim in places that actions towards friends are in some way more just or more noble than to strangers. In Nicomachean Ethics VIII.9, for example, he claims that “it is a more terrible thing to rob a
companion of his money than to rob a fellow citizen or not to give aid to a brother than not to
give it to a stranger or to strike one’s father than to strike anyone whomever,” and in
*Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9, he seems to suggest that it is “nobler to confer benefits on friends than
on strangers” (1160a3-7, 1169b12-13). If, as I have argued, we owe different things to our
friends than we do to strangers, then we might see why Aristotle thinks that this is the case. Our
friends do things for us that strangers would not, and so we owe our friends more in return.
Moreover, with the assistance of our friends, we can achieve greater things than we can on our
own. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Aristotle thinks that providing benefits to those who can
help us to achieve more noble things is nobler than providing benefits to strangers. Friendship,
then, is like virtue insofar as it involves acting for the sake of others in a way that is both just and
seeks to achieve something good—either something beneficial, something pleasant, or something
good absolutely. Friends are necessary for happiness because they are our cooperative partners in
achieving that good, and because they can help us to achieve goals that might otherwise be unavailable to us.
References


