Friendship beyond Reason

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Abstract: I elucidate the purposes of the ancient philosophers in turning us away from thinking about particularizing affection to thinking about justifiable human relations. The method is to read the accounts of friendship in Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, in the light of the views on the causes and justification of human relations of Rousseau, of Christian and post-Christian Kantians, and of the Hebrew Bible with its Rabbinic commentators.

Revised 17 July 2005

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> Robert Berman: You always want to tie thinking to a unique particular, not just a particular, but a unique particular, an individual.
>
> Seth Benardete: That is, you want to tie thinking to nonthinking, and that's very hard to do.[1]

I want to discuss a fundamental distinction between two types of human relations. Some relations are caused to come into being by the conscious motives of the participants: my relation to my barber, John, depends on my conscious desire to get a haircut and my conscious preference for John over John's boss who cuts hair in the same shop. In other relations conscious motives serve only to alter the expression or conduct of the relation without being able to alter the fact of the relation: the state of my relations with my three siblings depends in part on choices I have made and continued to make, but the fact that I stand in a relation of siblinghood to them does not. We are all involved in both sorts of relations -- my concern here will be to explore the role of explanation and justification in our understanding of each type.

I will examine the way this distinction appears in four broad classes of views about what the Greeks called philia. Philia is usually translated as "friendship," and I will follow this custom here. Yet as David Konstan has explained, the abstract noun philia "designates a wide variety of positive affective bonds including relations among kin, fellow citizens, comrades in arms and friends."[2] I will begin with the ancient philosophers who seek to distinguish justifiable from unjustifiable relations to others. Rousseau responds to the ancients by claiming that love is not caused, and therefore cannot be justified, by the perception of lovable qualities, but rather love deceives the lover by constructing and imposing a perception that these qualities are present in the beloved.

Yet Rousseau's view will not detain us because it too does not attempt to explain what draws a lover to a particular beloved. I will next discuss the Christians and post-Christian Kantians who

contend that I ought to love my fellow simply in virtue of his or her humanity or individuality. Finally, I will put on the table the Hebrew-Biblical and Rabbinic view that the highest form of love is the love of a particular lover for a particular beloved that is insulated from appeals to reason or justification. With these four views on the table, we will be in a position to understand the purposes of the ancient philosophers in turning us away from thinking about particularizing affection to thinking about justifiable human relations.

The problem of particularizing affection can be described in terms of Aristotle's first discussion of philia in the Nicomachean Ethics:

> In relations and in living together and in sharing in speech and deed, some seem to be obsequious, that is, those who praise everything with a view to pleasure and never are contrary, but think it necessary to abstain from giving pain to those they happen to encounter. Others, from a disposition opposed to that one, are contrary about everything, and so are called dyspeptic and ill-tempered. That these two aforementioned dispositions are to be reproached is not unclear, and that the middle disposition is to be lauded -- according to which one will accept what one must and in the manner which one must, and will become vexed likewise. But no name has been assigned to this middle disposition, though it is most like friendship. For the one of this sort, that is, the one put down under the middle disposition, is the sort we wish to call the good friend, if affection is predicated in addition. It differs from friendship in that it is without passionate affection for those to whom one relates. Since it is not because of loving or hating that he accepts each thing as it must be accepted, but because he is of that middle sort. For he will do the same towards those he is not acquainted with and those he is acquainted with, towards intimates and those who are not so, except that he accommodates himself towards each. For it is not proper to

> have the same care for intimates and for strangers, nor, mutatis mutandis, to cause them grief.[3]

The question is, what sense can we make of the "affection" (to stergein) which distinguishes friendship from amiability. The standard response in the literature on Aristotle and much of the philosophical literature on friendship generally is to turn away from this question, even if one has formulated it explicitly and thereby paid lip-service to the importance of affection, of the personalizing element, as a component of friendship.[4] As Derrida puts it, one turns from the question of "Who is my friend?" to examine the question "What is a friend?"[5]

The ancient literature on friendship not only turns away from this question but does so in order to alter our ethical orientation toward personalizing affection. The classical treatments of friendship are thus "protreptic," or literally, reorienting. Perhaps the crudest, and therefore the most illustrative, is Cicero's Laelius de amicitia. The discussion begins from Laelius's initial claim that "friendship is only possible among the good" (5.18), a claim which Laelius gradually modifies or softens. The guiding thesis of the conversation is that one should never do anything on behalf of one's friend that is incompatible with virtue, "nothing disgraceful",[6] or, at least, nothing "utterly disgraceful."[7] Laelius never stops to explain, however, what would lead one to do something for a friend that is incompatible with virtue: personalizing affection is assumed to come about, but there is nothing that needs to be said about how why it does so.

Aristotle's theory of friendship is protreptic in much the same way as de amicitia, but partly because the reader must reconstruct the conversational contexts in order to make sense of the arguments, the protreptic purpose is far less crudely visible. What is Aristotle's theory of friendship a theory of? What about friendship do his arguments aim to explain? Suzanne Stern-Gillet claims that Aristotle's highest form of friendship "is essentially a rational association which encompasses what is seen as the essential selves of the friends. As such, it evades the contingency and capriciousness which may well have caused the topic of friendship to drop out of the philosophical

agenda."[8] On Stern-Gillet's interpretation Aristotle is giving us a causal explanation of friendship. Martha Nussbaum explains that the cause of love is beliefs about the beloved:

> Aristotle informs us in detail that people who love one another do so on the basis of a certain conception or description of the object, and on the basis of their belief that the object has the feature or features in question – as well as their further beliefs that the object is well-disposed toward them, and so forth. It is perfectly clear that if any of these central beliefs turn out to be false, or becomes false, love itself will cease...[9]

Nussbaum's formulations suggest that it is not merely "subjective" beliefs about the friend, but the truth of these beliefs, that is the cause of friendship or its dissolution. It is striking that Nussbaum in the passage I have cited neither quotes Aristotle nor offers an extratextual example to prove a claim that appears refuted by every example of someone faithful to an unfaithful lover.[10]

The trouble is that, as everybody including Aristotle knows, "being loved is an accident," -- the personalizing element in friendship is indeed contingent and capricious.[11] It is more plausible, therefore, that Aristotle is offering not a causal theory of the origins of friendship between two persons, but rather an explanation of why ties of friendship are worthy of choice: an account of why – and when – friendship is justified. As Charles Kahn writes, "Aristotle seems to be concerned rather with the rationality of friendship, with defining and justifying its place within a theory of human happiness."[12] Nussbaum's exposition of Aristotle becomes unexceptionable if we see Aristotle's account of friendship as part of his own "therapy of desire", to coin her phrase. Aristotle is telling us not that friendship is caused by beliefs about the goodness and well-disposedness of our friends, but that we ought to be friendly only toward those who are good, pleasant or well-disposed to us.[13] We should reshape our relations therapeutically so as to align our actual friendships with our justifiable friendships. This rationalistic therapy or surgery upon friendship is part of the general project of Aristotle's ethical-political investigations: the project, as Francis Sparshott has put it, of "deciding how to live, as if one had power over oneself, one's destiny, one's world."[14]

Aristotle in the Nicomachean Ethics famously distinguishes between three forms of philia: friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure in shared activity, and friendship that is a partnership in shared worthy activity. In each case one's relation to the other person is grounded in a reason -- Aristotle ranks the forms of friendship according to the seriousness of the reason that supports each type. Friends ought to be loved as their qualities warrant, and the highest type of friendship is the type justified by the highest qualities.[15] In describing love as justified by the real qualities of the beloved, Aristotle is building on Diotima's infamous "ladder of love" in Plato's Symposium.[16]

One begins on the ladder of love by loving a single beautiful body because it is beautiful. Yet just as delighting in someone's beautiful looks does not become erotic love until one misses that person when they are absent and desires that person to be present, so too admiration of a good quality, even of the highest qualities of a person, those that constitute virtue, is not enough for friendship.[17] These good qualities, without personalizing, particularizing, affection, are neither causally necessary nor causally sufficient for love, but they are the qualities that would make these particular ties worthy of choice. These qualities are justifications for friendship – they make intelligible why the person is lovable[18] – but they do not explain what friendship is. Aristotle's theory of friendship does not, then, as John Cooper notes, "except incidentally, have anything to say about how friendships are formed in the first place."[19]

I want to explore this lacuna, to ask why a theory of friendship cannot explain the particularizing affection that Aristotle himself sees as characteristic of love.[20] I shall argue that the lacuna is best understood not as a limit of Aristotle's explanation of friendship but as a limit of explanation itself. Whether or nor someone is loved by another is "an accident," as we have seen – that is, to be loved is not a natural consequence of any traits the beloved happens to possess.[21] We are therefore forced to agree with John Brentlinger that "what people actually love cannot be determined philosophically."[22] In that sense what Aristotle calls the wish to become friends with a

particular person, which is a kind of liking (philēsis), is what Elizabeth Telfer calls irrational, and what Montaigne calls in his account of his love for La Boëtie beyond reason: "If you press me to say why I loved him, I feel that it cannot be expressed except by replying: 'Because it was him: because it was me. Meditating this union there was, beyond all my reasoning, beyond all that I can say specifically about it, some inexplicable force of destiny.'"[23] That particularization is unjustifiable in itself, and its natural, excessive, force is what Aristotle wants to persuade us to hobble, for reasons that are part and parcel of the limits of justification.

Rousseau explains the love of a particular lover for a particular beloved as the result of the lover's imagining: the lover imagines lovable qualities in the beloved to rationalize the affection.[24] Rousseau's claim might at first seem to echo a view that can be found in Plato: Socrates in the Republic, conversing with Glaucon, maintains that the lover persuades himself that the actual qualities of the beloved are worthy of love.[25] Socrates is light-heartedly pointing out that love leads us to err about the value of the qualities of the loved one, but Rousseau thinks that the lover posits lovable qualities in the beloved that are not actually present. Plato, unlike Rousseau, does not deny that love can also be a response to lovable qualities. Yet where the love comes before the attribution of imaginary lovable qualities, it is unclear whether the lover needs to form beliefs in the lovable qualities of the beloved for the love to persist. Even if the lover should happen to form such beliefs, it is unclear why these beliefs should add any particular psychic force to the love that the lover already feels for the beloved.[26]

In any case, particularizing affection is spontaneous for Rousseau as much as for Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero, produced in a way we cannot explain. As Denis de Rougemont writes: "to say that passion is an error is not to explain how that error arises."[27] The personalized affection is not explained but posited as inexplicable.[28] This may be the most reasonable thing, but it is on first glance unsatisfactory because it is disillusioning, on second glance because it leaves open the question of how we are to relate to this spontaneous production of particular ties.

Christian and post-Christian writers, as is well known, are much more voluble than the ancients on personalizing affection. For Anders Nygren, agapē, the love of persons, as against the eros that seeks to enjoy the good qualities of the other, is motivated spontaneously in the lover: "In relation to man, Divine Love is 'unmotivated'…. having no motive outside itself, in the personal worth of man."[29] "Eros recognizes value in its object – and loves it. Agape loves – and creates value in its object," Nygren writes.[30] Nygren, of course, thinks that eros and philia as described by Plato and Aristotle are not really love of other persons at all. Yet in a crucial sense the Christian tradition that Nygren narrates moves us far from what Aristotle recognized as distinctive of philia, the relation to a particular person. The two moments of agapē are God's love for the sinner, and the Christian's love of his enemy. Both are attachments to persons, since God loves all sinners and the Christian is commanded to love all his enemies, but the particular affection of God for some (even some sinners) is denied and the particular affection of one human being for the friend, the spouse, or the child, is disparaged. Or to quote a recent Catholic writer, James V. Schall, "What binds us together at the highest level is the capacity of love and friendship to see in reason and freedom the goodness that is there by divine love in the being of every existing person."[31] For Schall, what binds two people together is not a particular affection but the recognition in the concrete other of a universal human capacity.

Philosophers who take there bearings from Kant rather than the various strands of the Christian tradition make a similar turn away from the qualities that are thought to justify love on the ancient account. In my relations with my fellow, they argue, I ought to respond to him or her as a bearer of those human capacities for rational action that are present equally in all human beings. The Kantians thus stress the importance of individualization, since we are all supposedly moral individuals, only to move immediately to talking about "equal respect for individuals." Kantians thus leave behind the unthought concrete in friendship, the unequal attachment to the friend, in their ascent to the concrete practices of universal mutual respect.[32]

Our inquiry has managed to separate the question about the being of friendship from the question of its justification, and in exploring the ontology of friendship we cannot be satisfied with the limits to inquiry imposed by the context of justification. In the ancient world the inquiry of the philosophers into friendship within reason was confronted by the exponents of divine law and the apostles of divine love. The ancient philosophers, Rousseau, the Christians, and the Kantians cannot help us understand particularizing love. Fortunately, Nygren saves us from perplexity by directing us to the Hebrew Bible and its Rabbinic expounders:

> One of the most striking differences between the Commandment of Love as it is interpreted in the Old Testament and in Christianity, is that in the latter it is universal in scope. In Judaism love is exclusive and particularistic: it is directed to one's "neighbor" in the restricted sense of the word, and it is directed to "neighbors only."[33]

In the Hebrew Bible, God's love that singles out Israel among the nations of the earth is a friendship inherited from the patriarchs. At Creation God initially relates to man in the singular for there are no other creatures like Adam, as is made clear by Adam's quest for a mate. Since Adam and, subsequently, Eve, are singular of their kind, we don't need to explain why God chose Adam. God is, however, drawn to particular men among Adam's descendants, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, who are both righteous and obedient. While they are just of their own motion, not because God orders them to be just, it is not merely their righteousness, but their willingness to follow God that seems to be constitutive of their relation to Him. As the story of Abraham and Isaac shows, those who love and are beloved by God are willing to follow his commands to them even when these commands contradict His own promises. Isaac and Jacob are chosen based on their status as descendants of Abraham in the chosen line. God's preference for Isaac over Ishmael, or Jacob over Esau, is not motivated in the text by anything the rejected sons are said to have done.[34]

The Rabbis confront the distinction between the justifiable love that is within reason and the particularizing love that is beyond reason in the Mishnaic tractate Aboth, "Fathers", usually referred to so as to blur the distinction between philosophy and law as "Ethics of the Fathers":

כל אהבה שתלויה בדבר בטל דבר בטלה אהבה. ושאינה תלויה בדבר, אינה בטלה לעולם. אי זו היא אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר, זו אהבת אמנון ותמר. ושאינה תלויה בדבר, זו אהבת דוד ויונתן (אבות ה:טו)

> All love that is dependent on something (davar), when the thing is annulled the love is annulled. And love that is not dependent on a thing, will never ("in this world") be annulled. What is love that is dependent on something? This is the love of Amnon and Tamar. What is the love that is not dependent on anything? This is the love of David and Jonathan (Mishnah, Aboth 5:15).

This is a rejection of the Platonic formula that all love is love of something: according to the Rabbis, the highest form of love ought somehow to be independent of things. "Why do you love me?" she asks. Woe, woe, if her lover knows why.[35]

The Platonists are convinced that eternal love is based on shared love of eternal things. The Platonists have their say in Maimonides' commentary on this very Mishnah, or in Augustine's famous account in the City of God of how all human communities are held together by love of the same things.[36] Any attempt to explain the power of community in terms of shared "values" is likewise Platonizing dressed up in Nietzschean vocabulary. Our communities, and the patterns of relations within these communities which we call institutions, are in fact far more lasting than our transient value-commitments.[37]

The platonizers, of whatever stripe, fail to respect a fundamental distinction between types of human relations: relations whose existence depends on the reasons of the participants, and whose continued existence requires that these reasons continue to be valid, and relations in which the kind of reasons available to deliberate choice serve only to alter the expression or conduct of the relation

without being able to alter the fact of their being a relation. Susan Mendus describes this distinction thus:

> The distinction between, on the one hand, the person who promises to love and to honor but finds that, after a time, she has lost her commitment (perhaps on account of change in her husband's character), and, on the other hand, the person who promises to love and to honor only on condition that there be no such change in character. The former person may properly be said, under certain circumstances, to have given up a commitment; the latter person was never committed in the appropriate way at all.[38]

Mendus writes that "love is not love which allows in advance that it will so alter."[39] Her distinction is a distinction in intentions, between relations that are intended as conditional and those with no intended condition. The Rabbis are concerned with the de re distinction, between love which is in fact conditional on something we can point to, and love which is in fact not conditional on any particular fact about the world or the lovers. Mendus wants us to be willing to make unconditional commitments, the Rabbis want us to cease from meditating on conditions for the relations into which we are already living. Don't feel that something is missing, they counsel, if you don't have any particular beliefs about why your loved one is lovable: you don't want to make your tie to them contingent on the truth of a belief.[40] This is the objection to rationalism in the name of human nature: the existence of the community cannot be dependent just on shared things.

The Platonist is also right to an extent: some love is the love contingent on qualities, facts, or other predicates. This is why communities defend themselves against changes in opinion, lest their own ties of affection be overcome by newly presented facts.

The most profoundly rooted and lasting human relations frame rational action – that is, structure the arena for rational action – and so cannot be subordinated to the practices of acting reasonably that occur within them. Evaluations, justifications, and values are considered as reasons for action within a framework of human relations. This is not to say that these frameworks are

immutable, Mendus has explained to us, but it is to say that the activity of giving reasons, of reasoning together in speech, cannot explain or justify the alteration of these frameworks. In regard to the relations into which we are thrown, "what we find words for is that for which we no longer have use in our own hearts" as Nietzsche wrote.[41] It is not so much that our choices are constrained by our roles as citizen, parent, spouse, or child of elderly parents, as that the possibilities that constitute ethical life are themselves possibilities of these relations.

We turned from philosophy to Hebrew revelation to show the place of particularizing affection. Particularizing affection does not, we have seen, play a central role in the arguments of ancient writers on friendship. Yet the thrust of their arguments can only be understood once we reconstruct the conversational context, and in that conversational context particularizing affection is always present silently and sometimes explicitly. Our detour through Christian and Jewish thinking on love was necessary in order to bring into focus what for the ancient writers on friendship is present only as background, namely, the web of human relations in which each of us already lives. Some people are related to me in a way that is peculiar to me: they are my own. As Aristotle states in his critique of Platonic communism, in the Politics, "there are two [predicates] above all that make human beings care and love, being one's own and being worthy of liking."[42] The relations (philiai) in which we are thrown together with what is our own escape Nygren's dichotomy between eros and agapē. Unlike eros, these relations are not determined by the erotic desire to possess the beautiful for oneself. Unlike agapē, which does not discriminate, these relations are discriminations.

Family relationships are what John Cooper calls "the central cases of philia," and Aristotle himself speaks of family relations as phusikē philia, natural friendship.[43] Philia or friendship between brothers, parent and child, and so on, is not a fact about genetic relatedness but a lived relation: compare the difference between "sire" as posited of champion dogs, and "father." Our sense of belonging to a family does not presume that we expect to benefit by the relation, nor does it require that we see within the family circle potential partners in living together virtuously. Nor, of

course, does it seem plausible that a family stays together because its members receive pleasure from the relation. For Aristotle the relation to one's child is, or is like, a relation to oneself, not to another person, while the relation to a spouse is a political relation.[44]

Cooper goes on to assert that philia is a name for the affection that ought to arise in the relation rather than the relation itself, even though as he admits, the relation can be lived out even where the appropriate feelings are absent. When Aristotle discusses philia he seems to be discussing the way we live a relationship as part of our lives together. For Aristotle it is always better when acting appropriately to feel the appropriate feelings, no doubt, but the feelings of relatedness in themselves supervene on the relation, like feelings of pleasure supervening on pleasant actions, and do not constitute the relationship.

For the Greeks the civic relation, too, is one into which men are thrown, as it were. The civic relation is the only way that one man can be a philos (a personal friend) to many.[45] Socrates, for his part, frequently reaffirms his Athenian-ness, but never justifies it. Socrates says in the Apology that he loves the Athenians.[46] In the Protagoras, Socrates interprets a poem of Simonides as claiming that we ought to credit our actual ties, to our fathers or our city, even when they bind us to perverse relations.[47] The poet Simonides, Socrates says:

> believed that a gentleman often compels himself to become a friend and praiser of someone, for example when (as often happens) a perverse mother or father or fatherland befalls a man. The wicked, when something of this sort befalls them, by blaming both reveal and condemn the wickedness of their parents or their fatherland just as if they delighted to see it, in order that people don't call them out on the grounds that they are unconcerned about [their parents or their fatherland], although they are indeed unconcerned about them. Thus the wicked blame [their parents and fatherland] still more, and add willing to unwilling enmities. But the good compel themselves to issue praise, and cause [these faults] to be concealed. And if [the good]

> become angry in some way at their parents or their city when they are done injustice, they soothe themselves and are reconciled by compelling themselves to love their own and to praise them (Protagoras 345e6-346b5; my translation).

These relations, the civic and the familial, are regenerated continually by sharing in activities; otherwise these ties would dissipate as we interact with new people and form ties with them (cf. NE 8.8.3, 1159a27-28). Ethical obligation, as Plato and Aristotle depict it, arises out of these lived relationships. It is not relation to persons as such, but to persons as related to us in some way.

"The other", of modern philosophy, or as Seyla Benhabib calls it, "the generalized other," is a construct of reason . Modern philosophy attempts to "explain how the other becomes a fellow citizen, a friend, a lover."[48] The purpose of the ancient philosophers' protreptic discourses was to get their readers, who were citizens, sons, and fathers, to think about their lives by putting these relations into question. In that sense the accounts of friendship in Aristotle's ethical-political writings is not only Platonic in content but Platonic in purpose as well. It is left to Aristotle's reader to reconcile these justifications of his relations and their limits with the merely factual relations he lives. In the Platonic dialogues, justification is presented in the argument of the dialogue, while the limits of justification are presented in the action.

In Cicero, the dramatic context of his dialogues, rather than action within the dialogues, is used to show the limits of justification: Cicero sets the conversations about friendship and its place among our duties against two distinct if comparable backdrops: the crisis of the Roman Republic in Cicero's own time, the agrarian agitation in the days of the Gracchi and Scipio Africanus the Younger. In that fashion Cicero moderates in the whole of his dialogues the protreptic claim he had learned from the Greek philosophers, that only some human relations are justified by the goodness of those to whom we relate. Cicero contrasts that apparent philosophic subversion of the webs of relation with which we are woven to the reported response of Scipio Africanus and the recorded responses of Cicero and Brutus to their less-than-perfectly lovable friends, kinsmen, and fellow

Romans. Cicero leaves it to his readers to bring together the philosophical, Greek, thesis and the practical, Roman, antithesis

The distinction between framing relations -- friendships beyond reason -- and the framed relations -- friendships within reason -- is crucial for understanding the place and limits of the giving of reasons in speech within the full set of human relations. All human relations are mediated by language, but it is the peculiar hubris of philosophers to imagine that all should be mediated by communicated content. In particular, political communities are not dependent for their continued existence on shared reasons, shared interests, or shared values, but on a shared commitment to one another's welfare that we put beyond the shifting calculations of prudence. Nonetheless, ethical life is a struggle to fulfill this shared commitment by prudent and reasonable actions.

The project of ancient political philosophy was to understand the relations to which we are committed while leaving them in their place. To repeat Cicero's quotation from Xenocrates the Academic, the goal of a philosophic education is "to make the students do of their own accord that which they are commanded by the laws" – what Socrates called to become unwilling praisers of their fathers and cities.[49] "Even the most audacious of the schools … are constrained in the end to bow to the laws of society," Montaigne writes in the Apology for Raymond Sebond.[50] Yet "the dearest longing of our natures", as Allan Bloom calls it, is not to be reconciled to the loves we love but to find the words to justify our love.[51] Up through Montaigne the philosophers taught that only the highest form of friendship is fully rationalizable, and that highest form is available only to very few and is therefore exceedingly rare. The project of the moderns is to reconstruct relations in a fully rational way: friendship directed by an inclination toward a particular other, what Kant dared to call pathological love, no longer has any special place.[52]

We can therefore use friendship as a sign of the presence of ethical life as the ancients understood it. Ethical life is life together for the purpose of living well, for the purpose of happiness: it is the completion of human being in activity. The limited place of ethical life in our world does

not reflect a disagreement about the content of the ethical life so much as a disparagement of its importance and the importance of the relations within which ethical life is lived. In the contemporary world our life together is based on work, and on the progressive attainment of ever more complex works. The firm is a partnership of coworkers or collaborators, and produces in the interstices of the "job" office friendships, including office romances between colleagues who share a passion … for bug-free code. These relations do not, in general, survive transfers or retirement.[53] The work of research, in which we scholars are engaged, is organized primarily by the scientific society. A scientific society organizes human beings for the more efficient production of scientific papers.

It is a mistake to think that these collaborations, whether scientific or corporate, are motivated by utility, for the value of the work on the contemporary understanding is not determined solely by its utility, by its usefulness to particular human beings. Friends may necessary for a happy life, but we producers encourage ourselves with the words of Nietzsche's Zarathustra "Do I aspire to *happiness*? I aspire to *works*!"[54] Utilitarianism is itself subordinated twice over in our contemporary form of life: it is subordinated to the ever more intricate weaving of networks that bind together humans and things, and to the progressive emancipation of human beings from natural necessity.[55]

Notes

[1]Encounters and Reflections: Conversations with Seth Benardete, ed. Ronna Burger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 108.

[2]David Konstan, "Greek Friendship," American Journal of Philology 117 (1996):71-94; and see also Konstan, Friendship in the Classical World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 53-56, 67-72. At Eudemian Ethics 7.1.5, 1235a, aphilia or friendlessness is contrasted with living "with family, or with kin, or with age-mates, or children or parents or wife." In this paper it is the wider term, philia, which will be my main concern. Martha Nussbaum's objections to the traditional translation of philia as friendship, should, however be noted, most seriously that "Philia includes the very strongest and most intimate of our affective ties. We can say that two people are 'just friends'; no such thing could be said with philia"; Martha C. Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 328n, cf. p. 354.

[3]Nicomachean Ethics 4.6.1-5 (tr. modified from Ross).

[4]On Aristotle see e.g. John M. Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship" in Reason and Emotion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 320 n. 11.

[5]Jacques Derrida, The Politics of Friendship, tr. George Collins (London: Verso, 1997), p. 6. Derrida returns to the question "who is the friend" in the last chapter of The Politics of Friendship, where, by no coincidence, he touches for the only time on a view of love that is distinctively Jewish rather than Christian or philosophic.

[6]de amicitia 12.40; cf. de officiis 3.10.43-5, 3.23.90.

[7]de amicitia 17.61.

[8]Suzanne Stern-Gillet, Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 8.

[9]Martha C. Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 90.

[10]Elsewhere Nussbaum writes that "The best philos does seek repeatable traits of character in the object…. He seeks and attends to those repeatable traits… not as pieces of something homogeneous that turns up in many places in the universe, but as forming the essential core of what that concrete person is. He attends to virtues and aspirations because those are the deepest things that go to make another individual the individual he is. He searches not for isolable bits of a form, but for the combination of traits and aspirations that make up the wholeness of a person's character" (Fragility of Goodness, 357). Nussbaum's argument depends on eliding the distinction between character as a type and the individual person as an instantiation of that type. Such an elision may be tenable ethically and so defensible as protreptic rhetoric, but it is false ontologically; see my "Individual Narrative and Political Character," Review of Metaphysics 56(June 2002):691-709. The trouble is that Nussbaum treats Aristotle's "account of the value of love" (Fragility, 369) as if it were also an account of the etiology of love. I should add that Nussbaum addresses this difficulty, albeit with revealing obliqueness, in "Love and the Individual: Romantic Rightness and Platonic Aspiration," in Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); cf. also The Therapy of Desire, 67-8.

[11]EE 7.4.8, 1239a33-4; Derrida, Politics of Friendship, p. 9; Stern-Gillet herself admits this at pp. 71-2.

[12]Charles H. Kahn, "Aristotle and Altruism," Mind 90(1981):20-40, p. 23.

[13]See EE 7.2.2-3, 1235b.

[14]Francis Sparshott, Taking Life Seriously: a Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 22; italics omitted.

[15]See NE 8.3.2, 1156a6-24; Nussbaum, Fragility of Goodness, 357.

[16]Symposium 209b-212b; Gregory Vlastos, "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato," in Platonic Studies, second edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[17]NE 9.5.3, 1167a4-8; cf. Magna Moralia 2.12.8, 1212a.

[18]Susan Mendus, "Marital Faithfulness," in Alan Soble, ed., Eros, Agape, and Philia: Readings in the Philosophy of Love (New York: Paragon, 1989), p. 240

[19]Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship," p. 332.

[20]NE 8.6.2, 1158a; 9.10.5-6, 1171a.

[21]EE 7.4.8, 1239a33-4.

[22]John Brentlinger, "The Nature of Love" in Eros, Agape, Philia, p. 137.

[23]NE 8.3.9, 1156b; NE 8.5.5, 1157b; Elizabeth Telfer, "Friendship," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society (1971):223-241, p. 225; cited by Stern-Gillet, Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship, p. 63; Montaigne, "De l'amitié" in The Complete Essays, tr. M. A. Screech (London and New York: Penguin, 1993), p. 212; Derrida, Politics of Friendship, p. 392.

[24]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile (New York: Basic Books, 1979), tr. Allan Bloom, p. 391; Allan Bloom, Love and Friendship (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), pp. 112-13.

[25]Republic 474c-475a.

[26]See McTaggart's demonstration that "neither pleasure … nor approbation, nor benevolence, nor sympathy, is always found with love"; John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart, The Nature of Existence, chapter XLI, §§460-464 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 2:148-151.

[27]de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, p. 226.

[28]The only serious effort I have found so far to explain the personalizing element of love is in Stendhal's "physiological" treatise On Love: one admires someone for their genuinely admirable qualities, or at least "the course of beauty must not be interrupted by ugliness." One then anticipates the pleasures of the relation, and then, as soon as one (justifiably or otherwise) sees some hope of reaping those pleasures with this person, "love is born." One then proceeds to add all sorts of

imagined perfections to the love, a process for which Stendhal coins the term "crystallization", comparing it to the crystallization of glittering salt-crystals on an old dry twig in an abandoned salt mine; Stendhal, On Love, tr. H. B. V. under the direction of C. K. Scott-Moncrief, with a new introduction by Judith Martin (New York: Da Capo, 1983), pp. 5-9, 14-15, 29, 359-371.

[29]Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, tr. Philip S. Watson (New York: Harper and Row, 1969; originally published 1930-36), p. 76.

[30]Agape and Eros, p. 210; emphasis in original.

[31]James V. Schall, "Friendship and Political Philosophy," The Review of Metaphysics 50 (1996):121-141, p. 131.

[32]See e.g. Thomas McCarthy's response to Derrida's lecture "The Politics of Friendship," "On the Margins of Politics," The Journal of Philosophy 85 (1988):645-648; Fred Dallmayr, "Derrida and Friendship," in Love and Friendship: Rethinking Politics and Affection in Modern Times, ed. Eduardo Velásquez (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003), p. 549. For a critique of the Kantian claim, albeit mixed with an excessive degree of voluntarism about human relations, see Wilson Carey McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), esp. pp. 48-49.

[33]Agape and Eros, p. 63. On the comparison between the Christian and Hebrew Bibles see also Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), pp. 66-69; cited by Lorraine Smith Pangle, Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.201 n. 5. Shaftesbury quotes the "learned and pious" Bishop Taylor, "the word friendship in the sense we commonly mean by it, is not so much as named in the New Testament, and our religion takes no note of it" (p. 67 n. 1)

[34]The Rabbis as mythical interpreters of the Bible wish to rationalize God's choices, by retailing us myths about the sins and the vices of both Ishmael and Esau. Every beloved wants to believe that he or she is worthy of the love that he or she receives.

[35]I owe this illustration to a sermon preached by Rabbi Shmuel Krauthammer, Rabbi of Young Israel of Petah Tiqwa, Israel, on the fifth Sabbath after Passover 5761, the Sabbath when the fifth chapter of Aboth is customarily studied.

[36]City of God 19.24.

[37]See J. Enoch Powell and Keith Wallis, The House of Lords in the Middle Ages (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), xi.

[38]Mendus, "Marital Faithfulness," p. 238.

[39]Mendus, "Marital Faithfulness," p. 241. Cf. Emil Bruner: "The formula for love is not: I love you because you are thus – and we might add: as long as you are thus"; Emil Bruner, Eros und Liebe (Berlin, 1937), p. 26, quoted in Josef Pieper, On Love, tr. Richard and Clara Winston (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), p. 55.

[40]Cf. Nietzsche's command to be silent about one's friend, lest one talk away the friendship; Human All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits, tr. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Assorted Opinions and Maxims § 252; Derrida, Politics of Friendship, pp. 53-4.

[41]Quoted without a reference by Kenneth Burke, Counterstatement (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968; original edition 1931), p. 62.

[42]Politics 1262b22-3; my understanding of this statement follows the "weaker reading" rejected by Nancy Sherman, though it is Sherman who drew my attention to this passage; Nancy Sherman, The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 146.

[43]NE 8.14.4, 1163b. Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship," p. 313, n. 3.

[44]NE 5.6.8-9, 1134b.

[45]NE 9.10.6, 1171a. On the distinction in semantic range between philos and philia see note 43 above.

[46]Apology 30a.

[47] This passage in the Protagoras should be compared with the passages in the Gorgias in which Socrates contends that rhetoric's proper use is not to conceal the injustice of oneself and those to whom one is related but to indict them when they do injustice; Gorgias 480b-d, 508bc, 527c; James L. Kastely, "In Defense of Plato's Gorgias," PMLA 106(January 1991):96-109. It is the same problematic of how to properly praise or blame those with whom one is thrown together, but described with opposite polarities.

[48]Seyla Benhabib, Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics (New York: Routledge, 1992); Bloom, Love and Friendship, p. 261

[49]Cicero, de re publica 1.2.3.

[50]Michel de Montaigne, Complete Essays, p. 572.

[51]Bloom, Love and Friendship, p. 275.

[52]Critique of Practical Reason 5:83; Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals 4:399, Metaphysics of Morals 6:451, 471; Nussbaum, Love's Knwoledge, 337. Derrida asks, more than a little plaintively, at the end of The Politics of Friendship, "Is it possible to think and to implement democracy, that which would keep the old name 'democracy', while uprooting from it the all these figures of friendship (philosophical and religious) which prescribe fraternity: the family and the androcentric ethnic group?'" (306). As Derrida indicates throughout the book, to give a positive answer to his question, to claim that democracy without imagined kinship is possible, requires that the very concept of possibility be explicated in way incompatible with the understandings offered in the Western philosophical tradition; see e.g. p. 67, and "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides – a Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," in Giovanna Borradori, Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 115, 134. Intellectually this is probably the weakest point in Derrida's project or hope.

[53]See Horst Hutter, Politics and Friendship (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978), pp. 182-3. Sibyl Schwartzenbach emphasizes the displacement of the ethical by the productive, but she

seems to think that identifying the decline of friendship as due to the influence of what she calls "the ideology of productivity" is sufficient to refute that ideology. As the greatest critic of the productive ideal, Karl Marx, well knew, the productive achievements of the bourgeoisie are so magnificent that mere name-calling will not be enough to convince us to revalue the ethical; Sibyl A. Schwartzenbach, "On Civic Friendship," Ethics 107 (October 1996):97-128, esp. pp. 111-12, 124.

[54]Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, part IV, "The Sign"; as translated by Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge, 308.

[55]An earlier version of this paper was delivered at a panel on "Friends, Enemies, and Democracy" at the 2003 Western Political Science Association. I would like to thank my fellow panelists Todd Breyfogle, Corey Abel, Richard Avramenko, and John von Heyking for their comments, my Princeton Human Values colleague Arlene Saxonhouse for useful criticisms, and Richard Velkley for encouragement. I would also like to thank Nathalie Moise for research assistance, and Anna Kochin for her comments and suggestions. Research for this paper was supported by a Laurance S. Rockefeller Fellowship from Princeton University, and by a Dan David Scholarship from the Dan David Prize.