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The Phantasia of Friendship in Aristotle: Friendship and Self-Reflection

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ABSTRACT

Friendship, as defined by Aristotle, provides an opportunity for valuable self-reflection. The faculty that provides this self-reflection opportunity is *phantasia* (imagination). First, through an examination of Aristotle's writings on friendship, the differences between the three tiers of friendship come to light. The strengths and weaknesses of the first two become clear, and it can be seen how all three build up to the third and strongest type. After the third type is established, it has to be developed through sharing activities and spending time together. During this shared activity, the friends start to learn new things about themselves that they may not have learned before. Phantasia shows how this new self-knowledge comes about. Phantasia acts as an echo effect, where the friend receives new information about themselves through the activities they perform together. This has to happen in the context of friendship because of the emotional connection that comes with friendship. Phantasia expands and enriches one's concept of one's self, making clear one's good qualities and virtues. This connection between friendship and phantasia shows why Aristotle sees friendship as a beneficial thing, and the greatest of all external goods.

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1.

Introduction

Spending time with friends assists people in seeing the goodness inside themselves, and Aristotle's concept of *phantasia* (imagination) is necessary to understand this concept. Figuring out how this connection works requires an examination of both topics separately before analyzing how they perform together. Friendship resolves any inner conflicts one might have about their self-image, through the viewpoint of their friend, or as Aristotle puts it, a "second self." Generally, most people would agree that having friends is one of the more enjoyable components of life. Having friends who truly understand and connect offers many benefits for those involved, including restorative ones. For example, Danielle Allen, in her book, *Talking to Strangers*, states that "both friendship and justice cultivate habits of resolution" (Allen 126). Friendship serves as a tool for resolution, and viewing friendship this way starts a conversation about friendship's ability to resolve internal conflicts. That is, spending time with friends permits one to obtain a better vision of one's self. Through friendship, one starts to see their good qualities, when it may not have been clear before. Understanding friendship as something restorative needs Aristotle's understanding of both friendship and *phantasia*. When analyzing these concepts together, it becomes clear that through spending a lot of time with one's friends and sharing in activities, one's good qualities start to reveal themselves.

Aristotle's philosophical body dedicates much time to explaining the importance and functions of friendship, as well as *phantasia*. Friendship is important to human life and Aristotle breaks down this importance in his works on ethics. However, questions and conversations about this importance began before Aristotle wrote his works on ethics. In many ways, Aristotle

responds to and references questions/issues surrounding friendship raised by his predecessor and teacher Plato, in the *Lysis*. Talking about Plato's earlier works on friendship further contextualizes Aristotle's later writings. In *Lysis*, Socrates asks if friends are drawn to each other based on being similar or opposite. Later, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle references this dilemma at the beginning of book VIII (*EN* 1155a. 30-35). In that section, he asks if friendship is between opposites or between similar people. He then probes whether friendship is specific to good people or if it occurs among corrupt people as well (*EN* 1155b. 10). Overall, one of Aristotle's main arguments for this portion of his ethics is that "no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all the other good things" (*EN* 1155a. 4-5).

Aristotle claims, then, that friendship is the greatest of external goods, and plays a huge role in making life so meaningful. Part of this idea stems from friends wishing each other good for their own sake. The starting point for these sentiments is mutual, recognized goodwill. If feelings of goodwill persist, then the relationship becomes a friendship where the two "live together" (*suzên*), which means that they share in activities. Philosopher John Cooper explains that sharing activities with another virtuous individual proves very important for flourishing, since "a human being cannot have a flourishing life except by having intimate friends to whom he is attached precisely on account of their good qualities of character...it is only with such persons that he can share the moral activities that are most central to his life" (Cooper 309). Friendship facilitates a flourishing life through the opportunities to jointly perform virtuous activities. Perhaps one of the most poignant points Aristotle makes about friendship comes when he explains that the features of friendship derive from the good man's relationship with himself, "since his friend is another himself" (*EN* 1166a. 1-3). If a friend is a second self, they provide an accurate view of the other person to themselves. This point proves to be extremely important since

it leads to the idea that friendship has the function of strengthening one's self-conception, permitting inner goodness to be sharply seen. Knowing a friend allows one to better understand and see oneself.

Additionally throughout his corpus, Aristotle writes a lot about *phantasia's* role in facilitating mental images and visions. Book III of *De Anima* differentiates this concept from other psychological functions, such as perception and supposition. Aristotle declares that "visions appear even to those who have their eyes shut" (*DA* 428a.15-16). This remark is important because it shows that *Phantasia* is a special power within the body; it does not need a present sense object to produce the image of one in one's mind. To further explain *phantasia* Aristotle states, "Imagination cannot occur without perception, nor supposition without imagination" (*DA* 427b. 18-19). Here, Aristotle shows that *phantasia* has a sort of intermediate role between thinking and perception; it cannot imagine anything without having previously perceived that thing. He also highlights that this is a function performed by humans and animals alike. To further prove that *phantasia* is not supposition, "Imagination is also something different from assertion or negation – for it is the combination of thoughts that is true or false" (*DA* 423a. 12-14). *Phantasia*, then, plays a very important role in many areas of human life.

Because of the visual nature of *Phantasia*, it has been compared and combined with many other subjects that Aristotle has written about. For example, *Phantasia* has been used to explain human actions: "It looks as though its job is to present the perceived or thought object to the creature in such a way that it can be moved to act" (Nussbaum 233). Similar to Aristotle's quote about *phantasia* acting as the base for supposition, Nussbaum argues that *phantasia* plays a similar role in terms of movement and action. *Phantasia* has also been connected to Aristotle's treatise, *Rhetoric*. For example, Ned O'Gorman, argues, "Lexis, these associations indicate, has

to do with ‘what appears’ through language” (O’Gorman 23). Here, it is pointed out that Aristotle’s arguments and writings on rhetoric incorporate *phantasia*. Aristotle believes that much of life – acting, speaking, thinking – depends crucially on *phantasia*.

When one perceives their friend’s good actions or characteristics, it prompts them to reconsider and reflect on their view of themselves and helps them see that they have these good qualities as well. A perspective from Aristotle scholar Victor Caston helps demonstrate this claim. He argues that *phantasia* might be understood as an echo of an initial sense perception. Using this concept of an echo explains the relationship between sharing life with one’s friends and the expansion of one’s self-perception. In this case, the echo is the triggered self-reflection one experiences. Additionally, it must be a friend from whom one gains this echo. This factor stems from the deeper emotional connection that friends possess, it makes the self-realizations more meaningful. Having this connection is especially important for the echo of *Phantasia* within friendship to work: holding a friend in such regard makes the renewed self-reflection more meaningful.

After furthering the concept of *phantasia* as an echo, the restorative aspect of friendship is more apparent. From this perception of a friend’s existence comes what Caston describes as “...a lingering echo of sensation” (Caston 54) and the echoing is “...of the initial simulation in the sense organs: a side effect, like the original simulation in character” (Caston 47). Caston elaborates on this echoing sensation by using an example of someone shouting in a canyon, where the shout is heard multiple times due to the disturbances in the air. Similarly, when a friend perceives the existence of their other friend, they experience this echoing sensation, and it reminds them that their friend also feels delighted in their existence. After this happens, the added, pleasurable benefit is that the friend gains a new perspective/understanding of themselves,

through the eyes of the other. Combining the ideas of sharing a life with one's friend and the echoing of phantasia demonstrates that being friends with someone and perceiving their activities helps one understand that they too share those admirable traits. Thus, when phantasia works within the context of friendship, it reveals the good traits in someone that they may not have been able to see before. Witnessing the good actions of a friend assists one in perceiving those same capabilities in oneself. This general outline will be further developed throughout this project.

One of the benefits of friendship is seeing the good in yourself through spending time with one's friends, and the echoing effect of phantasia is necessary for this to occur; the echo of phantasia prompts one to evaluate and reflect on their lives due to a friend's actions and characteristics. If phantasia was not involved, the friends involved would not be able to imagine or see what is not physically present. For my argument, I will primarily focus on how these dynamics work in a friendship based on virtue, or the third type of friendship, as this seems most pertinent to those kinds of relationships. My argument will begin with an in-depth examination of friendship as Aristotle describes it, beginning with the three objects of friendship, moving to the concept of living together with friends, and then finishing with scholarly commentary on friendship's effects on one's self-perception. Then, I will conduct an overview of phantasia, describing its basic outlines it, talking about its connections with Aristotle's treatise, *Rhetoric*, and then talking about its connections with human action. Finally, I will analyze the connection between the two to show how phantasia explains the desirability found within friendship, and explain why this phenomenon only occurs in the context of friendship. Additionally, throughout each chapter, I will use a literary example to demonstrate the concept from Aristotle's philosophy that I am talking about.

2.

Friendship

The first step in this argument is differentiating between the three different types of friendship, showing why the third type needs a shared life to fully develop, and then establishing why a shared life is linked to improved self-perception. Understanding how friendship works is the first step to comprehending why it is restorative. Outlining the general role and functions of friendship initially reveals the benefits that people gain from friendships. Aristotle says there are three types of friendship and lists the different objects of love: the useful, the pleasant, and the good (*EN* 1155b.18). Since there are three objects of love, accordingly, there exist three types of friendship. For the first form, friendships of utility, the relationship only lasts insofar that the two remain useful to each other, and Aristotle states, “Utility indeed does not endure, but differs from time to time” (*EN* 1156a. 20). He shows that these relationships are very unstable and only last as long as there is still usefulness to be found. Lorraine Pangle argues that these relationships seem the farthest away from actual friendships, and are often found between opposites (Pangle 40). The first friendship form Aristotle analyzes appears the weakest of them all, due to its instability and tendency to last only a short while.

After explaining utility as an object of love and a form of friendship, he states the next type of friendship: those based on pleasure. Earlier in his works on ethics, Aristotle describes pleasure as an unimpeded activity of a natural state (*EN* 1153a7-17); meaning that pleasure always brings about “good” feelings. Moreover, these types of friendships are common among young people, which is part of what results in them not lasting as long. Aristotle states “...accordingly, they are changeable, for as their characters change as they grow up, so too do

their pleasures” (*EE* 1236b.1-2). These friendships do seem to be closer to true friendships, as explained by Pangle “...the sharing of pleasure gives life a sweetness that can be attained in no other way” (Pangle 40). This attribute of “pleasure friendships” shows that there is something more unique and interesting about these relationships; they permit a more emotional and sentimental connection than utility friendships. Having this deeper, sentimental connection gives the benefit of having a more personal relationship with a friend. While friendships of pleasure seem to have a stronger foundation than friendships of utility, they still are not as strong as the third type.

After pointing out the two more common, but more weak and unstable, relationships, Aristotle moves on to the strongest (but longest to establish) of them all: friendships with a foundation of virtue. In these relationships, “..each alike wishes good things to the other insofar as he is good, and each is intrinsically good” (*EN* 1156b. 8). Aristotle states that, in these cases, the object of friendship is virtue. In contrast to the first type of friendship where the friendship runs its course once the usefulness has been depleted, the two are constantly wishing good things to the other for their own sake. And, while friendships of pleasure provide a stronger base for friendship, virtue proves to be even better because of its steadfastness. Because of these qualifications Aristotle has in mind, it becomes clear that these types of relationships are very rare. This rarity is because of the time that these friendships require to fully develop (*EE* 1237b. 15-20), and “Primary friendship, therefore, is not something that extends to a large number, since it is difficult to make trial of many people” (*EE* 1237b. 35). In other words, relationships can not be replicated with many people throughout one’s lifetime, rather each person may only have a few instances of these relationships. Friendship, as Aristotle explains, begins as mutual goodwill (though it also must be recognized by the involved parties). Though this mutual goodwill is the

starting point, Theodore Tracy says it evolves into true friendship when it progresses to this point:

...(1) recogniz[ing] the other's goodness, not just objectively but as relevant to himself, and (2) not only wishes the other well but wants to implement that by actively doing good to the other for the other's sake, i.e., by conferring such benefits upon the other which will preserve or increase the other's intrinsic goodness. (Tracy 68)

In this passage, Tracy explains that, to move from mutual, recognized goodwill, one must see the ways that person is particularly good. From there, a friend performs activities that are best equipped to protect and promote the other's goodness. This view of friendship formation illuminates Aristotle's reasoning for the lengthy development and limited nature of the strongest friendships; there has to be a mutual understanding between the friends. The two need to spend significant time together to have a complete and perfected view of the other's intrinsically good qualities. Because of these qualifications, it seems unlikely that these friendships could be replicated among a large group of people.

It is necessary to understand these three forms of friendship to see why the expansion of self-knowledge comes from the third type since the third is ultimately the strongest and contains the best elements of the tiers below it. If this strength of virtue friendships is not explained, then it will be less apparent that friendships of virtue could have such a profound impact on one's self-view. The third type still contains elements of the lower two types, and Aristotle scholars have seen how the other two progress to the third form. Friends are still useful to each other in this third type, but the benefits last longer since the two constantly wish each other good for their own sake. Additionally, Pangle explains that companionship is still pleasant because the relationship should be desirable (Pangle 50). This desire for pleasure within friendship means

“the real heart of friendship lies less in contemplation or admiration than in an active exchange of pleasures or benefits, in an intimate sharing of activities, and in perhaps the vague confidence that the other will somehow always be there for one when one needs him” (Pangle 50). The key point from this quote is that friendship is something unimpeded and active. This aspect is important because it demonstrates that friendship involves actions, which becomes important when discussing how a friend’s actions affect one’s self-view. Sharing activities is the next step for understanding why the third type of friendship expands one’s self-conception.

Through sharing a life, friends perform virtuous activities together. Nancy Sherman further explains this concept, “Thus the best sort of friendship provides us with companions with whom we can share goods and interests in a jointly pursued life” (Sherman 596). As explained in this quotation, friends create a life together based on shared goods and interests. This dynamic shows that living together goes beyond simply being physically close to another person; they jointly engage in activities that contribute to their flourishing. This is why it becomes important that friends love each other for their virtue, they need someone alike in virtue to them to properly share activities and live together. Liu further interprets Aristotle’s concept of living together to mean “...we think about our friends when they are not around, we wonder what they would think about something that happened at work, we see something they might like and remind ourselves to tell them about it later” (Liu 594). In this regard, friends have intertwining lives, they see and think of each other even when one is not physically present. This intertwinement is important because it shows how heavily friendships affect the way one lives and perceives oneself. Next, Sherman says having this dynamic in a friendship permits “...such friends [to] promote each other’s good in a privileged way (as only another self can), but in a way that is mindful of the mature rational agency of each” (Sherman 607). Since the friends spend so much time together,

and are similar in terms of virtue, they have a stronger knowledge of what the other person's needs are to help them see the good they can perform, but still allow them the space to do it on their own. Due to their knowledge gained from spending so much time with their friends, and thinking of them throughout day-to-day life, they are better equipped to continue performing virtuous actions with their friends.

After establishing the lower types' presence in the third, it appears important to show how the third type of friendship is present throughout people's lives. It is necessary to explain this presence because it shows how perfect friendships start to impact one's self-view. This third type of friendship, then, is very limited and needs time to develop, and they progress through 'living together' (*suzên*), or sharing activities. Further explaining the concept of living together provides valuable material about how friendships based on virtue are still pleasant for the two involved because, as stated by Zena Hitz "in the best lives, a friend is not an external good but an integrated improvement to one's own activity" (Hitz 7). When friends share activities, they become improved compared to when one completes them on their own. The improvement, in my view, is that it expands one's knowledge of perception of oneself. This improvement only comes about through living together and sharing activities with a friend. Sharing of activities is what provides the initial stimulus for the echo of phantasia in friendship, which affects one's perception of oneself to create pleasure within the relationship, to occur in the first place. Thus, friendship provides opportunities for valuable self-reflection, like friends holding mirrors to each other.

Ultimately, sharing one's life with a friend impacts one's perception of oneself, and starts building to phantasia's connection to friendship. For example, Sherman argues "Aristotle suggests that we learn about ourselves by having another self before us whose similar actions

and traits we can study from a more detached and objective point of view” (Sherman 610). When one sees their friend’s behavior and actions through living together, they are given a chance to compare their conduct to that of their friend. This comparison results in them knowing their actions better and assists them in deciding the kind of life they want to live. From this view, a friend serves as a base for self-reflection and a model for aspiration. Sherman argues that this action results in “...a vision of ourselves that is more resolute and definite than our purely internalized view allows” (Sherman 611). Through sharing a life with a close friend, one can see more clearly their strengths, weaknesses, boundaries, etc., than by simply reflecting and analyzing themselves in solitude. This comparative aspect connects with phantasia because it permits one to start visualizing aspects of themselves that they may not have seen or understood before.

An example of this expansion of self-perception/knowledge comes from *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen, published in 1814. This specific example depicts an interaction between words of reassurance given to the protagonist Fanny Price by her cousin Edmund Bertram:

There is no reason in the world why you should not be important where you are known. You have good sense, and a sweet temper, and I am sure you have a grateful heart, that could never receive kindness without wishing to return it. I do not know any better qualifications for a friend and companion. (Austen 21)

This passage shows how, through the sharing of activities, Edmund has gained a fuller sense of Fanny’s personality and traits and, in return, makes them more known to her. He reassures her of her importance in a world where she is little regarded by the wealthy people around her. Edmund deems her to be, as phrased by Benjamin Bagley, “...[a person that is both] knowable and endlessly interesting and surprising” (Bagley 507). That is to say, Edmund recognizes Fanny as

someone who possesses the good, stable qualities that are needed in friendship, and still sees her as someone that he wants to continuously share his life with as a companion. Having a friend in this way allows for a new, expanded notion of self-knowledge, which continuously evolves throughout the friendship. The following quotation from Hitz illuminates this self-knowledge expansion, "...once knowledge is acquired by a person, in thinking that knowledge he thinks himself, in that he thinks something that has been incorporated into him" (Hitz 17). When one shares their life with a friend and compares/contemplates their actions alongside those of their friend, they gain new knowledge that becomes incorporated into them, and they carry it with them throughout their lives. Thus, they are constantly building themselves throughout a friendship. After Edmund's statement of reassurance, Fanny can incorporate this new knowledge into her sense of self.

Overall, while pleasure and utility rank below perfect friendship, there are still aspects of the former found in the latter, which emphasizes that this third kind is the strongest form. Tracy states the beneficial nature of friendship is found in its "...[necessity], for carrying on best the activities which are essential to human happiness" (Tracy 74). Their usefulness or utility is made apparent through their role in facilitating virtuous activities. The way pleasure works in perfect friendships is slightly different, however. For a friendship to exist, the companionship must be pleasant (Pangle 55). Pleasure is central to friendship, but a friendship solely based on that cannot survive. Since these explanations and analyses of the other types of friendship prove that the third type is the strongest, it is then developed through sharing a life. When sharing a life with someone, people are granted more opportunities to analyze their actions and experiences, than they would if they just thought about them on their own. Now that the importance of sharing

a life in the strongest form of friendship has been explained, it is important to show how phantasia is the mediating force that permits this phenomenon to occur.

3.

Phantasia

Phantasia creates an opportunity for people to see a better image of themselves, especially in the context of perfect friendships. Phantasia grants people the ability to see things that one normally could not; it gives people the ability to see beyond what they have in front of them. It is because of this visualization aspect that phantasia permits friendship to be understood as restorative. Spending time with friends opens up an opportunity for phantasia to occur, but in friendship it allows people to see into themselves. They start to see the qualities and virtues they may not have realized they had. Returning to Allen's point about resolution, phantasia is the faculty that connects friendship to resolution. Phantasia is the tool that allows one to see themselves as a whole image. Aristotle's *De Anima* begins with questions surrounding animal movement and then discusses the idea of perception (aisthesis) and 'phantasia,' commonly translated as imagination. This progression is a common technique/move in ancient writing since animals offer a diverse category in which writers could work. When discussing the role and operations of phantasia, he differentiates it from regular thought and *aisthesis*, which means perception. Additionally, he emphasizes that phantasia does not need to have an object of perception to occur. "For it lies in our power to be affected by imagination whenever we wish—one can produce something before the eyes" (*DA* 427b.20-22). In this sentence, Aristotle states that phantasia possesses more of a voluntary aspect than other psychological functions. Aristotle formulates that phantasia has the power to be both true and false.

Phantasia starts with the sensation and the perception of a sensible object. Aristotle defines phantasia as "...a motion arising from the activity of sensation" (*DA* 429a.1-2). When one

perceives an object, their senses receive the object, without any of the matter. After the reception, the agent differentiates between the received matter and other stored away matter. Kenneth Tumbull describes phantasia as "... a tracing of the sense-qualities passively received *via* proper sensation...that activity by which images of sensible objects as wholes or unities arise in us. Such images are detachable from the presence of the sensible object, and hence these images may be remembered" (Tumbull 328). This quotation connects well with Aristotle positing that "Imagination cannot occur without perception, nor supposition without imagination" (*DA* 427b. 17-18). First, the mind receives the 'tracing' of the relevant sense object. The use of the noun 'tracing' clarifies that imagination utilizes perception as its foundation; the qualities of the sense object leave an 'imprint' on the mind. From there, the image can now be recalled without the original sense material present. This recalling of sense material permits the original sense-material to be augmented by the agent. When this augmentation or expansion occurs in the context of perfect friendships, one perceives their friend displaying a certain quality or performing a certain action, then expands (or echoes) the perception by relating it to their own life and seeing how they exemplify that certain quality in their own life.

A literary example that helps illuminate this process initially comes from Henry James's novel, *The Portrait of a Lady*, originally published in 1881. In this particular moment of the novel, the protagonist, Isabel Archer, is traversing the streets of Rome, and reflecting upon the profound impact the environment is having on her:

She had always been fond of history, and here was history in the stones of the street and the atoms of the sunshine. She had an imagination that kindled at the mention of great deeds, and wherever she turned some great deed had been acted. These things strongly moved her, but moved her all inwardly. (James 304)

In this passage, Isabel experiences the movement arising from perception. First, she visually perceives her surroundings in this iconic city, e.g., the stones of the street, the sunshine, buildings, etc. After receiving the sense materials, Isabel connects them with the historical nature of Rome, and makes the images “whole”; that is, she utilizes the tracing aspect of phantasia to fill in the images she sees of Rome, taking them beyond what she can physically experience. All of these aspects culminate in the final line of the passage, where James states that it “moved her inwardly.” That line in particular reflects the notion that imagination is, primarily, an inward movement that occurs after observing a sensible object. Ultimately, this passage proves O’Gorman’s idea, “Phantasia is a distinct part of the psychê, essential to all animal action and human thought, including deliberation, contemplation, and creativity” (O’Gorman 22). Isabel, to accurately contemplate and deliberate upon the perceived materials, had to envision beyond what was present to her. Connecting the seemingly regular objects around her to the rich history of the city allows Isabel to use her creativity to further reflect on the significance of the ground she is standing on.

While sensible objects are one method of tracing and echoing phantasia, others have begun to theorize the way words and rhetorical skills result in the same action. It is important to analyze this understanding of phantasia since it connects well with what kind of tracings one picks up from spending time with friends. This theory primarily relies on combining ideas from *De Anima* and *Rhetoric*. The purpose of doing this, according to Debra Hawhee, is “...to notice the ways that language interacts with vision directly” (Hawhee 140). Through this practice, truly powerful and effective speakers can effectively persuade their audience, and according to Aristotle in *Rhetoric*, “A means of persuasion is a sort of demonstration” (*Rh.*1355a.4). This definition’s use of the word ‘demonstration’ shows the

important role phantasia plays in the general field of rhetoric and persuasion. A clear way to demonstrate the connection between language and vision comes from linking *Rhetoric* Book II's focus on emotions (pathē) to phantasia. This connection is especially useful for persuasive rhetoric because "...things do not seem the same to those who are friendly and those who are hostile" (*Rh.* 1377b. 31-32). This quotation from *Rhetoric* connects very well with phantasia because "...appearances created through a combination of words and actions, are frequently filtered through the pathē, the feeling side of rhetoric" (Hawhee 150). A good example of this connection comes from book II.4 of *Rhetoric*, where Aristotle defines feelings of friendship and friendliness. He does it in this way:

Let being friendly, then, be wishing for someone what one thinks to be good things, for his sake not for one's own, and to be productive in the action of such things so far as one can. (*Rh.* 1381b35-1381a1)

The ideas about friendship expressed here are very similar to the ones he stated in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics*. The other emotions he includes directly relate to pleasure and pain, while friendship is more related to desiring another person's sake instead of one's own. Christof Rapp says it is very interesting that Aristotle includes friendship/philia as an emotion in book II, because "...it is the only emotion defined as a kind of wanting" (Rapp 13). Rapp further states that friendship is more complicated than this since "As soon as we are concerned about our friends, we cannot avoid feeling pleasure and pain about the things that happen to them" (Rapp 15). People become concerned with/connected to their friends through mutually recognized goodwill.

Aristotle's definition of friendship in *Rhetoric* gives an interesting take on the origins of friendship and restorativeness. The concept of self-knowledge is still present in this definition of

friendship from Aristotle “...those who praise the good qualities that belong to us, and of these, especially the ones that we are afraid may not belong to us” (*Rh.* 1381a35-1381b1). In this passage, Aristotle explains that people desire to express friendship towards people who point out and reassure them of their intrinsic goodness. Additionally, in this situation, friends help the other see a truer better version of themselves that they may have not seen originally. Friendship/feelings of friendliness begin with mutually recognized goodwill, then moving to actively work to promote good for the other for their own sake. This definition is important to discuss because it shows how friendship starts to give people a new perspective on themselves. Using the tracing of a friend’s words or actions start to build one’s more complete thought of themself.

The idea that friends help each other see a more true or expanded vision of themselves is very important to establish at this point. It correlates with the earlier discussed concept of sharing activities and how that generates increased self-knowledge. This ‘expansion’ of oneself is the starting point of the pleasure that comes with complete friendships. Recall the earlier quote from Tumball about unities and wholes with phantasia. Similar to the earlier passage where Isabel Archer imagines a more complete and enriched idea of Rome, phantasia in the context of complete friendship facilitates a process where one continuously builds a more complete image of oneself in their mind. The process is unimpeded because of the shared life and activities in which friends partake.

Phantasia leads to a movement, whether the image comes from the memory or dim perception of external sensible objects or as a result of rhetoric, as described in the rhetorical visions theory. This movement establishes phantasia’s connection with desire because “It looks as though its job is to present the perceived or thought object to the creature in such a way that it is moved to act” (Nussbaum 233). For example, one may imagine a version of themselves that is

much more virtuous than they currently are at the moment, and then choose to work towards becoming a better version of themselves. It can also work in the political sense, where a group “...invokes an image of who [they] really are and by projecting this image into a potential future” (Schwartz 7). The fact that the ‘image’ is of “who they really are” is particularly interesting when viewed against the background of the dynamics of friendship. Referring back to *Rh.*1318a35-1381b1, friends praise the other’s good traits/qualities to make them more apparent to the other person. Combining these two views results in the friends casting positive views onto the other, improving “...the experience we have of ourselves” (Pangle 148). Pangle’s use of the word experience, here, is interesting because the word itself relates to obtaining knowledge. Therefore, this quotation shows that spending time with friends results in increased knowledge of oneself.

Specifically tied with the feelings of friendship in *Rhetoric*, friendship and living together with one’s friends creates a space where one’s good qualities are made known. Thus, phantasia has a function of revealing oneself through the eyes of another. When two friends connect emotionally, they both have someone who makes their goodness seem to themselves. It makes them more aware of how they’re viewed by others and sharpens what they think of themselves, expanding their self-knowledge. Phantasia’s function, in this regard, is extremely important for friendship because “...one recognizes the quality of one’s character and one’s own life by seeing it reflected, as in a mirror, in one’s friend” (Cooper 299). The friend reflects the true nature of the other person, which may be hard to see alone in some circumstances. This culminates in inspiring action and “...[enabling] animals to act in ways that go beyond the immediate promptings of their environment” (Caston 54). In Caston’s view, phantasia inspires animals/humans to go beyond the present sense of materials in their surroundings. With the role of

friendship in self-understanding and the feelings it elicits, someone with a true friend, can feel inspired to see themselves beyond their current and incomplete understanding that they currently possess.

4.

Friendship and Phantasia Synthesis

Phantasia is the mediating capacity that links friendship to self-knowledge, specifically when it is viewed as an echo of the initial sense-perception. Initially, Aristotle began his writings about friendship by differentiating the three tiers of friendship: utility, pleasure, and virtue. Then, living together with a friend grants opportunities to better examine one's own actions than one would have in solitude. This sharing of activities permits expanded self-knowledge in friends. Phantasia, and its connection with writings on emotions, show how friendship provides an opportunity to see oneself through the eyes of another, further establishing . Combining these two ideas demonstrates that phantasia explains why friendship helps one see the goodness in oneself.

First, I will offer a summary of how the connection of phantasia and friendship works, before going more in depth into the specific parts. It has already been established that Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, specifically the section concerned with defining friendship as an emotion, opens up a conversation on how friends can help each other see themselves in a new light, correlating with the increase in self-knowledge one gains through shared activities. Aristotle's concept of a shared life correlates with this facet of phantasia. Thus, when one spends time and shares activities with their friends, they observe their friend's initial actions and when it echoes back to them it shows them that they possess those good qualities too. Finally, I will explain why this process works best in the context of close friendships, instead of just seeing anyone do something good or admirable.

A good starting point to see how this expansion of one's self image is this scene from *Villette* by Charlotte Brontë, published in 1853. In this scene, the main character, Lucy Snowe, is reflecting on the news that her colleague, M. Paul Emanuel, wants to be “proper” friends with her:

On hearing this, a quiet courage cheered me. I ventured a word of re-assurance. That word was not only tolerated; its repetition was courted. I grew quite happy —strangely happy— in making him secure, content, tranquil. Yesterday, I could not have believed that earth held, or life afforded, moments like the few I was now passing. (Brontë 461)

In this passage, Lucy expresses her content over finding friendship with her fellow teacher. Not only is she delighted, the beginning of this relationship is reshaping her current view of the world and her mind. Prior to these strong emotions she now feels, it seemed unlikely that life could ever be this enjoyable or hopeful for someone like her, but she now sees that she can be someone who experiences true joy in her everyday life. Ronna Burger might posit the reason she feels this way is “...that happiness requires, not just an objective set of goods in life, but an awareness of being alive, and that comes about in and through the relation to the friend as another self” (Burger 5). This dynamic heavily relies on not only the concept of sharing one's life with a friend, but also on phantasia.

First, it is important to further explain and define the echoing nature of phantasia. Caston begins by explaining that, for example, when one shouts in a canyon, they hear the initial disturbance of the air, and an echo, which is the second disturbance of the air (Caston 47). Because of this occurrence, the phantasma produced has similar powers to its source; it will have similar effects on the agent. It will also cause the agent to reflect more on the original sense

perception, since it occurs more than once. Additionally, the thing that produced the echo does not have to be present for the effects to take place; the second sensation will affect the agent in the same way. Moss's view of perception further augments how the perception affects the perceiver, and how it explains friendship's connection with this phenomena. She asserts "...when cognition finds something good, desire moves the agent to pursue it" (Moss 129). In this statement, she points out the relationship between cognition and desire; after uncovering a pleasant or good thing, the agent is moved by their desire to possess it. Thus, when one encounters a stimulus that causes desirable sensations, they will decide to pursue it, in order to obtain the echoing sensation, which partially explains why one might feel inclined to continue pursuing shared activities with a friend.

Next, the earlier mentioned 'awareness of being alive' aspect of friendship is what leads into the new vision of oneself enjoyed through complete friendship. Ultimately, one needs a friend to accurately perceive and examine their own lives. Recall, partaking in shared activities gives an opportunity to increase understanding of one's actions. When one has friends to perceive and understand, they are able to see and appreciate the total goodness of their lives. This appreciation is because "...perceiving a friend's life is like perceiving one's own" (Liu 589). One feels toward themselves as they do toward their friend, watching their friend's life is very similar to how they view their own. By having a friend, and perceiving their lives and activities, one has someone that makes them see the goodness and positivity that is present in their own lives as well. In short, "By enjoying what is ours, they make the goodness of our own lives apparent to us" (Liu 592). Recall, Aristotle stated that phantasia is a motion arising from the activity of sensation, and Caston discusses the echoing effect of phantasia. When combining this echoing

motion and Liu's view it results in this understanding: sharing one's life with a friend heightens the goodness of one's own life and leads to an expanded view of oneself.

The emotions of friendliness from *Rhetoric* are needed to explain the origin of the echoing stimulation. Recall that Aristotle includes, one of the many examples of the emotion of friendliness, as not only wishing the best for one's friend, but being active in promoting the fruition of these goods as well. Friends can improve this sharing of activities that is found in Aristotle's concept of perfect friendship. When friends live together, they provide better opportunities for the both of them to examine themselves than they would have in solitude. Because of this aspect, through sharing a life with a friend, friends gain self-knowledge that they incorporate into themselves for future reference. The echo that comes from the stimulation of friendship is the new self-knowledge that friends get through spending time together. Thus, when one feels this 'echo' from a friend, it is something that they carry with them, throughout a shared life. This quote from Pangle augments this sentiment:

Our lives seem fuller and richer and more extensive and significant when we care about and live with – and so, in a sense, live through - our friends, than when we concern ourselves only with our own narrow selves. (Pangle 153)

Here, Pangle further highlights from where the pleasure of friendship comes. The use of the words 'fuller' and 'richer' are of particular interest in this passage, since they connect really well with the echo. They connect well with the concept of the echo because echoing represents a second effect (disturbance), and adds more to the original perception of the stimulus. Thus, it makes the agent's original perception of the stimulus to be a fuller and richer one, since they receive the second disturbance via *phantasia*. After they received the echo, they might have

thought about how that quality connects to their own life, and causes them to see how they exemplify it in their own life. Julie Annas further explains this importance, “if the good man lacked good friends whose activities he could gain pleasure from contemplating, his life would be to that extent lacking something worthwhile” (Annas 550). In this quote, she explains the view that without good friendships, people would not have the same opportunities to contemplate their own actions. Comparing one’s actions to that of one’s friend, especially when that friend is understood to be good, provides more benefit to a person’s life.

For example, if someone sees their admired friend do something selfless, they will receive the initial perception of the person doing that action. Then, according to Caston’s view, this initial perception generates an echoed effect. In this example of a selfless action performed by a friend, the agent’s ‘echo’ will possibly be an instantiation of when they performed something similar. Maybe at the time they originally did that action, they did not think much of it, but now after witnessing their friend do it, they see how they too perform selfless deeds. This echo makes the agent’s conception of themselves better or richer. It causes them to reflect on their lives and personalities in ways they would not have done before. This example shows how the function of phantasia in friendship increases one’s understanding of oneself and their role as a virtuous agent.

This concept of making richer explains the reason why phantasia generates expanded self-knowledge in perfect friendships. The echo needs the sharing of activities with a friend in order to initially occur. This shared life is necessary because it is what initiates the expansion of self-knowledge in the first place. Furthermore, living with, or sharing activities with friends, in a sense expands one’s personal “world.” When one’s personal world develops, it includes a

broadened view or conception of one's own self. Having shared activities with a friend, which generate opportunities for self-reflection, are what expands one's world or mind. This also relates back to the previously discussed idea that rhetorical visions from friends result in seeing oneself through the eyes of another; the echo brings forth an image of oneself. The expansion of one's world is also seen in the *Villette* passage where Lucy sees the goodness the world has to offer, and understands that she is worthy of taking part in it as well. The combination of phantasia and friendship, then, results in shared activity being the 'stimuli' that results in the echo of a new understanding of oneself.

To end, it is important to state why this phenomenon only truly occurs in the context of friendship. Why can someone not gain this newfound self-knowledge from watching anyone perform good actions? Why does it specifically have to be a friend? My response to those questions is that the emotional dimension and connection one has with their friends matters significantly. This emotional connection is so strong that Aristotle posits that friends view each other as second selves, and regard our friends the same way we regard ourselves (*EN* 1166a.29-30). The fact that friends see each other as second selves makes the observing of their actions more significant to the agent. Bagley further illuminates the importance of loving a friend as a second self, "if a fellow musician responds to you with something that complements your playing so well it feels like a fuller expression of the musical idea behind it, it feels affirming and enhancing" (Bagley 498). When one sees someone as a second self, one feels more connected to the good actions of the other. Since they initially see each other as similar, the perceptions of good qualities in the other is a lot more meaningful. If a good action was performed by a non-virtuous friend, it may still be impactful, but not as much as it would be if it were a virtuous

friend. The effect would not be as strong because of the lesser amount of development in the friendship. Non-virtuous friends do not have the same level of emotional attachment, which lessens the impact. This significance permits for the full unity of the original sense perception to occur. As an example, Emanuel's analysis of Lucy means more to her since he was someone she already had a lot of respect for and shared a similar way of life. The initial connection between the two makes the gained self-knowledge more meaningful and accurate.

Phantasia, when viewed with friendship, explains why sharing a life with a friend makes the other person gain a richer, fuller view of themselves. However, this is all possible from the echoing effect of phantasia. Relating this idea back to the earlier passage from Brontë, the pleasure that comes from friendships based on virtue is the expansion of oneself. In the original passage, Lucy notes that she feels more sure of her role in the world and wants to continuously feel the repetition of such events. The echoing of the initial perception of a friend's qualities comes from recalling the ways that the agent is actually similar, which they may not have perceived or understood before. This practice gives friends a more developed and thoughtful view of themselves. Finally, this process only truly occurs in the context of Aristotle's idea of a perfect friendship. This fact is due to the emotional connection that forms from friends sharing their lives and activities. The way that friends connect and complement each other means more than when one feels similar to someone they do not know as well, or even a stranger. Phantasia serves as the tool that makes one's self knowledge expand among friends.

5.

Conclusion

To understand what makes friendship so beneficial, we need to examine it through the lens of phantasia. Aristotle begins his section on friendship by differentiating the three types of friendship, and one can then see how the lower types build up to and are present in the third, most complete type. This build-up emphasizes the strength and power of the third one. After showing the presence of the lower types of friendship in the third, then it is important to show how the third type of friendship develops. It is important to show how they develop because the sharing of activities, or living together, is what provides the starting material for the echoing of phantasia to later occur. Furthermore, the process of sharing one's life with another starts to show how one's self-knowledge expands, which is another important facet of phantasia's role in the pleasure that exists in complete friendships.

Phantasia, then, is an internal movement that comes from the perception of a sense-object. It differs from typical perception in the sense that *phantasmas* can be produced or 'seen' even when one does not have it presently in front of them, or has their eyes shut. Additionally, phantasia permits the agent to augment their perception of something in their mind. This augmentation of phantasia becomes especially pointed and relevant when viewing it alongside the definition of friendliness from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. There, he posits that the emotions surrounding friendliness/friendship refer to a friend's ability to be productive/helpful in promoting the good of their friend for their own sake. Thus, combining phantasia with friendship

in this regard demonstrates that phantasia can result in an expanded, or improved, vision of oneself. This aspect of friendship further sets the ground for the echoing of phantasia.

When combining the idea that friendship leads to an improved vision of oneself with the concept of phantasia, it becomes more clear why there is new self-understanding in complete friendship. When sharing a life or actions with one's friend, they are constantly having someone who promotes their good for their own sake. Because of this, they have an unimpeded, continuous action of understanding themselves through friendship. Thus, when engaging in activities with one's friends results in one continuously developing a new view of themselves through the echoing effect of phantasia, resulting in the friend having an uninterrupted and consistently bettering view of themselves. This phenomenon needs to happen in the context of perfect friendship. In order for the initial perception to initiate the self-reflection, there has to exist an emotional bond between the two people.

It is important to unpack this expansion of oneself in the third type of friendship, because it helps us answer broader social questions about why friendship is beneficial or healthy for people. Understanding why friendship is a personal good that the majority of people seek out, assists us in seeing why the friendship aspect of life is something that has been valued throughout much of humanity and in many cultures. Ultimately, understanding why friendship is such a desirable and enlightening aspect of life helps us to see why we might value certain people in our lives. It also aids us in choosing the kinds of friends we want to actively spend time with every day.

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