

The Relevance of Aristotle's Virtue of Friendship in Countering Psychological Egoism Among the Youth

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Abstract – This paper seeks to use Aristotelian virtue of friendship as a way of countering psychological egoism among the youth. In the first section we shall explore psychological egoism and under this, some views of psychological egoists like Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville will be brought to the fore. After their views we shall examine the arguments for and against psychological egoism plus the inconsistency of psychological egoism. In the second section we shall analyze Aristotle's virtue of friendship and the meaning of altruism. We shall concisely explain the types of friendship as presented in Nicomachean ethics. This will be followed by its relevance to the youth. Then in the third section the general overview of friendship with an intention of countering psychological egoism will be elucidated.

Keywords: Relevance, Aristotle, Virtue, Friendship, Countering, Psychological Egoism, Among Youth.

Introduction

Instruction about friendship, appears not to have been as urgent before as it is today. We are living in a globalized world where most of the interactions portrayed are inclined to selfishness. In philosophy the field which emphasize self-centeredness is called egoism. It involves putting one's own good, interest, and concern above that of others. According to Kurt Baier, "to call you an egoist is to ascribe to you a moral flaw, namely, a determination to promote your own good or interest even beyond the morally permissible. You behave egoistically if you fail to restrain the pursuit of your own good in situations when it conflicts with mine, and it is morally required or desirable that I observe that restraint."¹ So for him a person is an egoist if the proportion of his or her egoistic behaviour exceeds a given measure, typically the average.

Egoism is divided into positive and normative ethic. The positive ethic views egoism as a factual description of human affairs, that is, people are motivated by their own interests and desires. The normative ethic on the other hand states that people should be motivated by their own interests and desires. Psychological egoism falls under positive ethic and it claims that each person has one ultimate aim, that is, one's own welfare. Psychological egoism makes a claim about human nature, or about the way things are, yet ethical egoism makes a claim about morality, or about the way things should be.²

Such egoistic claims have not only affected the mind-set of the adults but the young generation as well. They have taken this as the order of the day and the virtue of friendship is dwindling very fast. In order to respond to the claims of psychological egoism there is a need of a moral philosophy especially where the attitude of altruism is emphasized. This attitude is often ascribed to the ancient Greek philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Here however, we shall focus mainly on Aristotle's virtue of friendship.

Aristotle opens Book VIII with this phrase: "Without friends, no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods; even rich men and those in possession of office and of dominating power are thought to need friends most of all; for what is the use of such prosperity without the opportunity of beneficence, which is exercised chiefly and in its most laudable form towards friends? Or how can prosperity be guarded and preserved

¹ Kurt Baier, "Egoism" in Blackwell Companions to Philosophy. A Companion to Ethics. Peter Singer. Ed. (Blackwell: Oxford 1991, 1993.), 197.

² James, Rachels, The Elements of Moral Philosophy. 7th. Ed. Stuart Rachels, (Mc Graw-Hill, New York 2012), 66.

without friends? The greater it is, the more exposed is it to risk. And in poverty and in other misfortunes men think friends are the only refuge. It helps the young, too, to keep from error; it aids older people by ministering to their needs and supplementing the activities that are failing from weakness; those in the prime of life it stimulates to noble actions, for with friends, men are abler to think and to act.”³This simply is Aristotle’s way of expressing how friendship is important in order to understand his ethics and its altruistic nature which is so much opposed by the psychological egoists.

The back ground of this study focuses on the view that psychological egoism is the thesis that human beings are always deep down motivated by what they perceive to be in their own self-interest, this may be pleasure, wealth, power, and fame. This will be emphasized by Thomas Hobbes a proponent of psychological egoism. Thomas Hobbes However, like other psychological egoists has some limitations in his assertions, he ignores the aspect of love and concern for each other and he thinks that selfishness is a reality for every person. In doing this, he lowers human beings to the level of animals without rationality. Though there is selfish behavior in the world that it is easy to lose sight of the unselfish behavior, some human actions however, do not seem to be explained by self-regarding desires. It is on this basis that we have considered Aristotle’s virtue of friendship in countering psychological egoism especially among the youth.

1. Psychological Egoism

Psychological egoism is the name given to a theory according to which all human actions when properly understood can be seen to be motivated by selfish desires. More precisely, psychological egoism is the doctrine that the only thing anyone is capable of desiring or pursuing ultimately (as an end in itself) is his own self-interest. Thus for this theory purely altruistic and benevolence actions and desires do not exist; but people sometimes appear to be acting unselfishly and disinterestedly when they take the interests of others to be means to the promotion of their own self-interest.⁴ An example here is that, if someone rescues a child trapped in a neighbor’s burning house, there is no doubt that, that action is done out of good will for the child. This however cannot be taken as genuine by the psychological egoist, for him, such an act may be interpreted for the positive attention the rescuer would get afterwards or he may attribute it to that person’s feeling good about himself.⁵ For them the rescuer may reveal that he was motivated by a moral judgment and concern for the life of the child, yet in reality his motives are entirely selfish.

1.1 Psychological Egoist’s views

Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville are the famous proponents of psychological egoism. Thomas Hobbes thought that psychological egoism was undoubtedly true but he was not satisfied with such a disconnected approach. He tried to show that morality does not depend on God, natural purposes or altruism. Instead, morality should be understood as the solution to a practical problem that arises for self-interested human beings. Hobbes begins by asking what the situation would be like if there was no way to enforce social rules. He answers that, in this situation, people would be free to do what pleased them. Hobbes called this “the state of nature” that is, the state of men without civil society and that in such a state there is nothing else but a mere war of all against all.⁶ He thought it would really be dreadful due to the following four basic facts about human life:

First, there is equality of needs, were by each person is in need of the same basic things in order to survive, these are: food, clothing, shelter. He adds on that, although we may differ in some of our needs we are all essentially alike. Secondly, there is scarcity, the world is a hard, inhospitable place, where the things we need do not come in abundance. We have to work hard to produce them, and even then they may be in short supply. Thirdly, there is the essential equality of human power. No one can simply take what she wants, even though some people are

³ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, The Basic Works of Aristotle. Ed. Richard, McKeon, Trans. W. D. Ross. (The Modern Library: New York 1941), 1155a.

⁴ Joel. Feinberg, “Psychological Egoism” in *Ethics. History, Theory and Contemporary Issues*. Steven M. Cahn and Peter Markie, Eds. (New York: Oxford. 1998.) P. 557.

⁵ James. Rachels, 66.

⁶ Thomas. Hobbes, *Leviathan*. J. C. A. Gaskin. Ed. (Oxford: New York 1998.), xviii.

tougher than others, even the strongest can be brought down when those who are less strong act together. Finally, he states that there is limited altruism.⁷

Throughout his discussion of morality, Hobbes continually re-defines traditional moral terms such as right, liberty, contract, and justice in ways which reflects his account of self-interest and social agreement. Hobbes specifies the laws of nature as follows:

Every man should endeavor as much as it lies in his power to ensure peace. According to Hobbes this is the fundamental law of nature on which the others are based.⁸ He puts it that it is only in the state of peace that man can safely pursue the satisfaction of his appetites. But one man cannot do it without the cooperation of others. The second law of nature is that every man should make a covenant of mutual trust with other men in order to ensure peace and security in the society. In this covenant each man undertakes to respect the lives and properties of others and to refrain from doing harm to other people. The third law of nature is that every man should observe the covenant he has made with other men. This according to Hobbes is the origin of moral obligation. It arises from the covenant of mutual trust.

Thomas Hobbes argues that, in the absence of social condition, every action we perform, no matter how charitable or benevolent it may be, is done for reasons which are ultimately self-serving. Hobbes believes that any account of human action, including morality, must be consistent with the fact that we are all self-serving. So life in the state of nature would be intolerable. Hobbes did not think this was mere speculation. He pointed out that this is what actually happens when governments collapse during civil uprisings. People hoard food, arm themselves, and lock out their neighbors. Such arguments from Thomas Hobbes aroused a lot of suspicion about human nature and it prompted many philosophers to come to its rescue.

Mandeville too proposes that, vices, such as vanity and greed, result in publically beneficial results.⁹ He adds that many of the actions commonly thought to be virtuous were, instead, self-interested at their core and therefore vicious. For him man is capable only of pleasing himself/ herself, a human person is irredeemably selfish and greedy for his own private pleasure. It is on the basis of this account of human nature that a bigger problem for psychological egoism arises. Some behaviors do not seem to be explained by self-regarding desires. There are some human actions which are done out of a kind heart which is altruistic.

1.2 Arguments for Psychological Egoism

The first argument is that people always do what they want to do most. If we describe one person's action as unselfish, we are overlooking the crucial fact that in both cases, assuming the action is done voluntarily, the person is merely doing what he most wants to do.¹⁰ This argument has some flaws; first it is based on the idea that people never voluntarily do anything except what they want to do, but this is not true. Sometimes some things are done but not wanted; this is precisely because they are necessary means to an end that is wanted.

Another way of putting it, is that the object of a desire determines whether it is selfish or not. The mere fact that someone acts out of his own desires does not mean that he is acting selfishly; it depends on what it is that a person desires. If a person cares only about his own welfare and gives no thought for others, then he is selfish; nevertheless, if a person also wants others to be happy, and if he acts on that desire, then he is not selfish. Therefore, this argument goes wrong.

Another argument is that people do what makes them feel good, in other words, the unselfish actions produce a sense of self-satisfaction in the person who does them. Acting "unselfishly makes people feel good about themselves."¹¹ This argument indicates that every action aims at getting a good feeling or being satisfied after doing an action. For example, one who participates in the donation of blood does so for the good feeling and

⁷ James. Rachels, 84.

⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, the Matter, Form and Power of a common wealth*. Trans. Michael Oakeshott. (Oxford; Black Well 1951), 85.

⁹ Bernard, Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*. Vol.1 London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1714.

¹⁰ [www.http://vodkat.pbworks.com/James-Rachels%3A-Egoism-and-Moral-Scepticism](http://vodkat.pbworks.com/James-Rachels%3A-Egoism-and-Moral-Scepticism). Accessed on 18/04/2018.

¹¹ James. Rachels, 68.

satisfaction for doing that. Thus such actions which are done to get a good feeling and satisfaction are pointed out by psychological egoist as emphasizing the claim that people are always egoistic.

Another argument indicates that people act egoistically because they want to gain benefits from their action. This argument argues that people's actions are done to get benefits such as fame and popularity. For instance, a soldier who saves his comrade's life acts bravely to get an award or a reward such as a medal. They also claim that those who donate money to the poor and beggars, they do so to enjoy the feedback from their actions.

1.3 Arguments against Psychological Egoism

Generally, opponents of psychological egoism indicate that human acts are not solely because of self-interest or benefits, but can be caused by other factors such as genuine benevolence, compatibility of self-interest and other's welfare and also multiple of motives. Thus they believe that there are some human actions which are done out of a kind heart which is altruistic like that of Mother Teresa. She helped many people including the poor, sick, old and children, this she did so not for her own self-interest or benefits but for her genuine benevolence.

Another common objection to psychological egoism is the one made by Joseph Butler that I must desire things other than my own welfare in order to get welfare. For example, if I derive welfare from playing football, unless I desired it for its own sake, to play football, I would not derive welfare from playing. In the same way if I derive welfare from helping others, unless I desired it for its own sake, that others do well, I would not derive welfare from helping them. Welfare results from my action, but cannot be the only aim of my action.¹²

Another argument against psychological egoism is that human motives are broad. They state that one can have many motives while doing an action and only one of the motives may be for his self-interest or benefits. So people's actions are not exclusively due to self-interest but there might be other factors which are taken into consideration before acting.

1.4 Inconsistency in Psychological Egoism

The first one is that, there is a tendency of confusing selfishness with self-interest. Looking at these two words it is clear that they are not identical. For example, if I see a physician when I am feeling unwell, I am acting in my own self-interest, but no one would think of calling me selfish on account of it. Similarly working hard at my job and obeying the law are all in my own interest, but none of these are examples of selfish conduct. Selfish behavior is behavior that ignores the interests of others in circumstances in which their interests ought not to be ignored. Thus eating a normal meal in normal circumstances is not selfish, but one would be selfish if he or she piles food while others are starving.¹³

The second confusion is between self-interested behavior and the pursuit of pleasure. We do lots of things because we enjoy them, but that does not mean that we are acting from self-interest. The man who continues to smoke cigarettes even after learning about the connection between smoking and cancer is surely not acting from self-interest, not even by his own standards. Self-interest would dictate that he quit smoking and he is not acting altruistically either. He is no doubt, smoking for the pleasure of it, but this only shows that indiscipline, pleasure-seeking and acting from self-interest are different. Reflecting on this, Joseph Butler, the leading critic of egoism, remarked that; "the thing to be lamented is, not that men have so great regard to their own good or interest in the present world, for they have not enough"¹⁴

A third confusion is the common assumption that a concern for one's own welfare is incompatible with any genuine concern for others. Since it is obvious that everyone desires his or her own well-being, it might be thought that no one can really be concerned for the well-being of others. But this is a false dichotomy. There is no inconsistency in desiring that everyone, including oneself and others, be happy. Our interest may sometimes come into conflict with other people's interests, and then we may have to make hard choices. But even in these cases we sometimes opt for the interests of others, especially when others are our friends and family. Sometimes we are

¹² The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

¹³ James. Rachels, 71.

¹⁴ James. Rachels, 72.

able to help others at little or no cost to ourselves. In those circumstances, not even the strongest self-regard need prevent us from acting generously.

If psychological egoism is so obviously confused, one may wonder why so many people have been attracted to it. There may be other reasons but the deeper reason is that psychological egoism is taken to be irrefutable by many. In a certain sense, they are right, yet in another sense, the theory's immunity from refutation is its deepest flaw. Once it becomes the controlling assumption that all behavior is self-interested, everything that happens can be interpreted to fit this assumption. Nevertheless, people are motivated in all sorts of ways; people act from greed, anger, lust, love, and hate. They do things because they are frightened, jealous, curious, happy, worried, and inspired. They are sometimes selfish and sometimes generous, sometimes they are even heroic. In the face of all this, the thought that there is but a single motive cannot be sustained. If psychological egoism is held in a form that is testable, the results of the test will be that the theory is false.¹⁵

Generally, having evaluated the arguments for and against psychological egoism, it is clear that they are opposed to altruistic theories that claim that other people's interests should count more than the individual's interests. Therefore, prospects for psychological egoism are dim. However, this does not take away the fact that, the idea that people always act only to promote their own interests has some initial plausibility, this is due to the fact that there is so much selfish behavior in the world that it is easy to lose sight of the unselfish behavior. Secondly, just about everything we do, including what we do for others, is motivated at least partially by self-interest. But for psychological egoism to be true, it would have to be the case that all of our actions are motivated entirely by self-interest. Aristotle is one of the philosophers who appeals to altruistic behavior and this is expressed in the way he understands the virtue of friendship; this will be handled in the next section.

1. Aristotle's Virtue of Friendship

2.1 A Brief History of Aristotle's Concept of Friendship

In the Plato's *Lysis*, Socrates' dialogue with two young friends about friendship, Socrates follows the unsettling idea that all friendship is rooted in human need and defectiveness and is treasured only to the extent that we hope to get from others, things that we are unable to provide for ourselves. He adds that, "He who is good to that extent, sufficient for himself would be in want of nothing,"¹⁶ hence he would neither treasure nor love anything or anyone else. The radical claim advanced in the central section of the dialogue is not merely that human love begins in need but that love begins and ends and is wholly driven by need. Moreover, the *Lysis* explores the possibility that the most important needs that cause us to love are not needs for the pleasures and activities of friendship as such, but are directed to other things that act as remedies for our defects in the way that medicine does for the defects of the body, and to which the human beings we call our friends are merely the means.

Socrates' views about friendship portrays that he was not on the same footing with Aristotle regarding friendship. For Aristotle, we love friends both for themselves and for the benefits we receive from them, but Socrates seems to say that we love other human beings only because they are good for us. Thus Aristotle's discussion of friendship in Book VIII and Book IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is his efforts to engage and respond mainly to the arguments of Plato's *Lysis*.

According to John Cooper all the standard treatments of Aristotle on *philia* point out that the Greek concept expressed by this word is much wider than our "friendship". He puts it that, its field covers not just the intimate relationships between persons not bound together by near family ties, to which the words used in the modern languages to translate it are ordinarily restricted, but all sorts of family relationships especially those of parents to children, children to parents, siblings to one another, and the marriage relationship itself. The word also has a natural and ordinary use to characterize "civic friendship." Certain business relationships also come in here, as does common membership of religious and social clubs and political parties. It is not enough, however, just to list

¹⁵ James. Rachels, 75.

¹⁶ Lorraine, Smith. Pangle, Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship. (Cambridge: New York 2003), 20.

the fairly diverse sorts of relationship that form the field of Aristotle's investigation; one wants to know, if possible, what it was about them that inclined the Greeks to group them together under this common name.¹⁷

This account suggests that the central idea contained in *philia* for Cooper, is that of doing well by someone for his own sake, out of concern for him and not, or not merely, out of concern for oneself. If this is the case then one may conclude that the different forms of *philia* could be viewed just as different contexts and circumstances in which this kind of mutual well-doing can arise; within the family, in the state at large, and among business partners and political cronies, well-doing out of concern for other persons can arise, and where it does so, there exists a friendship.

Basically friendship involves a distinctive kind of concern for a friend, a concern which might reasonably be understood as a kind of love. Philosophers from the ancient Greeks on have traditionally distinguished three notions that can properly be called love, these are: *Agape*, *Eros*, and *Philia*. *Agape* is a kind of love that has come through the Christian tradition to mean the sort of love God has for us persons as well as, by extension, our love for God and our love for humankind in general. By contrast, *Eros* and *Philia* are generally understood to be responsive to the merits of their objects, that is, to the beloved's properties, especially his goodness or beauty. The difference is that *Eros* is a kind of passionate desire for an object, typically sexual in nature, whereas '*Philia*' originally meant a kind of affectionate regard or friendly feeling towards not just one's friends but also possibly towards family members, business partners, and one's country at large. Given this classification of kinds of love, *philia* seems to be that which is most clearly relevant to friendship.¹⁸

Aristotle emphasizes that, let loving then, be defined as wishing for someone what one thinks to be goods, for their own sake and not one's own. Or to be friends, persons "must be mutually recognized as bearing good will and wishing well to each other"¹⁹ Qualities indicative of friendship are: similar tastes, reciprocity, mutual concern for each other's being, promoting each other's good. Good will is a friendly quality, but differs in that, "it does not involve intensity or desire, whereas these accompany friendly feeling; and friendly feeling implies intimacy."²⁰ Good will is only a superficial love because it is capable of being summoned instantly without prior preparation, that is, one may exhibit good will even towards strangers.

Still in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle writes that "Friendship seems too, to hold states together and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice."²¹ The theme that in a just society citizens experience a form of friendship for each other, they wish each other well for their own sake, do things for fellow citizens both individually and as a citizen body, and share in values, goals, and a sense of justice is a constant theme running throughout Aristotle's ethical and political works. What Aristotle is emphasizing here is that when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality.²²

2.2 Altruism

Before elaborating on the types of friendship, it is fitting to briefly look at altruism. Behavior is normally described as altruistic when it is motivated by a desire to benefit someone other than oneself for that person's sake. Another way of putting it is that, an action is altruistic when it involves making a personal sacrifice for the benefit of others. Sometimes, however, the word is used more broadly to refer to behavior that benefits others, regardless of its motive. Altruism may be attributed to certain animals like mother bears, which protect their cubs from attack, and in doing so put their own lives in danger.²³ It is generally agreed that this sort of unselfish behavior is

¹⁷ John M. Cooper, Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship. In *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Philosophy Education Society Inc. Jun., 1977), p.620. Accessed: 14-04-2018 05:46 UTC. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20126987>.

¹⁸The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

¹⁹ *Ethica Nicomachea* 1156a 5.

²⁰ *Ethica Nicomachea*. 1166b 34.

²¹ Jonathan, Barnes, Ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

²²*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a.

²³ Elliott, Sober and David Wilson, *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology on Unselfish Behavior*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 6.

sometimes required by morality however, for the psychological egoists altruism is not just rare, but actually impossible since they believe that every human action is motivated entirely by self-interest.

2.3 The Three Basic Kinds of Friendship

Aristotle's own major contribution is to distinguish three different kinds of friendship, depending on the reasons one has for having a friend. One can, in a friendship, seek either what is useful, or what is pleasant, or what is good. Friendships based on usefulness or pleasure, are inferior to the other kind, and people who have them are friends to a lesser degree. The best or perfect kind of friendship is one in which each person is a friend with the other because of that person's goodness, specifically his good character.²⁴

2.3.1 Friendship of Utility

Indeed, as Aristotle proceeds to describe the three forms of friendship based on utility, pleasure, and excellence, it becomes clear that he considers the first two to be friendship in only a condensed sense. That which rests on utility is clearly the furthest from perfect friendship. In such friendships, Aristotle says, each loves the other person only incidentally, or rather, he does not precisely love the other person at all but only his own good. Aristotle treats it as seriously defective and as friendship "only incidentally" and not in the fullest sense.²⁵

In other words, Aristotle explains that those who love for the sake of utility love for the sake of what is good for themselves, and not in so far as the other is the person loved but in so far as he is useful. They do not love each other in themselves, but in so far as some benefit is expected from each other. He notes however, that these friendships are not permanent, they cease to be such at the same time as the advantage ceases; for they were not friends of one another but of the benefit to themselves.²⁶ Such friendship exists merely as a means to that end in question.

He elaborates that friendships of utility are commonly found between opposites, for example between poor and rich, between ignorant and learned; for what a man actually lacks he aims at, and one gives something else in return. Under this, he sees it appropriate to add lover and beloved, beautiful and ugly since each must find in the other something that he needs.²⁷ He adds on that, they are also found between those who have similar things to offer at different times, as do guest and host in traditional Greek guest-friendships²⁸. Aristotle suggests repeatedly that friendships of utility are most characteristic of old. The overwhelming impression he gives is that friendships of utility turn upon the desire for external goods or goods of fortune, but his mention of the learned and the ignorant suggests that associations entered into for the sake of any benefit are properly classed as friendships of utility.²⁹

For Aristotle, such friends seek each other out for reasons only loosely related to their characters, what each person finds useful varies at various times, and because one cannot count upon being able to be useful to another at the time when one needs something from him, friendships of utility are especially subject to disappointments, complaints, and ruptures. Aristotle comments that, in such friendship they use each other for their own interests they always want to get the better of the bargain, and think they have got less than they should, they blame their partners because they do not get all they want and deserve. Even at their best they are weakened, since there is no guarantee that those who find each other useful will also enjoy each other's company, whereas Aristotle will say that nothing characterizes friendship so much as spending one's days together.³⁰ From this it is easier to tell that their pleasure in each other goes no further than their expectations of advantage.

2.3.2 Friendship of Pleasure

²⁴ Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*. (Oxford University Press 1993), 250.

²⁵ Lorraine, Smith, Pangle, 40.

²⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1165b3-4.

²⁷ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1159b12-24.

²⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1129b28-30, 1130a3-4.

²⁹ Lorraine, Smith, Pangle, 41.

³⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157b19.

As discussed above, those who love for the sake of utility love for the sake of what is good for themselves. In the friendship of pleasure too, those who love for the sake of pleasure do so for the sake of what is pleasant to themselves, and not in so far as the other is the person loved but in so far as he is pleasant. In other words, people love their friend not for the sake of the friend, but for the sake of the pleasure received. Thus he emphasizes that in erotic relationships people “love not one another but their incidental features”³¹ that is, what gives pleasure to themselves. This seems to suggest that in pleasure friendship each party is concerned solely with its own good, and this would mean that they could not have the sort of concern for one another that Aristotle intends to attribute to friends in Book VIII. He adds that, such friendships are easily dissolved, if the parties do not remain like themselves; for if the one party is no longer pleasant the other ceases to love him.

Friendships of pleasure, by contrast, are much closer to the best form of friendship. Aristotle says that they are characteristic of the young. Aristotle states, that “With the young on the other hand the motive of friendship appears to be pleasure, since the young guide their lives by emotion, and for the most part pursue what is pleasant to themselves, and the object of the moment. And the things that please them change as their age alters; hence they both form friendships and drop them quickly, since their affections alter with what gives them pleasure, and the tastes of youth change quickly. Also the young are prone to fall in love, as love is chiefly guided by emotion, and grounded on pleasure; hence they form attachments quickly and give them up quickly, often changing before the day is out. The young do desire to pass their time in their friend’s company, for that is how they get the enjoyment of their friendship.”³²

He stresses that such friendships are transient, but as long as they last they are warm and heartfelt, and the friends do cherish one another’s company.³³ In part simply because pleasures are increased while being shared, whereas useful goods are in general decreased, friendships of pleasure seem more generous and suited to free men than are friendships that consist in exchanges of goods and services.

He also criticizes love affairs on the grounds that they always consist somehow in the attraction of opposites, whereas he says the best friendships involve partners who are virtuous and equal and who give and receive from each other something identical or similar. Virtuous people, he teaches, can be whole in themselves, and it is those who have such wholeness who can be the best friends. Therefore, he says, in the best case erotic love grows into a friendship between mature men who are similar and virtuous and love each other for their characters.³⁴

2.3.3 Friendship of Virtue

Aristotle observes, that, perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other qua good, and they are good in themselves.³⁵ Its dominant features are altruism and the intrinsic value of the friend. Those who wish well to their friends for their sake are most truly friends; for they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally; hence their friendship lasts as long as they continue to be good; and virtue is a permanent quality. In this best form of friendship, Aristotle says that the partners love each other for themselves, cherishing each other for their characters and not for some incidental benefit that they provide each other.³⁶ Love and friendship therefore are found most and in their best form between such men.

He comments that such friendships naturally are not frequent due to the fact that such men are rare. Further, such friendship requires time and familiarity; as the proverb says, men cannot know each other till they have ‘eaten salt together’³⁷ nor can they admit each other to friendship or be friends till each has been found lovable and been trusted by each. He adds on that people who enter into friendly relations quickly have the wish to be friends, this wish is a quick growth, but friendship is not. The friendship of the good is naturally permanent, since it combines in itself all the attributes that friends ought to possess. In other words, good friendship is categorically grounded;

³¹ Nicomachean Ethics, 1164a10-12.

³² <https://stpeterslist.com/the-3-types-of-friendship-according-to-aristotle> Accessed on 16/04-2018.

³³ Nicomachean Ethics, 1156a31–b6.

³⁴ Nicomachean Ethics, 1157a10–12.10.

³⁵ Nicomachean Ethics, 1156b 6.

³⁶ Lorraine, Smith. Pangle, 44.

³⁷ Nicomachean Ethics, 1156b.

while other forms rest on a conditional basis, that is, friendship is only incidental, opportunism is the important factor.³⁸

2.4 The Relevance of Aristotle's Virtue of Friendship to the Youth.

The term 'youth' refers to the time of life when a human being is young, that is, before reaching adulthood. The United Nations, explain youth, as those persons between the ages of 15 -24 years. In Africa it is commonly from 16-35. However, the meaning of this term varies in different societies around the world. In Africa the youth make up of almost 70% of the population.

According to Fischhoff, the youths underestimate the risks of particular actions or behaviors. It is possible, that some adolescents engage in risky behaviors because of a perception of invulnerability. Others, however, take risks because they feel vulnerable to a point of approaching hopelessness. In either case, these perceptions can prompt youth to make poor decisions that can put them at risk and leave them vulnerable to physical or psychological harm that may have a negative impact on their long-term health and viability.³⁹

Apart from Fischhoff, Aristotle too emphasizes that, young people have exalted notions, he attributes this to the fact that at this stage, they have not been humbled by life or learned its necessary limitations. They have a hopeful disposition which makes them think that they are great. In this state, they would always rather do noble deeds than useful ones. In other words, their lives are regulated more by moral feeling than by reasoning and so all their mistakes are in the direction of doing things excessively and vehemently. That is, they tend to overdo everything, for example, they love too much, hate too much, and the same with everything else.

Currently it is important to note that despite the widespread view that youths feel invulnerable, in reality, majority have serious concerns based on real-life factors that challenge them. Many youths worry about their education, unemployment, having a decent and meaningful job, they worry about poverty, and friendship. These do not only burden them but they make them vulnerable. As a result, they resort to risky behaviors such as alcohol or drug abuse, prostitution and gambling. Some are driven into thinking that the only thing anyone is capable of pursuing as an end in itself, is his own self-interest. Thus directly or indirectly linking to psychological egoism.

Looking at some of the risky behaviors I have mentioned, it is evident that there is need to invest in the youth, since it is at this stage that they experience multiple transitions such as new school environments, changing of peers and family dynamics. If we are to serve and protect the youth there is a need to shape them. Although they have other concerns of life, the issue of friendship if it is not fully explained to the youth it can lead to many vices. Many of the vices are associated with the issue of longing and getting wrong friends who cannot form their character in any way. As already mentioned, Aristotle from antiquity has been a model when it comes to teaching about friendship.

Aristotle asserts that, Man is by nature a social animal and that human beings are not a species of solitary beings. They need each other and cannot live in isolation. This is not only necessary for the basic needs of survival, but for the fulfilment of the human being's highest capacities like thought and language. Therefore, the social nature of human beings finds its highest expression in friendship. He cautions us however, that true friendship exists only among the virtuous, and not by simply the slavish accumulation of likes.

Consequently, by highlighting on Aristotle's virtue of friendship, the youth and the society at large will learn its relevance in countering psychological egoism, a theory which encourages self-centeredness. For Aristotle, in a just society citizens experience a form of friendship for each other, they wish each other well for their own sake, do things for fellow citizens both individually and as a society thus sharing values and goals.

3 Friendship in General and its Relevance in countering Psychological Egoism

³⁸ William S., Sahakia, Systems of Ethics and Value Theory. Little Field, Adams & Co. Paterson: New York 1964, 28.

³⁹ Baruch Fischhoff, Elena O. Nightingale, Joah G. Iannotta, Ed. Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability. Board on Children, Youth, and Families. (National academy press Washington, D.C. 2001), 1-3

Reversing through modern works on ethics, it would be difficult to find an extended discussion of friendship at all as Aristotle does. Friendship no longer carries significant philosophical importance to the modern society because people live in a world where individualism prevails. Though majority are not single-mindedly selfish, they generally take up their own path in life, which is defined by a personal set of goals and values. Friends of course are of help and comfort along the way, but they are not expected to share all our goals and values. Aristotle's worldview is significantly different because he thinks of human life as having a *telos*, or end goal toward which it is heading. In Aristotle's world, city-states are tightly knit communities where no strong distinction exists between public and private life. All citizens share the same goals and values, so the pursuit of happiness is a cooperative enterprise.

According to Aristotle, citizens should not cooperate simply because the laws compel them to. Rather, they should cooperate out of a friendly feeling that comes from sharing their lives and goals with one another. His analogies between political relationships and family relationships are not simply figurative: both should be determined primarily by love and duty. Aristotle seems to be emphasizing that friendship depends more on loving, and that it is those who love their friends that are praised. He takes loving to be a characteristic virtue of friends, therefore for him, it is only those in whom love is found in due measure that are lasting friends, and it is only their friendship that endures.

This work was prompted by the need to counter psychological egoism, a theory which makes a claim about human nature and which is apparently appealing in our present time. Psychological egoism assumes that human action is always motivated deep down by what we perceive to be in our own self-interest. This may be pleasure, wealth, power and fame. Such psychological egoists as Hobbes ignore charitable or benevolent moral action for reasons mentioned above.

In emphasizing psychological egoism Hobbes pointed out that, what actually happens when governments collapse during civil uprisings, people hoard food, arm themselves, and lock out their neighbors. So in a way for him, without a strong central authority to maintain the peace, countries guard their borders, build up their armies, and feed their own people first. Hobbes indeed ignored the aspect of love and concern for each other. It's like each person thinks only of himself and live in constant fear of each other. Such a conviction really lowers the nature of human beings to a level of animals which lack rationality. According to Aristotle, citizens should not cooperate simply because the laws compel them to, as mentioned earlier, rather, they should cooperate out of a friendly feeling that comes from sharing their lives and goals with one another.

Mandeville too, as mentioned earlier maintains that man is capable only of pleasing himself, is irredeemably selfish and greedy for his own private pleasure. This view also is found wanting. It is important to note that despite the fact that few people have written about psychological egoism, there people who up to date support such views, that, one is not to benefit others for their sake, but for one's own. Aristotle among others takes a different direction where he emphasizes appreciation and value of other people for their own sake when dealing with the friendship of virtue.

For Aristotle human excellence should be understood in terms of what ordinarily characterizes human life. For him to be a certain kind of thing is just to function in a certain way. The human function according to him is to be found in the activity of our rational faculties. To live well is to live a life characterized by the excellent use of one's rational faculties, and this excellence is marked by successfully applying general rules for virtuous living to particular situations calling for moral deliberation, knowing that what a person is doing, is due to the fact that it is a noble action. This calls for people to act for what is noble both for themselves and for the entire community, not for selfishness' sake only.

While explaining the friendship based on self-love Aristotle stressed that, those who criticize self-love are thinking of people who seek the greatest honours and pleasures only for themselves. A good person who is self-loving will seek only what is best for himself or herself, which will be consistent with what is best for all. A good person will do seemingly unselfish acts, such as taking risks for friends or giving away money, but will do these things because they are noble and are motivated by self-love. Aristotle believes that people who seek only utility or pleasure for themselves are not treating themselves well, just as people who use friends for utility or pleasure are not treating those friends well. It is best to love a friend for that friend's good character, and that is also the best reason to love oneself. The person who seeks true personal goodness will aim at a virtuous life that consists not only of health and prosperity, but also of nobility and friendliness. What Aristotle seems to recommend is that, the good

man needs only to apportion to himself the greater share in what is noble and this by all means makes him a lover of self but in a unique and upright way.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that Aristotle treasured the virtue of friendship so greatly. The researcher has found it beneficial in bringing out Aristotle's concern for others for their own sake a view which is highly opposed by the psychological egoists. For them, they assert that people always act in their own interests, even though they may disguise their motivation by helping others or doing their duty. What Aristotle has emphasized in friendship especially in the perfect one is that the dominant features are altruism and the intrinsic value of the friend. Those who wish well their friends for their sake are most truly friends; for they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally. Therefore, Friendship is an important virtue in understanding the altruistic nature of Aristotle's ethics which can be used in countering psychological egoism.

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