

The Elements of Aristotelian *Philia*

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Aristotelian *philia* (“friendship”) is a complex phenomenon involving such diverse emotional, rational, evaluative, and motivational elements that it can be difficult to see how to put the pieces together. Aristotle himself brings together nearly the full range of elements in a remarkably rich passage in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.5. I use this passage as a guide in developing an account of *hexis* (“state”) as the organizing principle of *philia*. This passage involves a contrast between *philia* and *philēsis* (“fondness”), and I begin by arguing in Chapter 2 that *philēsis* itself is a more interesting and complex emotional condition than has been recognized. I then partly use this account of *philēsis* to argue in Chapter 3 that the consensus interpretation of the passage in *NE* VIII.5 is mistaken. Aristotle appeals to the involvement of *prohairesis* (“decision”) in *philia* to argue that *philia* is a *hexis*, and most commentators take Aristotle to refer to a kind of decision to reciprocate love that forms a *philia*. I argue that Aristotle rather has in mind the decisions which friends make regarding the good of each other within the context of *philia*. I then explain in Chapter 4 how such decisions imply that *philia* is a *hexis* by arguing that Aristotle recognizes a distinction between ways of having *boulēsis* (“wish”): The kind of *boulēsis* that is required for *prohairesis* must be had as a *hexis*, although not all *boulēsis* is like this. Thus I argue that *philia* is, roughly, being fond of one’s friend and having as a *hexis* on the basis of which one acts by *prohairesis* *boulēsis* for the good of one’s friend. Finally, in Chapter 5 I argue that this account of *philia* as a *hexis* helps us to further appreciate the way in which character *philia*, out of Aristotle’s three forms of *philia*, is primary: It is the only form in which one is related to the good of one’s friend—rather than one’s own pleasure or utility—in such a way that one’s relationship is itself appropriately called a *hexis*.

Keywords: Aristotle, *philia*, friendship, *hexis*, *prohairesis*, *boulesis*, goodwill.

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Preface

This dissertation is not just a work *on* friendship, but *of* it; I could not have done it without the support of many *philo*i along the way, to whom I am grateful.

I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Jennifer Whiting. Without Jennifer's example as a philosopher, this dissertation would have been impoverished and without her guidance as a mentor, impossible. Jennifer's creativity, always well-grounded in the details, and her frank discussion, always mixed with good-humor and encouragement, provided needed perspective, both philosophical and practical.

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1.0 Introduction

Plato’s early dialogues often feature Socrates refuting an “expert” on some subject while at the same time professing ignorance of that subject.¹ This format is given an interesting treatment in the *Lysis*, where the experts are two young boys and the subject is one Socrates ought to know by his age: how to make friends. We certainly might hope that *this* profession of ignorance, at least, is ironic. It is pitiful to think of Socrates, as he describes himself, wanting a friend since childhood but not knowing how “one person becomes the friend of another” (211d-212a). With the help of Lysis and Menexenus—whose claims to expertise, such as they are, lie in their professing to *be* friends—Socrates attempts to discover what makes *someone* a friend and more generally, what makes *something* dear.²

The pace of their investigation is quick. Candidates are raised and rejected in swift succession: They begin with basic extensional accounts, according to which it is the mere *fact* of loving or being loved, or both, that makes something a friend (212b-213d); then move on to intentional accounts, according to which it is the *way* something is loved, e.g., *as* similar or *as* good, that matters (213d-215c); and finally reach a more complex intentional account which includes both the way in which the object is loved and the character of the lover which explains why the lover loves the object in that way (215c ff.). But throughout this discussion, the structuring assumption is that love is (a) desire. This assumption shapes which possibilities are taken seriously and which are discarded: It is a welcome and intuitively plausible result that a friend is good, but that a friend is bad or an enemy is a non-starter. And this assumption also generates many of the puzzles which block their progress; for example, a friend must be good (because desire is aimed at the good), and at the same time it seems that good people will be unable to have friends (because desire is aimed at something the desirer lacks and good people are self-sufficient).

The *Lysis* treats love as a desire the object of which is the beloved herself. And as

¹Classic examples are piety in the *Euthyphro*, courage in the *Laches*, and temperance in the *Charmides*.

²The Greek word for friend is just a substantive use of the adjective ‘*philos*’, “dear”, so the dialogue moves easily from what makes *someone* a friend to what makes *something* dear.

Aristotle is standardly read, he follows suit.³ He may clarify that the *object* of the desire is not the beloved herself but good things *for* the beloved. And he may improve upon the *quality* of the desire by requiring that good things are wished for the beloved *for her own sake*.⁴ But love is still fundamentally a desire or wish; and as David Konstan puts it, *philia* (usually translated as “friendship”) “...names the state of affairs that obtains between *philoï*, which requires that each *philos* have the corresponding wish for the other.”⁵ But this way of understanding Aristotle is a mistake (or at least a profound oversimplification): It obscures important differences between Plato and Aristotle; muddies the internal structure of *philia*; and underestimates the role of technical aspects of Aristotle’s moral psychology in his account of *philia*.

However, it is perhaps unfair to attribute to Konstan the view that *philia* is a state of affairs constituted by *desire*: Konstan has *also* claimed that it is a state of affairs constituted by a *feeling* (*pathos*) and then *revised* this claim, saying:

I myself once wrote that “...as a state of affairs obtaining between friends, [philia] consists of two *pathē*...” But I now think that this is inadequate as an account of Aristotle’s view. For Aristotle, friendship is primarily an activity, not just a state. (Konstan, 2018, 44)

Konstan’s evolution on this point indicates just how difficult it is to explain the way in which the elements of *philia*—e.g., the elements Konstan emphasizes, desire, *pathos*, and activity—come together in this complex phenomenon.

There is, however, a remarkably rich passage where Aristotle brings together nearly the full range of elements. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.5 Aristotle argues that *philia* is a *hexis* (“state”) in contrast to the *pathos* of *philēsis* (“fondness”) and in doing so invokes *boulēsis* (“wish”), *prohairesis* (“decision”), and more (1157b28-32). I propose to use this passage as a lodestar in developing an account of *hexis* as the organizing principle of *philia*. Aristotle recognizes three forms of *philia*: virtue or character *philia*, pleasure *philia*, and utility *philia*.

³The question of what *kind* of a thing love or friendship is according to Aristotle is not often addressed directly. But this general consensus can be seen, e.g., in Cooper’s treatment in his seminal 1977 of *philia* as mutual well-wishing, an approach which is followed by many, including Konstan, who argues that love is a desire and that friendship is a state of affairs involving reciprocal desires (2008, 212). Further evidence is the fact that two recent monographs on Aristotle on friendship, Stern-Gillet (1995) and Pangle (2002), address neither this question nor the alternative I will propose.

⁴See, e.g., Vlastos (1973).

⁵Konstan (2008, 212).

Focusing on *philia* as a *hexis* helps us to further appreciate the way in which character *philia* is *primary*: It is the only form in which one is related to the good of one’s friend in such a way that one’s relationship is itself appropriately called a *hexis*.

Primary *philia* is, roughly, being fond of one’s friend and having as a *hexis* on the basis of which one acts by *prohairesis boulēsis* for the good of one’s friend. This structure parallels the structure of *virtue* as an emotion-involving *hexis* which gives rise to *prohairesis*. Thus one theme running throughout, often submerged, is a way to understand the possibility raised by Aristotle that *philia* is a “kind of virtue” (*ἀρετή τις*) (*NE* VIII.1, 1155a4). As we will see, this is not how *NE* VIII.5 has generally been understood, for scholars have underutilized the rich connections that Aristotle sees between *philia* and virtue.

1.1 The Consensus Interpretation and its Problems

In *NE* VIII.5, 1157b28-32 (which I present in Chapter 2 and to which I will often return) Aristotle argues that in contrast to *philēsis*, *philia* is a *hexis* because of the way in which *prohairesis* is involved in *philia*. According to the widely-endorsed view which I will simply call the “consensus interpretation,” the role of *prohairesis* in *philia* is that friends *decide* to reciprocate *philēsis* or love. Reciprocation is a foundational requirement for *philia*, and so according to the consensus interpretation, *prohairesis* is involved in *establishing philia*—it is a *hexis* which is in some sense *chosen*. This certainly does not seem to be the kind of *hexis* that virtue is, which according to the account in *NE* II, takes time and habituation to develop. And in general, whether *philia* is the kind of thing that can be instituted by *prohairesis* would make an immense difference in our conception of *philia*.

The consensus interpretation is riddled with problems; but given the fundamental issues involved in this argument, these are *productive* problems: Addressing them will give us a better understanding of Aristotle’s account of *philia*. I summarize the main problems here:

1. The consensus interpretation often recasts this argument in terms of a contrast between *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis*, but *antiphilēsis* does not appear in the argument; *antiphilein* does.

2. The role of *prohairesis* in reciprocation identified by the consensus interpretation depends upon “*anti*” implying a thick notion of reciprocation, but there is good reason to suppose that it does not.
3. The consensus interpretation makes *philēsis* the object of *prohairesis*, but *philēsis* does not seem to be a proper object of *prohairesis*.
4. The way in which the consensus interpretation understands the role of *prohairesis* does not make sense of Aristotle’s argument: If *prohairesis* is involved in the reciprocation which establishes *philia*, then in order to conclude that *philia* is a *hexis*, we would need the claim that *hexeis* come from *prohairesis*; but Aristotle claims just the opposite.
5. However we understand the argument that *philia* is a *hexis*, it is meant to *contrast* with Aristotle’s claim in the same passage that there *can* be *philēsis* for inanimate objects. The consensus interpretation has a harder time making sense of this contrast: If, as the consensus interpretation claims, *philēsis* is a suitable object of *prohairesis*, then we certainly might think that one could have *philēsis* for an inanimate object by *prohairesis*. But if it is this *prohairesis* which indicates that there is a *hexis*, then such *philēsis* for an inanimate object would be a *hexis*, too. And if the consensus interpretation were to appeal to a further distinction between inanimate objects and living things, then this would only show that there is more at issue in this argument than reciprocation.
6. Finally, most expositors of the consensus interpretation agree (as I do) that this argument concerns *primary philia*, but the consensus interpretation cannot properly account for this fact because reciprocation is a feature of all three kinds of *philia*.

The first two problems concern important assumptions made by the consensus interpretation. These problems give us reason to be suspicious that the consensus interpretation is really so obvious as it is made to seem. The second two problems concern internal issues within the consensus interpretation itself. I argue that these problems give us good reason to reject the consensus interpretation. And the last two problems concern the relationship between the consensus interpretation and elements of the larger context. I develop an alternative interpretation, and I argue that the way in which my interpretation is able to resolve these problems gives us further reason to adopt it.

1.2 Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2: In *NE* VIII.5 Aristotle argues that *philia* is a *hexis* in order to support a contrast between *philia* and *philēsis*. It is a quick, compressed argument which likely relies on Aristotle's other discussions of *philēsis*, especially the earlier contrast between *philia* and *philēsis* in *NE* VIII.2. It will be helpful to approach the argument in VIII.5 with some understanding of *philēsis*. A prior examination of *philēsis* is especially needed because expositors of the consensus interpretation often assume that '*antiphilēsis*' ("reciprocal fondness") can be substituted in this argument for '*antiphilein*' (roughly, "to love in turn"). Aristotle's notion of *philēsis* has received little attention. But, as I argue in Chapter 2, this notion is especially interesting and important for two reasons.

First, the term '*philēsis*' does not appear in Aristotle's other ethical treatise, the *Eudemian Ethics* (or indeed in *any* of Aristotle's other works). I argue that a close examination of Aristotle's use of '*philēsis*' in the *Nicomachean Ethics* suggests that it is introduced in order to clean up some messiness in the Eudemian discussion of *philia*, especially concerning the treatment of inanimate objects. The introduction of '*philēsis*' allows Aristotle to more clearly regiment the terminology describing love and friendship. Most importantly for the argument of later chapters, it allows Aristotle to reserve '*τὸ φιλεῖν*' ("loving") and '*philia*' for attitudes toward and relationships between individuals with independent *goods* (roughly, those for whom living well is possible and thus might fare well or badly).

Second, *philēsis* is a complex and interesting concept in its own right, which has been overlooked because scholars often fail to connect Aristotle's three main discussions of *philēsis*. Although Aristotle assimilates *philēsis* to a *pathos* in *NE* VIII.5, we learn in *NE* IX.5 that *philēsis* takes time and familiarity to develop. In other words, *philēsis* itself seems to have *hexis*-like features. We also learn in IX.5 that although *philēsis* is not *defined* as a desire, it is essentially connected to *motivation*. This connection helps us to appreciate the complex *boulēsis* which Aristotle seems to connect with *philēsis* in *NE* VIII.2 (wishing goods to one's wine but for oneself). The view of *philēsis* which emerges is of a complex emotional condition which gives rise to a wide range of motivations.

Chapter 3: With a clearer understanding of *philēsis*, I turn in Chapter 3 to the ar-

gument that *philia* is a *hexis* from *NE* VIII.5. According to the consensus interpretation, this argument turns on *reciprocation*: *Philia* requires reciprocation, but *philēsis* does not, and reciprocation involves *prohairesis* because of the element of deliberateness or intention involved in reciprocation. In this chapter, I argue that the consensus interpretation faces a number of problems, and I propose an alternative interpretation.

I begin with two assumptions (problems 1 and 2 above) often made by expositors of the consensus interpretation. These assumptions make the consensus interpretation seem straightforward: It is often assumed (1) that this argument can be understood as a contrast between *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis* and (2) that the prefix ‘*anti-*’ indicates an intentional sense of reciprocation. Together, these assumptions almost *force* us to accept the consensus interpretation. But I argue there is good reason to question both of these assumptions. The examination of *philēsis* in Chapter 2 shows that there are important differences between *philēsis* and τὸ φιλεῖν such that we should not *assume* that ‘*antiphilein*’ can be replaced with ‘*antiphilēsis*.’ And I argue that there is good reason to suppose that the prefix ‘*anti-*’ does not indicate *intention* but *symmetry*.

The consensus interpretation itself faces further problems. First, the consensus interpretation supposes that in establishing *philia*, one reciprocates *philēsis* or love by *prohairesis* (problem 3 above). But it is difficult to make sense of this reciprocation as an object of *prohairesis*. For Aristotle describes *prohairesis* as, roughly, the choice of something *up to us* as a means towards some end. *Philēsis*, as a *pathos*, does not seem to be up to us in the way required by *prohairesis*. Likewise, it is difficult to understand *philia* as established by a kind of “rational commitment” involving *prohairesis*. And in both cases, establishing *philia* by *prohairesis* goes against Aristotle’s own description of the slow development of *philia* over time. And even if we could make sense of reciprocation as a matter of *prohairesis*, the consensus interpretation faces the more serious problem that it fails to make sense of Aristotle’s *argument* that *philia* is a *hexis* (problem 4 above): According to the consensus interpretation, *philia* in a way comes from *prohairesis*; but Aristotle claims that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*, not the other way around. Thus the consensus interpretation gets the structure of Aristotle’s argument backwards.

We should take the *prohairesis* Aristotle has in mind here to be not the decision to

become friends, but the decisions friends make concerning each other *within* the context of their friendship. In a friendship, friends not only wish goods to their friends but also *act* on *prohairesis* to bring those goods about. These *prohairesis* flow from the *philia*, and thus because as Aristotle claims, *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*, the kinds of *prohairesis* involved in *philia* show that *philia* must be a *hexis* (although we will find in Chapter 5 that primary *philia* is special in this regard).

Chapter 4: My account of the argument that *philia* is a *hexis* calls attention to the key claim that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*. In order to support my interpretation and see more clearly the way in which *philia* is a *hexis*, we need to better understand this key claim; and I turn to this in Chapter 4. The basic shape of a connection between *prohairesis* and *hexis* is suggested by Aristotle's association of a *hexis* of character with the *ends* towards which *prohairesis* is in some sense directed. I accept the general view offered by others, such as Anscombe, that *prohairesis* involves a conception of one's good or living well which requires a *hexis* of character. But I argue that a distinction which Aristotle draws in *NE* VIII.5 allows us to say something more specific which, however, challenges the common view of Aristotelian *boulēsis*.

I sidle up to this issue from a different angle. I begin by using the kinds of distinctions in desire drawn by, for example, Gary Watson and Bennett Helm, to motivate what I call “spontaneous *boulēsis*.” One of the defining features of *boulēsis* is that its objects are desired in some sense as *good*. Most interpretations of *boulēsis* in some way tie the goodness of its object to a conception of one's good. I suggest that sometimes we can desire something as good *on a whim* or simply because it *strikes us* as good in the moment. Most views of *boulēsis*, I argue, have a hard time accommodating spontaneous *boulēsis* which seems to neither explicitly *refer* to one's conception of the good nor *express* it.

I then argue that Aristotle distinguishes two ways of having *boulēsis* which suggest that he allows for spontaneous *boulēsis*. In referring to the well-wishing of friends, Aristotle distinguishes between *boulēsis* “according to a *pathos*” (*κατὰ πάθος*) and *boulēsis* “according to a *hexis*” (*καθ' ἕξιν*). I argue that *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* refers to something like spontaneous *boulēsis*: It is sudden, in the moment, and not connected to a conception of one's good. In contrast, *boulēsis καθ' ἕξιν* involves a conception of one's good had as a matter of one's

hexis of character. Finally, I argue that *prohairesis* likewise involves a conception of one's good. And thus *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis* in the sense that the *boulēsis* with reference to which a *prohairesis* is made must be had as a matter of one's character (although not *all* *boulēseis* are).

Chapter 5: Finally, I return to the *hexis* of *philia* in light of this account of the connection between *prohairesis* and *hexis*. We still need to understand exactly how this connection shows that *philia* is a *hexis*. If the connection between *prohairesis* and *hexis* runs through a person's *ends*, then we must examine the kinds of ends involved in *philia*. Determining the ends involved in *philia* requires addressing the role of goodwill in *philia*.

Perhaps the most intensely discussed issue concerning Aristotle's account of *philia* is whether all three forms of *philia*—character or primary, pleasure, and utility—require *goodwill*. Goodwill is roughly the wishing of goods to someone *for her sake*. The issue of whether or not all three forms of *philia* require goodwill thus raises the question of whether there are *self-interested* forms of *philia*. I argue in favor of the traditional view, influentially challenged by John Cooper, that pleasure and utility *philiai* do *not* require genuine goodwill. I argue that pleasure and utility *philiai* are both based on and aimed at the pleasure or utility one receives *for oneself* from one's friend (at least, in their *pure* form, which qualification is important because I also argue for a more nuanced understanding of the classification of *philiai*).

In order to support the claim that pleasure and utility *philiai* do not require goodwill, I appeal to Aristotle's characterization of *philia* as *koinōnia* ("community"). The dividing line separating those things which *are* capable of sharing in *koinōnia* and thus capable of being in a relationship of *philia* from those things which are *not* is the line between those things which have independent goods and those things which *lack* them. This recalls the important contrast between *philēsis* and *philia* developed in Chapter 2, and it helps to explain why Aristotle would count even self-interested relationships as *philiai*: Even self-interested relationships involve a special form of interaction between persons as distinct from mere things.

Every *koinōnia* aims at some good, and this structure helps us to understand the *hexis* of (primary) *philia*. In pleasure and utility *philiai*, the good enabled by the *koinōnia* and at

which it aims is the pleasure or utility one receives *for oneself*. One's friend is loved *insofar as* she provides pleasure or utility, and the *philia* ceases whenever she ceases to be pleasant or useful. The controlling end in virtue of which one's friend is loved in pleasure or utility *philiai* is thus the end of one's own pleasure or utility. I argue that these *philiai* are not themselves *hexeis* because as Aristotle says, these *philiai* are merely *incidental*: The stable end (on the basis of which one might act by *prohairesis*) involves one's friend only *incidentally*. Primary *philia*, by contrast, deserves to be called a *hexis* because it is that aspect of one's own *hexis* of character in virtue of which one has the good of one's friend *herself* as an end. Becoming friends and coming to fully value one's friend thus involves acquiring, and can be identified with, an end one did not previously have.

1.3 Texts, Translations, and Terms

Translations from Aristotle's *Ethics* are my own. I have followed, unless otherwise noted, the *Oxford Classical Texts* of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Bywater and of the *Eudemian Ethics* by Walzer and Mingay. I have greatly benefited from the translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Irwin, Reeve, and Rowe and from the translation of the *Eudemian Ethics* by Inwood and Woolf. Translations from other works of Aristotle are from the *Revised Oxford Translation*, edited by Barnes.

In order not to prejudice interpretation and to call attention to the technical nature of key terms, I have usually transliterated and italicized, but not translated, terms such as *philia*, *philēsis*, *prohairesis*, *boulēsis*, etc. (although I sometimes use a translation for an associated word, such as “choosing” or “deciding” for *prohairesisthai*).

2.0 *Philēsis*

Aristotle’s discussion of *philia* (often translated as “friendship”)¹ in Books VIII and IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* has the typical shape of an Aristotelian inquiry: It begins with some general remarks on the importance of the subject and raises some puzzles about it; proposes a method by which progress might be made; and then implements that method.² In this case, Aristotle suggests that we might better understand *philia* by first understanding the possible *objects* of love—the “things that are lovable” (*philēta*).³ In VIII.2, Aristotle identifies these as the good, the pleasant, and the useful. In VIII.3-4, Aristotle uses this classification of the objects of love to distinguish the corresponding kinds of *philia*: virtue (or as I will often refer to it, “primary”), pleasure, and utility *philia*. The remaining chapters deal with refinements, extensions, and defenses of this view, beginning in VIII.5.

Scholars have tended to treat VIII.5 as a disorganized collection of miscellaneous points. Christopher Rowe, for instance, sees five sections (i-v).⁴ Even without describing the contents of these sections, Rowe’s summary of their relations gives a good sense of how hectic VIII.5 might appear:

There is no connection between i and what has gone before, or between i and ii; and the switches between iii and iv, iv and v, and vi and vii are all equally abrupt. That between ii and iii is at least explicitly marked; but iii is so short that there is a certain abruptness even here. (Rowe, 1971, 59)

I will argue that VIII.5 offers a crucial refinement to the view of *philia* developed in the previous chapters by answering the question What kind of a thing is *philia*? Leading up to VIII.5, *philia* has been characterized primarily in terms of attitudes—loving ($\tau\omicron\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$), fondness (*philēsis*), and goodwill. This characterization might even lead one to suppose that

¹‘*Philia*’ is a difficult term to translate because of, among other issues, its wide range of application. It applies relationships between close friends, business partners, family, etc. On these difficulties of translation, see Konstan (1997, Ch. 1) and Whiting (2006, §1).

²Cf. *NE* VII, *Physics* I, *De Anima* I-II.

³Cf. *DA* I.1, 402b14-16, where Aristotle raises the methodological question of the priority of objects to faculties.

⁴Rowe’s divisions are: i, 1157b5-13; ii, b13-24; iii, b25-28; iv, b28-32; and v, 1157b33-1158a1. Rowe’s sections vi (1158a1-10) and vii (a10-18) continue into VIII.6 and complete a unit which Rowe sees as corresponding to *EE* VII.2, 1236b32-1237b7.

philia just *is* one of or some combination of these attitudes.⁵ Aristotle heads off this potential misstep in VIII.5, where he makes clear that *philia* is not in itself an *attitude*, but rather a *hexis*, a stable “state.” Properly appreciating this point is key to understanding, for example, how *philia* comes about, how the varieties of *philia* differ, and how *philia* fits into Aristotle’s moral psychology. And once we properly understand Aristotle’s argument that *philia* is a *hexis*, we can also see that VIII.5 is better organized and less abrupt than it might seem at first.

Aristotle offers two considerations to support the claim that *philia* is a *hexis*. The first makes this claim seem entirely ordinary: Friends do not cease *being friends* just because they are asleep or separated and so unable to engage in the *activities* of *philia* (*NE* VIII.5, 1157b5-11).⁶ Likewise, the fact that one is not contemplating some bit of knowledge at the moment does not mean that one cannot be said to *know* it. For Aristotle, this is an indication that *philia*, like knowledge and virtue, is a persistent *state*, not merely an activity (although as we will see, mere persistence over time may not be enough to establish that *philia* is a *hexis* proper).

Aristotle’s more formal argument, my primary concern, shows that there is much more to Aristotle’s claim that *philia* is a *hexis*. This argument introduces *prohairesis* into the Nicomachean discussion of *philia* for the first time. *Prohairesis*, often translated “decision” or “choice” and explained more fully in §3.1 below, is a central concept in Aristotle’s ethics. By drawing our attention to the role of *prohairesis* in *philia*, this argument represents a key point of contact between Aristotle’s account of *philia* and the rest of his ethics. Here Aristotle argues:

Fondness [*philēsis*] seems to be a feeling, and friendship [*philia*] [seems to be] a state [*hexis*]; for there is fondness no less towards inanimate things, but they [sc., friends] love [each other] in return involving decision [*prohairesis*], and decision comes from a state; and they wish good things to those whom they love for their own sake not according to a feeling but

⁵The Platonic background might further strengthen this supposition, given Plato’s general emphasis on love as an *attitude*, even in the discussion of *philia* in the *Lysis*.

⁶Here Aristotle does not draw the explicit conclusion that *philia* is a *hexis* but says: “Just as in the case of the virtues, some are called ‘good’ according to a state [*καθ’ ἑξίν*] and others according to activity, so too in the case of friendship.”

according to a state.^{7 8} (*NE* VIII.5, 1157b28-32)

This argument—punctuated as a single sentence in the Greek—is compressed, to say the least.⁹ The conclusion given at the start is a contrast between “fondness” (*philēsis*) and *philia*, but *philia* drops out of the justification. And the opposition between inanimate and animate objects, apparently poised to be the wedge that drives this contrast, is not continued as we might have expected. Despite these difficulties, scholars have been remarkably unified in their interpretation of this argument.

According to what I will simply call the “consensus interpretation,” the fulcrum of this argument is the notion of *reciprocation*.¹⁰ This distinguishes *philēsis* from *philia*—at least, it is claimed to be the *operative* distinction here—because *philēsis* does not involve reciprocation (or at least need not), but *philia* requires it. The consensus interpretation then locates the role of *prohairesis* in this reciprocation by taking there to be a level of rationality and intention in reciprocation which requires *prohairesis*. According to the consensus interpretation, then, *philia* is established by *prohairesis*—friends are so *by choice*.

There are several problems with the consensus interpretation. Most importantly, it saddles Aristotle with a bad argument (or rather, not much of an argument at all) for the conclusion that *philia* is a *hexis*. For according to this interpretation, *prohairesis* establishes

⁷ἔοικε δ' ἡ μὲν φίλησις πάθει, ἡ δὲ φιλία ἕξει· ἡ γὰρ φίλησις οὐχ ἦπτον πρὸς τὰ ἄψυχά ἐστιν, ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις ἀφ' ἕξεως· καὶ τὰγαθὰ βούλονται τοῖς φιλοῦμένοις ἐκείνων ἕνεκα, οὐ κατὰ πάθος ἀλλὰ καθ' ἕξιν.

⁸Several notes concerning the translation of this passage: (1) I prefer “fondness” as a translation of ‘*philēsis*’, which is usually rendered as “loving” or “affection.” This better captures the wide range of objects and attitudes associated with *philēsis*; for example, Aristotle seems to allow that you can have *philēsis* for your favorite mug (*NE* VIII.2, 1155b27-28), but it is not clear that “loving” or “affection” properly apply in this case. This also better reflects Aristotle’s view that even *philēsis* takes time and familiarity to develop (*NE* IX.5, 1166b34-67a1), as we speak of “growing fond” of something and “having a fondness” for something in a way which indicates a kind of habitual state. (2) “they love [each other] in return” renders the finite verb ἀντιφιλοῦσι. Translators routinely make this into a participle for ease—“reciprocal loving”—but as we will see, this risks confusion, especially if ‘*philēsis*’ is translated as “loving.” This is a rare use for Aristotle of the verb ἀντιφιλεῖν in the plural. It is most often used to indicate one person having love for a person who loves her. In the plural it seems to indicate two people loving and being loved by each other (cf. *MM* II.11, 1209a8-10). (3) I have supplied “friends” as the subject of ἀντιφιλοῦσι, but as I will argue in §5.3.1, this argument applies to *primary philia* in particular.

⁹But it seems to me quite clear that it *is* an argument. It begins with what looks like a conclusion (“*philēsis* seems to be a *pathos*, and *philia*, a *hexis*”). This apparent conclusion is followed by a γὰρ clause, which we would expect to give the justification. And this justification consists of three clauses (with subsequent clauses connected by δὲ) which when properly understood, *can* be seen to offer an argument for the conclusion.

¹⁰For sources of the consensus interpretation, see 45n19 below.

philia through reciprocation. But Aristotle does *not* claim that a *hexis* comes from *prohairesis*; he rather claims that *prohairesis* comes *from* a *hexis*. So the role assigned to *prohairesis* by the consensus interpretation does nothing to show that *philia* itself is a *hexis*. I consider this problem in detail and defend an alternative interpretation in Chapter 3. By misconstruing the structure of this argument, the consensus interpretation also makes it difficult to see how this argument fits into its context. The consensus interpretation forces an abrupt transition to Aristotle’s remark on wishing goods to one’s friend “according to a state,” and it has a hard time explaining how this argument might especially apply to primary *philia* in particular, as the larger context suggests that it does. I examine these issues more fully in Chapters 4 and 5.

In this chapter, I want to start from a confusion which has made the consensus interpretation seem almost inescapable. Some expositors of the consensus interpretation construe the argument in terms of a contrast between *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis* (“reciprocal fondness”).¹¹ If the argument is construed in this way, then of course it appears that *all* the difference lies in the “*anti-*” prefix. And if Aristotle is understood as claiming that *antiphilēsis* involves *prohairesis*, whereas *philēsis* does not, then it would seem that the role of *prohairesis* must be in the reciprocation taken to be indicated by the “*anti-*” prefix. The consensus interpretation easily concludes that in this argument *philia* is distinguished from *philēsis* by the fact that *philia* requires reciprocation which involves *prohairesis*.

But Aristotle does not contrast *philēsis* with *antiphilēsis* in this argument; rather, he contrasts the noun, ‘*philēsis*’, with the verb, ‘*antiphilein*.’ This is important because ‘*antiphilein*’ does not mean “to have *philēsis* for each other,” but “to *philein* each other” and given the way in which Aristotle uses *philein* to characterize *philia*, *antiphilein* thus potentially brings in the full range of features associated with *philia*. This raises the possibility that the role of *prohairesis* lies in some feature *besides* reciprocation. Thus it is potentially misleading to frame the argument of VIII.5 in terms of a distinction between *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis* because this is liable to give the false impression that the distinction Aristotle is making and the *locus* of the *prohairesis* must be found in the “*anti*” rather than in the more general contrast between *philēsis* and *philia* with which Aristotle is concerned there.

¹¹See below, 47n25.

In order to approach this argument in VIII.5 with a proper appreciation of the interpretive options, we need a clearer understanding of Aristotle's notion of *philēsis* and its relationship to *philia*. This issue is also worth pursuing in its own right: Although *philēsis* has received little sustained attention from scholars, it plays a key role in Aristotle's account of *philia*, which requires or is partially characterized by *antiphilēsis*.¹² Moreover, I will argue that *philēsis* itself is a complex mixture of emotional, motivational, and dispositional elements which covers important areas of love and friendship to which *philia* does not apply.

The term '*philēsis*' seems to have been coined by Aristotle: It does not occur before Aristotle, and after Aristotle it occurs almost exclusively in the commentators on Aristotle. Within Aristotle, it does not occur outside of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. '*Philēsis*' thus seems to be a specialized term suited to the discussion of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and one that was not widely taken up.¹³ This makes '*philēsis*' an excellent case study in Aristotle's technical vocabulary. My hypothesis, suggested by the usage of '*philēsis*' in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is that Aristotle introduced the term as a *refinement* to the discussion of *philia* in the *Eudemian Ethics*. So I will begin by arguing that the Eudemian discussion exhibits a kind of *messiness* which *philēsis*, properly understood, is well-suited to clean up.¹⁴ This messiness has to do with the treatment of inanimate objects (and this is not surprising, given that as we have already seen, Aristotle explicitly connects *philēsis* with inanimate objects in *NE* VIII.5). I will not argue that the Eudemian treatment is outright *contradictory*, since this would involve settling big questions about, among other things, the attribution of apparently-psychological capacities to inanimate objects. Even the appearance of inconsistencies will be enough to shed light on the role of *philēsis*.

¹²*Philēsis* receives passing attention in many discussions of Aristotle's account of *philia*, some of which will be discussed below, but I have found no focused treatment of it.

¹³It is an interesting question *why* '*philēsis*' did not enter the philosophical vocabulary (at least as far as surviving texts indicate). But I will not pursue this question here.

¹⁴On this point, then, I think we find a counter-example to Rowe's general view that the *Nicomachean* discussion presupposes elements of the *Eudemian* discussion in ways that make it *less* clear. See Rowe (1971, Ch. I.5).

2.1 Inanimate Objects in the Eudemian Account of *Philia*

At a general level, the Eudemian and Nicomachean accounts clearly differ in their handling of inanimate objects. When Aristotle sets up the discussion of *philia* in *NE* VIII.1—setting out the *endoxa* to be accommodated, the problems to be resolved, etc.—Aristotle describes one line of inquiry as “higher” (*ἀνώτερον*) and “more concerned with nature” (*φυσικώτερον*) (1155b1). This is the approach of those who discuss *philia* at the elemental or cosmic level, like Euripides, Heraclitus, and Empedocles. The puzzles of this natural scientific approach can be set aside, Aristotle says, “since they do not belong to the present inquiry,” which concerns human affairs (1155b8-9).¹⁵ When Aristotle discusses *philia* in terms of likeness and opposition in *NE* VIII.8—concepts also employed by the natural scientific approach—Aristotle is careful to limit discussion of the way in which the elements, e.g., the wet and the dry, might fit the model of *philia* between opposites. These matters again “belong to quite another” (*ἀλλοτριώτερα*) inquiry (1159b23-4).

Aristotle sets up the natural scientific approach similarly in *EE* VII.1, referencing Euripides, Heraclitus, and Empedocles; but he does not set it aside. And instead of bracketing the natural scientific approach in the discussion of likeness and opposition in *EE* VII.5, Aristotle explicitly seeks to situate it in relation to his own account (1239b5-10).¹⁶ The discussion of inanimate objects, particularly the elements, is correspondingly much more detailed than that of *NE* VIII.8. There is more to this difference in approach, I think, than a narrowing of the topic in the Nicomachean discussion. He also employs a new concept, *philēsis*, to make the Nicomachean account more precise.

The discussion of *philia* between opposites in *EE* VII.5 begins with a general thesis: “The opposite is dear to the opposite as being useful; for what is similar to itself is useless to it” (1239b23-4).¹⁷ After giving a few examples, like husband and wife, Aristotle rephrases this thesis in terms of desire:

[A]: ...and the opposite is pleasant and an object of appetite [*ἐπιθυμητὸν*] as being useful, and not as constituting the end but as contributing towards the end. For whenever [something]

¹⁵ τὰ μὲν οὖν φυσικὰ τῶν ἀπορημάτων ἀφείσθω (οὐ γὰρ οἰκεία τῆς παρουσίας σκέψεως).

¹⁶ Here Aristotle describes this way of discussing *philia* as that done “by those who include outside matters” (ὑπὸ τῶν ἕξωθεν συμπαλαμβανόντων).

¹⁷ τὸ δ' ἐναντίον τῷ ἐναντίῳ φίλον ὡς τὸ χρήσιμον· αὐτὸ γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸ ὅμοιον ἄχρηστον

gets what it appetitively desires [ἐπιθυμεί], it is in possession of the end, and it does not desire [ὀρέγεται] the opposite, such as the hot [desiring] the cold, and the dry [desiring] the wet.¹⁸ (*EE* VII.5, 1239b25-29)

The opposite is desired as something useful. When it is obtained, the desire for it goes away; so the opposite is desired not as an end *itself* but as usefully contributing *towards* some end. Notably, Aristotle's examples here are pairs of opposed elements apparently *desiring* each other, the hot and the cold, the dry and the wet. It is difficult to avoid attributing some quasi-psychological attitude to them analogous to love. Immediately before introducing the elements, Aristotle does switch to 'ὀρέγεται,' which might be used in a less psychological and more metaphorical sense of "striving." But this use of 'ὀρέγεται' is so closely linked to the previous 'ἐπιθυμεί' that it is hard to make much of the transition. And clearly this point about desire is meant to be connected to the initial thesis that "[t]he opposite is dear to the opposite as being useful..." Aristotle is preparing to connect this claim to his own account of *philia* in terms of the three objects of love, which had earlier been distinguished with reference to desire (*EE* VII.2, 1235b18-1236a15). But Aristotle has already said that inanimate objects, though they can be loved, are incapable of loving (*EE* VII.2, 1237a37-40). So we might at least wonder at this point, Just how do inanimate objects fit into the account of loving and *philia*?

The way Aristotle proceeds only intensifies this question. He moves *directly* to applying this discussion to *philia*:

[B]: And in a way even the *philia* for the opposite is for the good; for they [sc., opposites] desire [ὀρέγεται] each other on account of the mean. For like tallies, they desire [ὀρέγεται] each other on account of producing in this way one mean out of both. Yet it [*philia*?]¹⁹ is incidentally for the opposite, but intrinsically for the mean. For the opposites do not desire each other, but the mean.²⁰ (*EE* VII.5, 1239b29-34)

Throughout this passage, which immediately follows the previous one, Aristotle refers to

¹⁸καὶ ἡδὺ καὶ ἐπιθυμητὸν τὸ ἐναντίον ὡς χρήσιμον, καὶ οὐχ ὡς ἐν τέλει ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸς τὸ τέλος. ὅταν γὰρ τύχη οὐδ' ἐπιθυμεί, ἐν τῷ τέλει μὲν ἐστίν, οὐκ ὀρέγεται δὲ τοῦ ἐναντίου, οἷον τὸ θερμὸν τοῦ ψυχροῦ καὶ τὸ ξηρὸν τοῦ ὑγροῦ.

¹⁹There is no expressed subject, and it may be that the *desire* is incidental (as Inwood and Woolf translate) or that the *philia* is incidental (as Kenny takes it). These claims are of course related, but I am inclined to see *philia* as the referent. The structure seems to be: a point about *philia* supported by a claim about desire, followed by another point about *philia* (introduced by the 'ἔτι') supported by another claim about desire.

²⁰ἔστι δὲ πως καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἐναντίου φιλία τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. ὀρέγεται γὰρ ἀλλήλων διὰ τὸ μέσον· ὡς σύμβολα γὰρ ὀρέγεται ἀλλήλων διὰ τὸ οὕτω γίνεσθαι ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἐν μέσον. ἔτι κατὰ συμβεβηκός ἐστι τοῦ ἐναντίου, καθ' αὐτὸ δὲ τῆς μεσότητος. ὀρέγονται γὰρ οὐκ ἀλλήλων τὰναντία, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μέσου.

neuter “opposites.” There has been no explicit narrowing of the subject, and so Aristotle’s claim that “...in a way even the *philia* for the opposite is for the good” at least *appears* to apply generally, even to the example of the opposed elements just given. Are we to take it, then, that there can be *philia* between inanimate objects, even though they are incapable of loving (τὸ φιλεῖν)? (Aristotle does imply that there is *philia* for inanimate objects when he argues that goodwill is not a part of pleasure *philia*, because if it were, then there would also be goodwill for inanimate objects (*EE* VII.7, 1241a8-9).)

Aristotle does eventually draw an explicit contrast between inanimate and animate things. But even this contrast is of only limited help:

[C]: For if those who are too cold are heated and if those who are too hot are cooled, they are brought into the mean; and likewise in the other cases. But if not, they are always in a state of desire [ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ], not in the mean states. But the one in the mean without desire takes pleasure in the things that are pleasant by nature, and others [take pleasure in] everything that deviates from their natural condition. This pattern [εἶδος], then, is also in the case of non-living things; but loving [τὸ φιλεῖν] comes about whenever it is in the case of living things.²¹ (*EE* VII.5, 1239b34-1240a1)

Aristotle, switching from the neuter to the masculine, now illustrates the previous point in terms of *people* (but not yet *pairs* of people): Those who are, for example, too *hot*, perhaps because of a fever, can be brought into the mean state through the opposite, being *cooled*. Those in an extreme, then, only incidentally desire the opposite as being useful for bringing them into the mean state.²² It is those *in* the mean state who desire and take pleasure in the things which are pleasant *by nature*—a point Aristotle repeats elsewhere.²³ At this point, Aristotle draws a contrast between inanimate and animate things: “This pattern [εἶδος], then, is also in the case of non-living things; but loving [τὸ φιλεῖν] comes about whenever it is in the case of living things.” But this contrast is not as helpful as we might wish precisely because it is unclear what “pattern” (εἶδος) Aristotle means to *attribute* to inanimate things

²¹ὑπερψυχθέντες γάρ, ἐὰν θερμανθῶσιν, εἰς τὸ μέσον καθίστανται, καὶ ὑπερθερμανθέντες, ἐὰν ψυχθῶσιν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων. εἰ δὲ μή, αἰὲν ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ, οὐκ ἐν τοῖς μέσοις. ἀλλὰ χαίρει ὁ ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἄνευ ἐπιθυμίας τοῖς φύσει ἡδέουσιν, οἳ δὲ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐξιστάσιν τῆς φύσει ἕξεως. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀψύχων ἐστίν· τὸ φιλεῖν δὲ γίνεται, ὅταν ᾗ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμψύχων.

²²The *Lysis* is clearly in the background here. This is Aristotle’s answer to the potentially worrisome role of something *bad* in *philia*, which troubles Socrates when he reaches the conclusion that “the body, which is neither good nor bad, is a friend of medicine on account of disease, that is, on account of something bad” (219a1-3).

²³E.g., *EE* VII.2, 1235b33-1236a; *NE* III.4, 1113a29-33; *NE* X.5, 1176a15-19.

and what notion of “loving” ($\tau\acute{o}$ $\phi\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$) he means to *deny* them.

I will not go into the interpretive options in detail here. It suffices for my point that there *are* several options. The “pattern” might be understood in more or less psychological terms: At one end, it might be the immediately preceding pattern of *desiring* and *taking pleasure* in an opposite. At the other end, it could be merely the pattern of opposites *bringing* each other into the mean (without attributing desire). The pattern might also be understood as either one-sided (like a person who is too hot desiring the cold) or reciprocally (like the wet and the dry “desiring” each other).

This latter distinction corresponds to a potential distinction in $\tau\acute{o}$ $\phi\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$: This might be understood either as the one-sided activity of loving or as being in the reciprocal relationship of *philia* (i.e., ‘ $\phi\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ ’ as “being friends”). So it could be that inanimate objects are capable of quasi-psychological attitudes, but these attitudes do not constitute *loving*. Or it could be that inanimate objects do stand in relationships of, we might say, “attraction” to each other, but these relationships do not constitute *philia*.

As we have already seen, these interpretive options may be in tension with passages earlier in the chapter where Aristotle does seem to attribute both something like loving and a kind of *philia* to inanimate objects. After all, this is what makes them relevant to the discussion and what allows Aristotle to conclude the chapter with the general statement (referring to neuter plural opposite *things*), “Therefore, the opposites are friends incidentally, as has been said, and on account of the good” (1240a3-4). But again, my point is not that these difficulties *cannot* be settled in a consistent manner. My point is rather that this discussion gives inanimate objects an ambiguous status. Aristotle seems to want to attribute *something* like loving and *philia* to inanimate objects, but he lacks the framework to draw clear-cut distinctions.

Aristotle has good reason to want to address inanimate objects in *some* way. They are part of the domain addressed by Plato’s *Lysis*, to which Aristotle is clearly responding.²⁴ In the *Lysis*, Socrates tries to develop an account of being a “friend” or being “dear” which applies *generally*. He considers both cases of opposed inanimate objects being friends with

²⁴Price (1989, 9-10) provides a useful summary of the similarities between the *Lysis* and Aristotle’s account.

each other and cases of people being friends with inanimate objects.²⁵ This level of generality causes many of the problems which block Socrates' progress. And in *EE* VII.5, I think we see Aristotle likewise encountering problems. Aristotle improved on the account of the *Lysis* by distinguishing between the good, the pleasant, and the useful as the objects of love. But this distinction is not enough to forestall difficult questions which arise when he tries to accommodate the general claim that opposites, including inanimate objects, are “friends.” The Nicomachean account seeks to answer these questions partly by restricting the domain of inquiry—excluding elemental and cosmic *philia*—and partly, I argue, by introducing *philēsis*. *Philēsis* thus represents a significant aspect of Aristotle's engagement with the *Lysis*.

2.2 *Philēsis* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

In fact, as we will see, Aristotle uses an example reminiscent of the *Lysis* to introduce *philēsis* in the first of three passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics* where Aristotle addresses *philēsis* most directly. In each of these passages, Aristotle is concerned to distinguish *philēsis* from a related concept: In VIII.2, Aristotle distinguishes *philēsis* from *philia* by appealing to the fact that an object of *philēsis*, unlike a party to *philia*, needs neither to reciprocate nor to have an independent good. In VIII.5, Aristotle again distinguishes *philēsis* from *philia*, this time arguing that *philēsis* is a feeling (*pathos*), whereas *philia* is a *hexis*. Finally in IX.5, Aristotle distinguishes *philēsis* from goodwill (*eūvoia*) by calling attention to the active motivation involved in *philēsis*. Scholars often treat these passages in isolation, and *philēsis* has suffered from this piece-meal treatment. Read together, they reveal an interesting account of a complex emotional condition that has not been sufficiently appreciated by commentators.

2.2.1 *Philēsis* and inanimate objects in VIII.2

After setting out the puzzles in VIII.1, Aristotle proposes: “Perhaps it would become clear concerning these things if the object of love were identified” (1155b17-18).²⁶ Aristotle

²⁵For examples of the first sort, see 215e; and for examples of the second sort, see 212d.

²⁶Τάχα δ' ἂν γένοιτο περὶ αὐτῶν φανερόν γνωρισθέντος τοῦ φιλητοῦ.

then distinguishes *three* “objects” of love (*philēta*), the good, the pleasant, and the useful, and he charts the relations between them. Here Aristotle’s analysis parallels his treatment of desire.²⁷ These are the *formal* objects of love (in the same way that according to Aristotle, desire is for the good or apparent good). These formal objects pick out aspects in virtue of which something is loved (or desired). It would be natural—perhaps more natural than in the case of desire—to raise a question about the *range* of these formal objects: Can *any* particular thing which instantiates one of these formal objects be loved?²⁸

It is in response, I think, to this kind of implicit question that Aristotle brings in *philēsis*:

Although there are three things on account of which [people] love, in the case of *philēsis* for inanimate things it is not called ‘*philia*’...²⁹ (*NE* VIII.2, 1155b27-28)

There is a distinction to be made which depends upon whether the *philēta* are instantiated by inanimate or animate things. The way in which Aristotle *begins* this distinction by referencing love (*φιλεῖν*) might lead us to expect something like: If one loves (*φιλεῖν*) an inanimate object, then the resulting relationship is not *philia* but *philēsis*. However, Aristotle does not continue in quite this way.³⁰ It is *philēsis*, not *φιλεῖν*, which is directly attached to the inanimate objects: “...in the case of *philēsis* for inanimate things...”³¹ This gives the impression, which I think we will see confirmed, that *philēsis* takes on characteristics of both loving (*τὸ φιλεῖν*) and *philia*. It can take the place of *τὸ φιλεῖν* as an active attitude but can also be viewed as a kind of relationship comparable to *philia*. This is important because, among other reasons, it opens the possibility that in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, unlike the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle reserves ‘*τὸ φιλεῖν*’ for *living* things.

Aristotle supports this distinction between *philēsis* and *philia* by pointing to two distin-

²⁷Cf. *NE* II.3, 1104b30-31, where Aristotle lists the three objects of choice as the fine, the beneficial, and the pleasant (*τριῶν γὰρ ὄντων τῶν εἰς τὰς αἰρέσεις καὶ τριῶν τῶν εἰς τὰς φηγάς, καλοῦ συμφέροντος ἡδέος...*). On this point, see Whiting (2006, §4).

²⁸It might be intuitively plausible that anything which can *appear good* can be *desired*. But VIII.1 has just demonstrated that there are more conflicting beliefs about the kinds of things which can be *loved*.

²⁹*τριῶν δ' ὄντων δι' ἃ φιλοῦσιν, ἐπὶ μὲν τῇ τῶν ἀψύχων φιλήσει οὐ λέγεται φιλία.*

³⁰Of course, Aristotle could not have gone on to make a simple distinction concerning the resulting relationship depending upon whether the object of *φιλεῖν* was inanimate or living because unreciprocated love will not result in *philia*.

³¹It could be that the subject of ‘*λέγεται*’ is meant to bring in *φιλεῖν* from the first clause, but I think it is more likely that the subject is specified by the *ἐπὶ* clause, as, e.g., Reeve and Irwin translate. We might also make a connection with *τὸ φιλεῖν* by assuming that *philēsis* just is the activity of *τὸ φιλεῖν*, as some scholars seem to do, but as we will see, this is an assumption we should not make.

guishing features. *Philēsis* for inanimate objects is not *philia*:

for there is no reciprocal fondness [*antiphilēsis*], nor is there wish [*boulēsis*] for that thing's good (for presumably it would be ridiculous to wish good things to wine, but if indeed [someone does], he wishes that it be preserved, so that he himself might have it).³² (*NE* VIII.2, 1155b28-31)

First, inanimate objects are of course incapable of *returning* fondness, so there is no reciprocal fondness (*antiphilēsis*). (And note that here Aristotle does use the noun, '*antiphilēsis*,' rather than the verb, '*antiphilein*,' as he does in our passage from VIII.5.) But as Aristotle will go on to assert, *philia* is a reciprocal relationship between two (or more) people.³³ If someone wishes goods to someone for her own sake but the wish is not returned, then the wisher is said to be merely "good-willed" (*εὖνους*) and the two do not stand in a relationship of *philia* (*NE* VIII.2, 1155b32-34).³⁴

Second, *philēsis* for inanimate objects does not amount to *philia*, because inanimate objects are not proper *recipients* of well-wishing, which is required for *philia* (although whether the stronger notion of goodwill is required must be considered later). Inanimate objects do not seem to *have* "a good" such that someone might wish good things *to them*. Here Aristotle employs an example which might make us think of the *Lysis*, where Socrates considers "*phil-*" compounds, including "wine-lovers" (*φίλωνοι*) (212d5-8). It would be ridiculous, Aristotle supposes, to wish goods for one's *wine*; the closest attitude would be to wish to the wine something which is good for *oneself*. This is because inanimate objects do not have

³²οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀντιφίλησις, οὐδὲ βούλησις ἐκείνῳ ἀγαθοῦ (γελοῖον γὰρ ἴσως τῷ οἴνῳ βούλεσθαι τὰγαθά, ἀλλ' εἴπερ, σφύζεσθαι βούλεται αὐτόν, ἵνα αὐτὸς ἔχη).

³³This requirement comes up in an interesting way in the discussion of self-love, where Aristotle wonders whether there can really be *philia* with oneself, given that *philia* requires two or more parties (*NE* IX.4, 1166a33-b2; cf. *EE* 1240a13-21).

³⁴This raises complicated questions both about the nature of *philia*—in particular, whether all three forms of *philia* require goodwill (which will be addressed in Chapter 5)—and about the nature of goodwill () itself. David Konstan, for instance, supposes that this sense of being "good-willed" (*εὖνους*) in VIII.2 is just like *philia*, but single-sided. This sense thus involves both *philēsis* and wishing goods, and in this respect it differs from the more technical notion of goodwill discussed in IX.5 which Aristotle distinguishes from both *philēsis* and *philia* (Konstan, 2008, 209). Against this view, (1) it is not unlikely that, after just indicating that *philēsis* is separable from goodwill, Aristotle is also treating goodwill as separable from *philēsis*, as he will in IX.5. Certainly *philēsis* has not been explicitly reintroduced, and the focus is on the role of goodwill in *philia*. And (2) the example which Aristotle will go on to give of having goodwill towards someone one *has not seen* (*NE* VIII.2, 1155b34-56a1) seems to fit the notion of goodwill discussed in IX.5, which may be motivationally *inert*. However, there would seem to be *some* difference in the way in which Aristotle is treating goodwill in VIII.2 and IX.5, given that goodwill seems to be restricted to primary *philia* in IX.5. I address this issue in Chapter 5.

independent goods.³⁵ Their goods are rather dependent upon the *user*. (It is an interesting feature of Aristotle’s example, to which I will return, that the attitude is not quite the one we might expect to be ascribed to the wine-lover: It is not aimed at wine in general or drinking wine habitually; rather, it seems to concern a *particular* wine which it is hoped will be preserved, like a connoisseur taking care to age a particular bottle.³⁶)

Aristotle returns to this point later in *NE* VIII.11 as part of his discussion of the relationship between *philia* and justice. Aristotle argues that there is no *philia* (or justice) between craftsperson and tool, soul and body, or master and slave because there is “nothing in common” between them (1161a32-35). For the same reason, there is no *philia* or justice with inanimate objects in general (1161a35-b2). Aristotle puts this point more clearly in terms of their goods in the corresponding passage in the *Eudemian Ethics*:

Since it holds likewise, soul in relation to body and craftsman in relation to tool and master in relation to slave, of these there is no community [*κοινωνία*]. For there are not two things, but the *one* and the other belongs to it.³⁷ Nor is the good for each separable, but rather the good of both is [the good] of the one for whose sake [the other] is.³⁸ (*EE* VII.9, 1241b17-22)

The attitudes of well-wishing involved in *philia* require that each party have an independent good that might be promoted. However, when one thing, A, is *for the sake of* another, B, then in a sense, there is only one *good*, the good of B. And the “good” of A is subordinate to and determined by that of B. There is a sense in which such things can be “benefited” by their use, but this falls short of well-wishing (*NE* VIII.11, 1161a35-b1). To the extent that *this* thought is meant to apply to inanimate objects in general (and to horses, oxen, etc., as at *NE* VIII.11, 1161b1-2), it raises large questions about the scope of Aristotle’s teleology.³⁹ But it is at least clear that inanimate things and non-rational animals do not

³⁵Nussbaum rightly emphasizes this independence as part of what makes friends a vulnerable external good (2001a, Ch. 12, esp., 354-5).

³⁶This may in fact be what Aristotle has in mind. Wine was already being purposefully aged in the Classical period, and aged wine was valued at least by some (Davidson, 1998, 40-43). Pindar, for instance, praises “old wine” (*Ol.* 9.48).

³⁷I agree with Inwood and Woolf in bracketing ‘οὐδέν,’ as the OCT does. Kenny accepts Jackson’s emendation ‘οὐδ’ ἓν’ and translates: “because they are not two different things: the first term in each is unified, but the second belongs to the first and has no unity of its own.” However, the use of ‘τοῦ ἑνός’ in 1241b21 seems to tell against this reading.

³⁸ἐπεὶ δ’ ὁμοίως ἔχει ψυχὴ πρὸς σῶμα καὶ τεχνίτης πρὸς ὄργανον καὶ δεσπότης πρὸς δοῦλον, τούτων μὲν οὐκ ἔστι κοινωνία. οὐ γὰρ δύο ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἓν, τὸ δὲ τοῦ ἑνός. {οὐδέν}. οὐδὲ διαιρετὸν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐκατέρω, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀμφοτέρων τοῦ ἑνός οὐ ἕνεκα ἐστίν.

³⁹Cf. *EE* VII.10, 1242a13-19. On the scope of Aristotle’s teleology, see Sedley (1991) and especially Gelber

share in *eudaimonia*.⁴⁰ In this sense, then, which I take to be the sense relevant to *philia*, they do not have an independent, self-standing good.⁴¹ Their “good” can be determined by the use to which they are put—for example, the enjoyment of wine by the wine-lover, the prescription of wine by the doctor, etc. There can be *philēsis* for such things based upon the way in which they fit into one’s own good, but one cannot stand to them in a relationship of *philia*.⁴²

2.2.2 *Philēsis* as a *pathos* in VIII.5

Later in VIII.5 (the passage with which we began), Aristotle again distinguishes *philēsis* from *philia* and again appeals to inanimate objects:

Fondness [*philēsis*] seems to be a feeling, and friendship [*philia*] [seems to be] a state [*hexis*]; for there is fondness no less towards inanimate things, but they [sc., friends] love [each other] in return involving decision [*prohairesis*], and decision comes from a state; and they wish good things to those whom they love for their own sake not according to a feeling but according to a state.⁴³ (*NE* VIII.5, 1157b28-32)

Aristotle argues here that *philēsis* is a *pathos*, and *philia* is a *hexis*. I will examine this argument more fully in Chapter 3. For now, note that Aristotle’s use of the claim that there can be *philēsis* towards inanimate objects recalls the passage from VIII.2, and it is likely that this argument in VIII.5 turns on one (or more) of the features highlighted there, reciprocation and having an independent good. Clearly the role of *prohairesis* is central to this argument, and there are two ways in which *philēsis* might lack (and *philia* have) *prohairesis*, corresponding to those two features: First, it might be that *philēsis* is without *prohairesis* in the sense that *philēsis* is not exercised intentionally, at will—by *prohairesis*. Second, it might be that *philēsis* is without *prohairesis* in the sense that it does not require one

(2018), who argues for a “*huperetic*” sense of being for an end which holds between an instrument and the user of that instrument.

⁴⁰See, e.g., *NE* I.9, 1099b32-1100a1; *Pol.* III.9, 1280a32-4; *PA* II.10, 656a3-8.

⁴¹How exactly this independence is to be accommodated within friendship is a difficult issue. See, e.g., Whiting’s worries about the “colonizing ego” (1991, §4).

⁴²However, note that this contrast does not yet indicate anything determinate about the motivation behind well-wishing in *philia*. Parties to *philia* must have independent goods which can be promoted, but it may be that the wish that those goods be promoted is self-interested.

⁴³ἔοικε δ' ἡ μὲν φίλησις πάθει, ἡ δὲ φιλία ἔξει· ἡ γὰρ φίλησις οὐχ ἤττον πρὸς τὰ ἀψυχὰ ἐστίν, ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις ἀφ' ἑξέως· καὶ τὰγαθὰ βούλονται τοῖς φιλοῦμένοις ἐκείνων ἕνεκα, οὐ κατὰ πάθος ἀλλὰ καθ' ἑξίν. (On the translation of this passage, see 12n8 above.)

to act *prohairesitically* towards the good of the object. *Philēsis* does seem to lack *prohairesis* in both of these senses. As a *pathos*, *philēsis* does not seem to be the kind of thing which can be controlled by *prohairesis*.⁴⁴ And given that the object of *philēsis* might not even *have* a good (as in the case of inanimate objects), *philēsis* certainly does not require *prohairesitic* action regarding the good of its object.⁴⁵

This distinction between *philēsis* as a *pathos* and *philia* as a *hexis* is sometimes treated as a distinction between *active* and *passive*. On this way of treating the distinction, *philēsis* is thought to be the *activity* of *philia*.⁴⁶ (And this may be part of the reason why expositors of the consensus interpretation see no problem in shifting from *antiphilein* to *antiphilēsis*.) At a certain level, this may be correct: Aristotle twice claims that *philia* and *philēsis* co-vary with the object of love (*NE* VIII.3, 1156a6-7; VIII.7, 1158b17-19); and the conjunction of both terms might be taken to pick out the relationship and the attitudes within it.

Although we might use ‘*philēsis*’ to refer to the kind of active fondness or affection present in *philia*, we should not *identify* *philēsis* with the activity of *philia* for at least two reasons: First, the activity of *philia* requires well-wishing of some sort, but as we have seen, *philēsis* does not. The objects of *philēsis* may not even *have* a good which one might wish to be promoted. *Philēsis* thus encompasses a wider range of possible attitudes than the activity of *philia*. When Aristotle needs to describe the activity of *philia*, he rather reaches for ‘*τὸ φιλεῖν*,’ for instance in VIII.8, where Aristotle argues that “loving” is more characteristic of *philia* than “being loved” (1159a27 ff.). I think that in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, at least, Aristotle identifies the activity of *philia* with *τὸ φιλεῖν* (although of course *τὸ φιλεῖν* can occur outside of *philia* too) and reserves it for cases in which a kind of well-wishing is involved.⁴⁷ Indeed, as I will argue, this narrowing of ‘*τὸ φιλεῖν*’ made possible by the introduction

⁴⁴Aristotle appeals to this fact in arguing that virtue is not a *pathos* in *NE* II.5 (1106a2-4).

⁴⁵In Chapter 3, I will argue that the consensus interpretation fails to properly take into account the first sense and wholly overlooks the second sense, which I argue is key to understanding this argument.

⁴⁶For instance, Price refers to the definition of ‘*τὸ φιλεῖν*’ in the *Rhetoric* (II.4, 1380b34-1381a3) as a definition of ‘*philēsis*’ (1995, 113).

⁴⁷On Aristotle’s vocabulary of love and friendship, see Konstan (2006, Ch. 8). Konstan notes the close connection between *philia* and *τὸ φιλεῖν* and occasionally comes close to suggesting that *τὸ φιλεῖν* requires well-wishing, saying, e.g., “As a name for simple love, that is, the altruistic wish for the good of another, *philia*, like *to philein*, is a *pathos*...” (178). But if he does accept this restriction, Konstan would appear to hold that *τὸ φιλεῖν* requires goodwill, whereas I have suggested, and this will require further explanation in Chapter 5, that *τὸ φιλεῖν* only requires *boulēsis* for the promotion of the beloved’s good (which *boulēsis* may or may not be for the beloved’s own sake).

of ‘*philēsis*’ is part of what gives Aristotle greater precision in the Nicomachean discussion. And second, as we will see, the way in which Aristotle contrasts *philēsis* and goodwill further suggests that *philēsis* itself has *hexis*-like features, so to restrict *philēsis* to an activity would be an oversimplification. (And this may be why here in VIII.5 Aristotle says that *philēsis* “seems” (ζοικε) to be a *pathos*.)

Certainly this distinction does indicate an important difference in the *stability* of *philēsis* and *philia*. In the *Categories*, Aristotle describes a *hexis* as an especially durable kind of condition (διάθεσις).⁴⁸ His primary examples of *hexeis* are knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and virtue, both of which take time to develop and are quite resistant to change.⁴⁹ This fits well the characterization of (primary) *philia* as developing slowly over time: Friends must have shared the proverbial amount of salt because the required knowledge and trust of each other takes time to acquire (*NE* VIII.3, 1156b25-32; cf. *NE* VIII.4, 1157a20-22). The *philia* built on such a foundation and based in each friend’s character is also especially durable (*NE* VIII.3, 1156b9-12). It is likely that the way in which *philēsis* is characterized here as a *pathos* indicates that *philēsis* need not take so long to develop or be so long-lasting.

However, Gauthier and Jolif take *philēsis* too far in the other direction when they suggest that *philēsis* is a *pathos* in the sense that “...one is able to fall for a good wine, for example, in one blow and without forethought, to feel an outburst of passion for it...”⁵⁰ This sets up their view of the contrast between *philēsis* and *philia* in this argument: *Philēsis* can occur suddenly and with no thought, but the reciprocation involved in *philia* requires *prohairesis*. But as we will see, this view of *philēsis* directly contradicts Aristotle’s claim in IX.5 that *philēsis* also takes time to develop. In this respect, *philēsis* seems to differ from other *pathē* in that *philēsis* refers directly to a kind of emotional *state* or *disposition* (something *hexis*-like)

⁴⁸ *Cat.* 8b27-35: “A state differs from a condition in being more stable and lasting longer. Such are the branches of knowledge and the virtues. For knowledge seems to be something permanent and hard to change if one has even a moderate grasp of a branch of knowledge, unless a great change is brought about by illness or some other such thing. So also virtue; justice, temperance, and the rest seem to be not easily changed.” Hutchinson (1986, Ch. 2) provides a thorough account of Aristotle’s notion of a *hexis*, especially as it relates to the ethics.

⁴⁹It is clear from Aristotle’s account of virtue in *NE* II that it is acquired through a process of habituation. It may be more surprising that knowledge, which in some sense can be taught, also requires time to develop, but see *NE* VII.3, 1147a18-24.

⁵⁰“...on peut s’éprendre d’un bon vin, par exemple, d’un seul coup et sans réflexion préalable, éprouver pour lui une bouffée de passion...” (Gauthier and Jolif, 1958, II.681).

developed and persistent over time. Certainly other *pathē*, like fear, could *become* emotional dispositions—this is key to Aristotle’s account of becoming virtuous—but fear can grip one suddenly, all at once in a way that *philēsis* cannot. Perhaps the analogue in the domain of fear would be something like a *phobia*.

As Aspasius points out, classifying *philēsis* as a *pathos* does seem to indicate an important *non-rational* element in *philia*.⁵¹ The *pathē* are emotional responses of the non-rational part of soul which Aristotle particularly associates with pleasure and pain.⁵² To the extent that all *philiai* involve *philēsis*, as Aristotle seems to hold, all *philiai* then involve some kind of a non-rational, emotional attachment.⁵³ But the issue of the non-rational nature of *philēsis* is perhaps not as clear-cut as Aspasius supposes: As we have already seen in VIII.2, *philēsis* can be directly connected with what is usually taken to be a highly rational form of motivation, *boulēsis*, as when a person *wishes* that her wine be preserved. This brings *philēsis* closer to *philia* itself, which is often taken to be defined as the *wishing* of goods for one’s friend.

Aristotle does elsewhere list *philia* among the *pathē*. But given the care he takes to distinguish *philia* from *philēsis*, I take those references to be general, non-technical uses of ‘*philia*.’ As the Nicomachean discussion shows, it would be more precise to refer to *philēsis* as the *pathos* in the domain of *philia* (although even this would not be entirely satisfactory since like *philia*, *philēsis* is not the kind of thing that an orator might suddenly arouse in an audience).⁵⁴ The classification of *philēsis* as a *pathos* and its connection to *boulēsis* raise important questions about the structure of the motivations involved in *philia*. I will address an aspect of this issue in Chapter 4, where I consider the distinction Aristotle draws in this passage from VIII.5 between wishing “according to a feeling” (*κατὰ πάθος*) and “according to a state” (*καθ’ ἕξις*).

⁵¹Aspasius, *On Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics* 8, 172, 8-23. See below, §2.3.

⁵²Rapp (2013, §IV) attempts to fit *philia* into the *Rhetoric*’s framework of defining the *pathē* with reference to pleasure and pain.

⁵³*Philēsis* is thus relevant to the long-standing debate over the role of affective ties in *philia*. Malcolm Heath, for instance, has argued that the Greek notion of *philia* “is not, at root, a subjective bond of affection and emotional warmth, but the entirely objective bond of reciprocal obligation; one’s *philos* is the man one is obliged to help, and on whom one can (or ought to be able to) rely for help when oneself is in need” (Heath, 1987, 73-74). On this view, cf. Peachin (2001). Konstan has argued energetically against this view: See, e.g., Konstan (1997, 1-23 and *passim*), Konstan (2006, Ch. 8), Konstan (2008), and Konstan (2018).

⁵⁴On this issue, see Rapp (2013, esp. 25). I agree with Rapp that *philia* involves important emotional elements, as *philēsis* indicates, but I am not convinced that *philia* as explained in *EE* VII and *NE* VIII-IX is itself a *pathos*.

2.2.3 *Philēsis* and goodwill in IX.5

The connection between *philēsis* and desire is made clearer in *NE* IX.5, one of a pair of chapters which distinguish *philia* from the closely related concepts of goodwill (*εὐνοια*) and concord (*ὁμόνοια*).⁵⁵ As we have already seen, some form of well-wishing or goodwill is an integral part of Aristotle’s account of *philia* from the beginning, but here he addresses goodwill directly, arguing that it is a potentially free-standing attitude.⁵⁶ To do this, Aristotle argues that goodwill can be separated from both *philia* and *philesis* (in VIII.2 Aristotle had argued that *philēsis* is separable from goodwill, and so we now learn that neither requires the other).

Goodwill is not *philia*, Aristotle argues, because the *epistemic* requirements, as it were, of goodwill are so much lower than those of *philia*. You do not need to *know* someone in order to have goodwill towards that person, as you might have goodwill towards the citizens of your country or those who practice the same profession; but it would be strange to say that you could be friends with someone you did not know. Likewise the recipient of your goodwill might never be *aware* of it; but surely it cannot escape your notice that you are *friends* with someone.⁵⁷ Aristotle says that these points have been mentioned before (1166b32), which I take to be a reference back to VIII.2: There Aristotle said that you could have goodwill towards someone you have never laid eyes on and this person might even have goodwill towards you, but this would not constitute *philia* (1155b34-1156a5). Goodwill, then, requires only the vague supposition that the recipient is somehow deserving of it, whereas *philia* requires greater, more precise knowledge of the friend.

Although *philesis* too is less demanding than *philia*, it is still more demanding than

⁵⁵We might also view these chapters as focused on the “features of friendship” (*τὰ φιλικὰ*), as e.g., Gauthier and Jolif (1958, II.725) and Whiting (2006, §6) do. Then they would be part of a larger unit including at least IX.4 on self-love, which begins, *Τὰ φιλικὰ δὲ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς πέλας, καὶ οἷς αἱ φιλίαι ὀρίζονται, ἔοικεν ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐληλυθέναι* (1166a1-2).

⁵⁶There is a question (mentioned above, 21n34) about how this later discussion of goodwill relates to Aristotle’s earlier usage of it. Some, such as Whiting (2006, 281) and Konstan (2006, 173), suppose that IX.5 introduces technical refinements to a pre-theoretic notion of goodwill in VIII.2. However, the way Aristotle refers in IX.5 (1166b32) to earlier discussions (on which see below) seems to indicate continuity. I discuss this more fully in Chapter 5.

⁵⁷In a sense, this statement is too strong: It may be difficult to “label” a relationship, but in any relationship approaching *philia*, one is certainly aware both of the other person and to some extent, of that person’s attitudes. I discuss a related issue in §5.1.3.1 below.

goodwill:

For [goodwill] does not have *διάτασις* or desire [*ὄρεξις*], but these things attend *philēsis*; and *philēsis* involves familiarity, but goodwill can arise suddenly, as happens toward contestants.⁵⁸ (*NE* IX.5, 1166b30-1167a1)

Aristotle points to two features which distinguish goodwill from *philēsis*: First, goodwill does not necessarily involve *διάτασις* or desire. (There are issues concerning the translation of ‘*διάτασις*,’ and so I have left it untranslated for now.) Second, whereas *philēsis* requires familiarity or intimacy, goodwill may come about *suddenly*. I will address the second feature first.

2.2.3.1 *Philēsis* and familiarity

Philēsis involves or comes about with *συνήθεια*—“familiarity,” “intimacy,” or “acquaintance.” This is a condition *philēsis* shares with *philia* (or perhaps we should say, a condition *philia* has in virtue of involving *philēsis*?). *Philia* requires trust, and trust is built through coming to know someone, which in turn requires close association (*συνήθεια*).⁵⁹ In both *philia* and *philēsis*, becoming acquainted or familiar with someone (or something) is a process which takes *time*. This is clear both from the way in which Aristotle elsewhere connects *συνήθεια* with time (e.g., *NE* VIII.3, 1156b25-32) and from the contrast Aristotle draws here with goodwill: Goodwill does not require *familiarity*, but rather can come about *suddenly*. Thus the requirement of familiarity for *philēsis* is not merely a knowledge requirement, although it certainly is that; there is an element of repetition or habit involved in *συνήθεια*. This shows that *philēsis* cannot be, as Gauthier and Jolif claim, an “outburst” of emotion where one is seized suddenly, all at once by a feeling of love for something.⁶⁰ Rather, *philēsis* is developed over time as one becomes familiar with its object. It takes time to come to know that a new mug fits your hand well, holds heat well, is resilient, is easily cleaned, etc. (although presumably less time than it takes to come to know a friend as trustworthy).

As we have seen from VIII.2 and VIII.5, *philēsis* can be had towards a wide range of

⁵⁸οὐ γὰρ ἔχει διάτασιν οὐδ' ὄρεξιν, τῇ φιλήσει δὲ ταῦτ' ἀκολουθεῖ· καὶ ἡ μὲν φίλησις μετὰ συνηθείας, ἡ δ' εὐνοία καὶ ἐκ προσπαίου, οἷον καὶ περὶ τοὺς ἀγωνιστὰς συμβαίνει·

⁵⁹See, e.g., *NE* VIII.3, 1156b25-32 and *NE* VIII.4, 1157a20-22.

⁶⁰See above, 25n50.

objects. This includes the objects of *philia*, other people who can reciprocate, and other living things, whether they can reciprocate or not; and it includes inanimate objects like your favorite mug or shirt, and perhaps by extension your favorite café or vacation spot.⁶¹ But if *philēsis* is a fondness for something developed over time, then there is an important limit on the attitudes which will count as *philēsis*. We can see this by contrasting the way Alexander Nehamas explains the *philēsis*:

Philēsis is a very broad, generic attitude: it ranges from a merchant’s cool appreciation of profit to the most intense erotic passion, and it is provoked by everything that, according to Aristotle, human beings care for: practical benefit or profit, pleasure, and virtue (*NE* 8.2, 1155b17-26). (Nehamas, 2010, 216).

It is certainly right that, like the objects of *philia*, the possible objects of *philēsis* are the *philēta*—the good, the pleasant, and the useful—and that *philēsis* can be directed towards a wider range of objects which have these properties than *philia*. But the familiarity and time required to develop *philēsis* mean that not every instance of caring about something based upon one of the *philēta* will amount to *philēsis*. This is precisely part of Aristotle’s point in contrasting *philēsis* and goodwill. We certainly *care* about someone when we have goodwill towards that person, and goodwill is based upon the appearance of some positive quality of that person. But such goodwill need not involve *philēsis*. And to the extent that an erotic passion is *sudden*, aroused all at once by the beauty of its object, that erotic passion will not amount to *philēsis*.⁶²

Nehamas’ characterization also raises an important question about the *generality* of *philēsis*: To what extent is it a generic attitude which might characterize, as Nehamas suggests, the “merchant’s cool appreciation of profit”? This raises again the question of whether *philēsis* is meant to be Aristotle’s analysis of the attitudes of the horse-lovers, quail-lovers, dog-lovers, exercise-lovers, and wine-lovers discussed by Socrates in the *Lysis* (212d5-8). The role of familiarity and time in developing *philēsis* suggests a certain level of particularity. *Philēsis* involves getting to know an object, becoming familiar with it in a way that brings about a fondness for it. As I noted earlier, Aristotle’s own example of *philēsis* for wine fits

⁶¹Cicero, for instance, touches on our propensity to become attached to familiar places (*De Amicitia* 68).

⁶²Aristotle explicitly compares goodwill and erotic love in this regard at *NE* IX.5, 1167a3-4: “[Goodwill] seems to be a starting-point of *philia*, just as pleasure through sight [is a starting-point] of erotic love” (ἐοικε δὲ ἀρχὴ φιλίας εἶναι, ὡσπερ τοῦ ἐρᾶν ἢ διὰ τῆς ὄψεως ἡδονή).

this model: Aristotle’s imagined wine-lover seems to have a fondness for a *particular* wine and wishes that *it* be preserved.

Aristotle elsewhere characterizes being a “lover of something” (*φιλοποιούτος*) as taking pleasure in that thing, apparently in a kind of general, habitual way (*NE* I.8, 1099a7-11). A wine-lover in this sense might be someone who habitually enjoys drinking wine. But if the attitude of such a lover could be fully characterized in terms of habitual *appetites* (*epithumiai*) for that thing, then I would argue that *philēsis* would not be involved. *Philēsis* seems to require some attitude of *care* which sets it apart from *epithumia*—something like the difference between the attitudes of the connoisseur and the drunkard.⁶³ *Philēsis*, after all, is at least in the domain of *philia*, so we might reasonably expect it to involve similar sorts of attitudes. And such attitudes of care are most naturally directed at particular objects.⁶⁴ Perhaps it would be enough, however, to say that a wine-lover had developed a fondness for wines from a particular vineyard, varietal, vintage, etc. in such a way that she took special care in storing, aging, tasting, etc. those wines. But it is more difficult to imagine that there could be *philēsis* for something as general as “profit.”⁶⁵ Certainly we would, I think, need to know more about the shape of the merchant’s attitudes and motivations towards profit before we could say that she has *philēsis* for profit in general. (I will return to the attitudes involved in *philēsis* below.)

We can now appreciate the *hexis*-like character of *philēsis*. It is not a fleeting, momentary *pathos*. Indeed, as we have seen, it is similar enough to *philia* that Aristotle must carefully

⁶³Pakaluk is certainly right to point out that the ultimate aim of the wine-lover is to *drink* the wine, and so in that sense the wine-lover would not seem to aim to *promote* the good of the wine, even if the wine had “a good”, which it does not (Pakaluk, 1998, 60). But this fact should not overshadow the kind of care with which the connoisseur might approach her wine. And Aristotle does seem to think that the proper use of something can be a way of *benefiting* that thing in such a way that drinking the wine might not be inconsistent with caring about it (1161a35-b1). Cf. Gauthier and Jolif’s comment: “...qu’il y ait des gens chez qui cet amour est un état habituel, c’est ce qu’Aristote n’entend pas nier; il veut dire simplement que pour aimer le vin, il n’est pas nécessaire d’être un ivrogne” (Gauthier and Jolif, 1958, II.681). But there is certainly room between their view that *philēsis* might be a sudden outburst of *passion* and being an *ivrogne*, and it is in that space that I would locate *philēsis*.

⁶⁴Thus *philēsis* fills a gap Aristotle recognizes in the unnamed social virtue discussed in *NE* IV.6. This virtue is closest to *philia* but differs from it because this virtue “does not involve passion [*πάθος*] and being affectionate [*στέργειν*] towards those with whom it deals” (1126b22-23). This virtue involves a general sensitivity to the proper pleasures and pains of social interaction, not affection aimed at individuals.

⁶⁵There are deep issues here, which I will not be able to address, paralleling well-known issues in *philia*: Are friends loved on the basis of *repeatable qualities*, such as their virtue? In which case, there might indeed seem to be an attachment to something *general*, with friends loved on the basis of it. Or are friends loved as whole, particular *individuals* or for their *particular instantiations* of repeatable properties?

distinguish the two. Like *philia*, *philēsis* involves a process of becoming acquainted with the object, which requires repeated, close association over time. This process establishes something like a *relationship* of fondness with the object. *Philēsis* seems to persist over time, shaping one’s general attitudes towards the object. This process of development and persistence over time give *philēsis* something like the stability of a *hexis* (although as noted above, presumably not the high degree of stability and durability Aristotle ascribes to *hexeis* proper). Moreover, this gives Aristotle the kind of account which we would want of emotional “loving.” To say that we *love* something is not to indicate a particular episode, a particular instance of an attitude, but rather to indicate a kind of ongoing emotional *disposition*.⁶⁶ The other feature which distinguishes *philēsis* from goodwill helps to further fill out this emotional disposition.

2.2.3.2 *Philēsis* and desire

Goodwill and *philēsis* can be distinguished not only by the way in which they come about, but also by the kinds of attitudes involved: Goodwill does not have (or at least does not require) *διάτασις* and desire (*ὄρεξις*), but these are concomitant with *philēsis*.⁶⁷ For the moment, I will focus on the claim about *ὄρεξις*. As Christof Rapp notes, we might initially find this claim puzzling: Aristotle seems to define goodwill as a kind of *wishing* goods to someone; and this wishing (*boulēsis*) is a form of desire; so how could goodwill not have desire?⁶⁸ Rapp rightly identifies two ways in which we might resolve this appearance of contradiction. First, Aristotle standardly uses ‘*ὄρεξις*’ as a *general* term for desire, of which Aristotle recognizes three kinds: appetite (*ἐπιθυμία*), spirit (*θυμός*), and wish (*boulēsis*).⁶⁹ It would indeed be difficult for Aristotle to assert that goodwill, which is defined as a kind of

⁶⁶*Philēsis*, then, to some extent corrects an “awkwardness,” noted by Striker, which we might feel in Aristotle’s treatment of *philia* in the *Rhetoric* by giving us an emotional disposition associated with *philia* (1996, 301n13). But to the extent that, like *philia*, *philēsis* takes time and familiarity to develop, it does not supply the kind of emotion an orator might arouse in her audience on the spot.

⁶⁷Aristotle says that these things “follow” (*ἀκολουθεῖ*) *philēsis*. However, ‘*ἀκολουθεῖν*’ often indicates a logical, not merely a temporal, relation, and so we should understand this in the sense that *philēsis* necessarily involves these things. But I do not think that we should take this passage, as Rapp does, to show that “*philēsis* is said to *be* a sort of desire” (2013, 34).

⁶⁸Rapp (2013, 34).

⁶⁹See, e.g., *EE* 1223a26-7; *DA* 414b1-3, 433a21-26.

boulēsis, does not have desire in the general sense which *includes boulēsis*. But occasionally Aristotle seems to use ‘*ὄρεξις*’ in a *specific* sense (although note that my argument here will not turn on whether or not Aristotle *in fact* employs this narrower sense). Aristotle sometimes seems to oppose *ὄρεξις* to *nous*, *logos*, or even *boulēsis* in a way which might suggest that ‘*ὄρεξις*’ refers to *mere* desire in the sense of *non-rational* desire.⁷⁰ In this sense, *ὄρεξις* would pick out appetite and spirit in opposition to *boulēsis*. If Aristotle does use ‘*ὄρεξις*’ in a restricted sense and we were to take it in that sense here in IX.5, then Aristotle’s point might be that *philēsis*, unlike goodwill, involves non-rational motivations. And this point would certainly align with understanding goodwill as a certain kind of *boulēsis*.

According to Rapp, this point would also be congenial to *philēsis*, contrasting “the more passionate *philēsis* with the more detached goodwill.”⁷¹ And Rapp stops short of endorsing this interpretation only because of the way in which it might seem to align τὸ φιλεῖν with goodwill in *contrast* to *philēsis*, given that τὸ φιλεῖν seems to be defined in the *Rhetoric*, similarly to goodwill, as a kind of *boulēsis*. And Rapp is precisely concerned to vindicate the *Rhetoric*’s treatment of τὸ φιλεῖν as an emotion, so he does not want to see the “more passionate” *philēsis* separated from τὸ φιλεῖν. But I think we have good reason to reject this interpretation outright. Besides identifying *philēsis* as a *pathos*, there is little evidence that Aristotle restricts *philēsis* to non-rational motivation. In fact, as we have seen, even *philēsis* for an inanimate object can involve *boulēsis*, as when a person *wishes* that her wine be preserved, so clearly *boulēsis* can “attend” *philēsis*. Moreover, the way in which Aristotle proceeds in IX.5 does not support this way of contrasting goodwill and *philēsis*; it rather supports another understanding of the contrast.

Aristotle will go on to say that we might describe goodwill as a kind of “inactive (*ἀργή*) *philia*” (1167a11). It is this potential *inactivity* or *idleness* of goodwill, not its *rationality*, which is central to the contrast between goodwill and *philēsis*. The sense in which goodwill might be inactive is suggested by the way Aristotle supports the initial contrast between

⁷⁰Rapp cites *DA* 434a12 and *MA* 701b1 as passages in which ‘*ὄρεξις*’ is sometimes taken in this sense (2013, 34). For a fuller argument that Aristotle does use ‘*ὄρεξις*’ in this narrow sense, see Lorenz (2009, 182-3). Lorenz adds *EE* 1224a23-5 and *DA* 433a6-8. Of course, whether *ὄρεξις* is really meant to be excluded from the contrasting element can be difficult to ascertain. Whiting (2002b, esp. §5) brings out the kinds of difficulties involved in *DA* 433a6-8.

⁷¹Rapp (2013, 34).

goodwill and *philēsis*, continuing from above:

For they [sc., the spectators] become good-willed towards them [sc., the contestants] and share their wishes, but they [sc., the spectators] would not at all join in their actions; for, which we said before, they become good-willed suddenly and feel superficial affection [ἐπιπολαίως στέργουσι].⁷² (*NE* IX.5, 1167a1-3)

Spectators can get swept up in the action of the contest and suddenly form goodwill for one of the contestants. The spectators *want* the contestant to win, just as the contestant herself does (and so they “share their wishes” (συνθέλουσι)). But the spectators will not *act* on behalf of the contestant—they will not jump into the ring and actually *do* anything to bring it about that the contestant wins (and so they do not “join in their actions” (συμπράξαιεν)).

This suggests the second way to understand the claim that goodwill might lack ὄρεξις: It might be that Aristotle is using ‘ὄρεξις’ to refer specifically to desire which actually *motivates* someone. As in the first interpretation, this would involve a slightly narrower, non-standard usage of ‘ὄρεξις,’ since Aristotle would be claiming that *boulēsis*, which *is* a kind of ὄρεξις in the general sense, might lack ὄρεξις in this narrower sense. If this is indeed Aristotle’s point, as I think it is, then we can see that it is a difficult point to make purely in terms of ὄρεξις. We certainly might have thought that all forms of ὄρεξις, including *boulēsis*, involved motivation insofar as they are forms of *desire* (and Rapp is hesitant to endorse this interpretation for such reasons). Here it is helpful to return to *διάτασις*.

Translators often treat *διάτασις* as if it were a *third* difference between *philēsis* and goodwill (in addition to ὄρεξις and familiarity). But I think that *διάτασις* should rather be taken together with ὄρεξις and that Aristotle adds it in order to help clarify his point about ὄρεξις and motivation. Most translators take ‘*διάτασις*’ to mean “intensity” in the sense we might use of the “intensity” of an emotion.⁷³ Understood in this way, *διάτασις* indeed looks like a separate condition. We have and act on cool emotions and desires, so *διάτασις* would tell us something specific about the quality of the *pathos philēsis*. However, this does not seem to fit Aristotle’s other uses of ‘*διάτασις*.’

It is used infrequently by Aristotle and most commonly in physiological or biological

⁷² εἶνοι γὰρ αὐτοῖς γίνονται καὶ συνθέλουσι, συμπράξαιεν δ' ἂν οὐδέν· ὅπερ γὰρ εἵπομεν, προσπαίως εἶνοι γίνονται καὶ ἐπιπολαίως στέργουσι.

⁷³E.g.: Reeve, “intensity of feeling”; Ross and Brown, “intensity”; Irwin, “intensity”; Bartlett and Collins, “intensity”; Rowe, “intensity about it.”

contexts. There it seems to be used without any psychological dimension. So in *History of Animals*, Aristotle says that the womb has “elasticity” (X.3, 635b9) and that spasms in the womb can be caused by “distention” (X.4, 636a32). In *De Incessu*, Aristotle explains why athletes with weights jump farther and runners who swing their arms run faster by the resistance or pressure that happens in “extending” their arms (3, 705a18). The esophagus is capable of sinewy extension (*νευρώδη τάσω*), Aristotle explains in *Parts of Animals*, so that when food enters, it can “stretch” (III.3, 664a33). Finally, in the *Politics* Aristotle argues that lawmakers should not try to forbid the “exertions” and crying of young children, because this is itself a form of physical exercise and strengthening (1336a34)—“Exertions” here often seems to be understood in the sense of exerting or stretching one’s voice, i.e., “screaming.”

The only other use of ‘διάτασις’ by Aristotle (besides the possibly spurious *Problemata*) is in this passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. And from these other instances, it is perhaps difficult to tell just what Aristotle means by saying that *διάτασις* follows *philēsis*. In these other instances, Aristotle uses ‘διάτασις’ to refer to the physical extension, stretching, or exertion of something in a way that might not seem to be psychological or emotional, such as the extension of the womb, the esophagus, the arms, etc. But what might this kind of physical movement have to do with *philēsis*? This question has presumably led most translators to understand ‘διάτασις’ in a metaphorical sense meaning “intensity” or “intensity of feeling.”⁷⁴

Rapp considers both a metaphorical use of ‘διάτασις’ and a low-level physiological sense referring to the kinds of physiological alterations which accompany *pathē* (such as the boiling of the blood around the heart in anger), and Rapp finds himself “unable to decide” between the two.⁷⁵ But I think we can understand ‘διάτασις’ more straightforwardly in a higher-level physical sense of “exertion.” This fits quite well with Aristotle’s point that those who merely have goodwill may not “join in the actions” of those for whom they have goodwill. Those who have *philēsis*, by contrast, both have a desire (*ὄρεξις*) and are moved by that desire to *exert* themselves—to take action to fulfill the desire. Thus I think *ὄρεξις* and *διάτασις*

⁷⁴LSJ recognizes a metaphorical use of ‘διάτασις’, but cites this very passage in support.

⁷⁵Rapp (2013, 34).

function together to make a point which would be difficult for Aristotle to make in terms of *ὄρεξις* alone. And if we understand ‘διάτασις’ in this way, then we can see that Aristotle is careful to touch on *both* distinguishing features of *philēsis* in his example and explanation: Goodwill involves sharing the wishes of someone in a way which may come about *suddenly* and may not *lead to action* because the affection is merely superficial. Conspicuously absent is any reference to intensity and for good reason: The wild cheering of spectators would seem to be a paradigmatic case of *intensity*, and yet such intensity may not lead to the kind of *exertion* required for *philēsis*.⁷⁶

Even so, we may be hesitant, as Rapp is, to accept this interpretation because it forces us to say that although *boulēsis* is a kind of *ὄρεξις*, not all *boulēseis* are *motivating*. And we might have thought that what unites the three kinds of *ὄρεξις*—what makes them all kinds of *desire*—is their motivating character. But in fact, this interpretation aligns with a distinction Aristotle himself makes in *boulēsis*, and this distinction makes good sense of Aristotle’s discussion of goodwill. Aristotle recognizes two classes of *boulēsis* which are not (at least directly) motivating. These are *boulēseis* for things which are either *impossible* or cannot be accomplished *by us*.

But there is *boulēsis* for impossible things, such as immortality. And there is also *boulēsis* for things which could not at all be accomplished through ourselves, such as that some actor or athlete be victorious.⁷⁷ (*NE* III.2, 1111b22-24)

Even if something is impossible, whether *in itself* or *for us*, we might nevertheless *wish* that it would come about. Thus *boulēsis* includes *idle* wishes and hopes.⁷⁸ The kind of *boulēsis* involved in goodwill may remain at this motivationally inert level (notice Aristotle’s use of contestants as examples in both cases). But *philēsis* necessarily involves some kind of exertion in pursuit of the object of desire.

This essential role of motivation in *philēsis* is noteworthy: *Pathē* clearly *can* give rise to desires, but Aristotle tends to define the *pathē* independently of possible motivations.

⁷⁶There is perhaps a sense in which feeling “superficial affection” might be considered the opposite of intensity; “exertion” better fits Aristotle’s other uses of ‘διάτασις,’ and I think it better in context to connect ‘διάτασις’ with the *action* prompted by *philēsis*.

⁷⁷βούλησις δ' ἐστὶ <καὶ> τῶν ἀδυνάτων, οἷον ἀθανασίας. καὶ ἡ μὲν βούλησις ἐστὶ καὶ περὶ τὰ μηδαμῶς δι' αὐτοῦ πραχθέντα ἄν, οἷον ὑποκριτὴν τινα νικᾶν ἢ ἀθλητὴν.

⁷⁸This feature of *boulēsis* complicates the distinction between volitional and cognitive made by Hadreas (1995), who argues that we should give a *cognitive* account of goodwill instead of volitional.

Aristotle classifies appetite itself as one of the *pathē* and treats it in *Rhetoric* I.11, while reserving the remaining *pathē* for the more formal discussion of the *pathē* in Book II. And only a few of the remaining *pathē* are defined in terms of desire (including anger, τὸ φιλεῖν, and hate). As Gisela Striker observes, “...Aristotle’s division of labor between Books 1 and 2 has the interesting effect of separating, as it were, the desiderative from the cognitive aspects of emotion.”⁷⁹

This division makes good sense. As is often emphasized, the *pathē* play a cognitive role by providing an experiential grasp of certain facts (or apparent facts). Fear, for instance, makes one *aware* of danger. But for many *pathē*, including fear, the experiencing of the *pathos* is not characterized by a particular desire. Certainly an arachnaphobic encountering a spider and a thrill-seeker at the plane door would seem to have quite different motivational responses to their fear.

For many emotions, the information conveyed is quite distinct from the question of what one should *do* with that information. However, *philēsis* is not like this; it is essentially motivational. This is what we would expect for a *pathos* connected to τὸ φιλεῖν, which Aristotle treats in the *Rhetoric* as a *pathos* defined as a certain kind of *boulēsis* (II.4, 1380b34-1381a3).⁸⁰ But we should be careful to note that *philēsis* is not *defined* as a certain kind of desire, but rather as necessarily accompanied by desire (and action prompted by the desire).

2.3 Conclusion

Aristotle’s discussion of *philēsis*, read as a whole, paints the picture of an aspect of love and friendship more interesting and complex than recognized by many modern commentators. However, in commenting on *NE* VIII.5 Aspasius offers quite a perceptive analysis, and it is instructive to compare his account:

[Aristotle] says that *philēsis* resembles an emotion, but *philia* [resembles] a *hexis*. However, some *philēseis* seem to be *hexeis* and not just *pathē*. Temporary motions in the body or soul

⁷⁹Striker (1996, 289).

⁸⁰In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle does note that part of τὸ φιλεῖν is “being inclined, as far as you can, to bring these things about,” so τὸ φιλεῖν is defined as a kind of motivationally efficacious *boulēsis*.

are *pathē*, while certain enduring qualities, from which activities are derived, are *hexeis*. For we call some people wine-lovers or savoury-lovers when the *philēsis* that is in them is a *hexis*; I mean that savoury-loving and wine-loving are a *hexis* in them. However, [Aristotle] calls emotion not only a temporary motion but also an emotional condition [*παθητικὴν διάθεσιν*]; I mean by an emotional condition that [found] in the emotional [part] only, and not also in the rational [part of the soul]...

But a *philēsis* according to *pathos* is engendered according to a mere *pathos* and is active according to a *pathos*. For this reason he said that a *philēsis* is a *pathos*, but *philia* is a habitual condition....

...*philēsis* has been called a *pathos* because it is a kind of emotional *hexis* [*παθητικὴ τις ἕξις*] from which only activities according to *pathos* arise... (Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* 8, 172, 8-23; Konstan, trans., modified)

Aspasius rightly notes that although Aristotle assimilates *philēsis* to a *pathos* in VIII.5, *philēsis* itself has *hexis*-like features. This aspect is lost in many translations—“affection”, “friendly affection”, or “friendly feeling”—which threaten to reduce *philēsis* to the mere *feeling* of love.⁸¹ As we have seen, it takes time and familiarity to develop and must be carefully distinguished from the relationship of *philia*. Aspasius calls *philēsis* both an “emotional condition” (*παθητικὴ διάθεσις*) and an “emotional state” (*παθητικὴ ἕξις*). Although Aristotle does not use these labels, as far as I can tell, “emotional condition” seems apt (as long as “condition” is understood not in the sense of being in the *active* condition of experiencing the *pathos*). It is doubtful that *philēsis* implies a condition so thoroughly ingrained as a *hexis*.⁸²

Aspasius also recognizes the corresponding claim that the condition of *philēsis* gives rise to certain activities, although he is not entirely clear on the scope or character of these activities. But Aspasius heavily emphasizes the non-rational nature of *philēsis* and attributes *philēsis* to wine-lovers and savoury-lovers. Aspasius then at least appears to associate *philēsis* closely with appetites. If so, Aspasius rightly captures the way in which *philēsis* is partially distinguished by its connection to motivation.

I have argued that the motivations connected to *philēsis* are both more expansive and more sophisticated than appetites: It would be strikingly—*implausibly*—odd if Aristotle felt the need to work so hard to distinguish *philēsis* from *philia* and goodwill, if *philēsis* merely

⁸¹E.g., Crisp, “affection”; Bartlett and Collins, “friendly affection”; Ross and Brown, “love” (VIII.2, VIII.5), “friendly feeling” (IX.5); Reeve, “way of loving”; Irwin, “loving”; Rowe, “loving”.

⁸²It may also be that *philēsis* need not rise to the level of being a *hexis* as that “according to which we are in a good or bad condition in relation to the *pathē*” (*NE* II.5, 1105b25-6).

described the kind of habitual appetites he discusses elsewhere, while at the same time failing to draw an explicit connection between *philēsis* and appetitive desire. It seems rather that *philēsis* is in the domain of *philia*, τὸ φιλεῖν, and goodwill precisely because it involves similar motivations. However, *philēsis* appears to have a wider range of desires associated with it than τὸ φιλεῖν does (at least in the Nicomachean account). At one end of the range, *philēsis* might involve the kind of wishing of goods to a friend for her own sake which characterizes primary *philia* (given that, as Aristotle claims, there is *philēsis* in each of the three kinds of *philia*). At the other end, *philēsis* might involve wishes with reference to *one's own good concerning* an object lacking an independent good, as in the example of wishing that one's wine be preserved.

We can now see how *philēsis* is well-suited to clean up the apparent messiness of the Eudemian discussion. *Philēsis* encompasses aspects of both an attitude and a relationship, so it can be used in place of both τὸ φιλεῖν and *philia*. It is elastic enough to apply to a wide range of cases, from the complexities of primary *philia* on down. This allows Aristotle to make much clearer distinctions in the Nicomachean account. In the Eudemian account, Aristotle says outright that inanimate objects can be the *objects* of τὸ φιλεῖν (VII.2, 1237a37-40), and he clearly implies that there is *philia* at least between people and inanimate objects (VII.7, 1241a8-9) and as we saw in *EE* VII.5, perhaps between inanimate objects. This raises serious questions about what exactly *constitutes* τὸ φιλεῖν and *philia*.

In the Nicomachean account, by contrast, there is no indication that inanimate objects can be the recipients of τὸ φιλεῖν (and as I have suggested, this seems to be denied at VIII.2, 1155b28-31). And Aristotle clearly states that there is no *philia* with inanimate objects (VIII.11, 1161a35-b2). Instead, both of these cases are covered by *philēsis*. This allows Aristotle to reserve 'τὸ φιλεῖν' and '*philia*' to describe the attitudes and relationships between individuals with *independent goods*. In Chapter 3, I will argue that this is key to understanding Aristotle's argument that *philia* is a *hexis* in VIII.5: *Philia* and *philēsis* differ in that *philēsis* does not require that one act on *prohairesis* for the good of the object—indeed the object of *philēsis* may not even have a good.

3.0 *Prohairesis*

With a clearer understanding of *philēsis*, we can now turn to the argument in VIII.5 that *philia* is a *hexis*. There is widespread agreement on the shape of this argument. Many scholars endorse some version of the consensus interpretation according to which the central focus of this argument is *reciprocation*. According to this interpretation: the reciprocation required for *philia* involves *prohairesis*; this *prohairesis* (somehow) implies a *hexis*; and thus *philia* is in some sense a *hexis* which is *chosen*. What we learn in VIII.5 is that friends are so by *prohairesis*.

In this chapter, I argue against the consensus interpretation. After giving a brief account of the key concept of *prohairesis* in §3.1, I cast doubt on two important assumptions often made by expositors of the consensus interpretation in §3.3.1. It is often assumed that this argument can be recast in terms of *antiphilēsis*, but as we saw in Chapter 2, there are important differences between *philēsis* and τὸ φιλεῖν which should make us hesitant to replace *antiphilein* with *antiphilēsis*. The consensus interpretation also assumes that the prefix ‘*anti-*’ indicates *intentional* reciprocation in *response* to the love of a friend, but I argue that there is good reason to think that ‘*anti-*’ merely indicates *symmetry*. Then I turn to two problems with the consensus interpretation itself, beginning in §3.3.2 with the difficulty of interpreting reciprocation as a matter of *prohairesis* and then continuing in §3.3.3 with the difficulty of making sense of the argument in terms of reciprocation. Finally in §3.4, I argue for an alternative interpretation according to which *prohairesis* in this argument refers to the *prohairesis* friends make regarding each other within the context of *philia*.

3.1 A General Account of *Prohairesis*

The argument in VIII.5 that *philia* is a *hexis* turns on the role of *prohairesis* in *philia*. The concept of *prohairesis*—usually translated as “choice” or “decision”—is central to Aristotle’s ethics, and the elevation of the importance of *prohairesis* is a distinctively Aris-

totalian feature. *Prohairesis* helps to demarcate virtuous actions, which must, among other things, be done “choosing them” (*προαιρούμενος*) (*NE* II.4, 1105a31-32); it helps to explain what exactly a virtue *is*—a state which is in some way “concerned with *prohairesis*”, a *ἔξις προαιρετική* (*NE* II.6, 1106b36; VI.2, 1139a23); and as such, *prohairesis* is in some ways the primary locus of moral evaluation, given that, as Aristotle says, *prohairesis* “distinguish characters more than actions” (*NE* III.2, 1111b6; cf. *EE* II.11, 1228a2-4). Thus *prohairesis* also provides the fault-line along which Aristotle distinguishes *defective* character-states. Roughly, the virtuous person acts on *prohairesis* in pursuit of the right aim, while the vicious person acts on *prohairesis* in pursuit of the wrong aim; and the *enkratic* acts on *prohairesis* following reason and going against appetite, while the *akratic* follows appetite, acting *against* *prohairesis* (and the *akolastos*, the uninhibited or indulgent person, follows appetite, in some way acting on *prohairesis*).

Given the centrality of *prohairesis*, it has justifiably received considerable attention. With such scrutiny, almost every aspect of *prohairesis* is disputed to some extent, but it will be useful to have a general account in place before we consider the way in which *prohairesis* functions in VIII.5.¹ Aristotle’s primary discussions of *prohairesis* are found in *Eudemian Ethics* II and *Nicomachean Ethics* III. What we see in these discussions, I think, is Aristotle refashioning a conventional term for technical use.² In common usage, a *prohairesis* is something like a “plan” or “purpose.” Aristotle precisifies this notion into an explanation of a seemingly quite demanding subset of intentional action.

A *prohairesis*, Aristotle says, going back to the etymology, is the choice (*hairesis*) of one thing “*pro*” another (*EE* II.10, 1226b6-7; cf. *NE* III.2, 1112a16-7). Three ways in which this ‘*pro*’ has been taken point to three important features of *prohairesis*. Karen Margrethe Nielsen argues that this ‘*pro*’ is really a ‘*pros*,’ and it expresses a teleological relationship.³ *Prohairesis* is in this sense the choosing of something *towards* or *for the sake of* another. Certainly Aristotle emphasizes that a *prohairesis* is both *of* something and *for* something:

¹The account of *prohairesis* given here largely aligns with that presented by Lorenz (2009, §3: 184-192). As entry-points into the vast literature on *prohairesis*, see also: Anscombe (1965), Broadie (1991, Ch. 5), Mele (1981), and Segvic (2008).

²Thanks to Gisela Striker for discussion on this point and for sharing her paper on *prohairesis*.

³Nielsen (2017, 14). Alfred Mele also emphasizes that *prohairesis* is “...specifically of things which are *pros* ends” (Mele, 1981, 406); but he does not explicitly connect this to the etymology of ‘*prohairesis*.’

A *prohairesis* is the choice of something *as a means* to something else, some *end* (*EE* II.11, 1227b36-37; cf. *NE* III.5, 1113b3-5). The shape of *prohairesis* will be heavily influenced by what we take a “means” to be. John McDowell rightly argues that we need not restrict *prohairesis* to *mere* means—i.e., instrumental means—in a sense which would exclude as objects of *prohairesis* things which are themselves the *realization* of an end.⁴ It may be that virtuous actions, which must be both *chosen* and chosen *for themselves*, are objects of *prohairesis* in this sense.⁵

Aristotle seems to require that the end with reference to which the object of *prohairesis* is chosen be set by wish (*boulēsis*) (*NE* III.2, 1111b26-7; III.5, 1113b3-5).⁶ A *boulēsis* is a desire which in some sense involves the good. This makes it suitable for capturing the motivating character of the end, the sense in which the end is taken to be something to bring about. *Boulēsis*—in general, as such—is often taken to involve the good in the sense that the object of *boulēsis* is desired somehow in relation to an agent’s conception of her own good or living well (however murky and inchoate that might be). Although I will argue against this general understanding of *boulēsis* in Chapter 4, there is good reason to think that an agent’s conception of living well *is* connected to the kind of end involved in *prohairesis* (or put another way, every *prohairesis* is *in a sense* aimed at living well).⁷ Aristotle famously—infamously—says that “[w]e do not deliberate about ends but about things towards [*πρὸς*] ends” (*NE* III.3, 1112b11-12).⁸ This claim has provoked much debate, but however we understand the contrast, it at least serves to make clear that there *can* be deliberation concerning the *objects* of *prohairesis*—things which are “towards”, i.e., promote or contribute to, ends.⁹

But Aristotle seems to go beyond the claim that it is *possible* to deliberate about the

⁴See McDowell (1980, 361-2), McDowell (1988, §§III-IV), and McDowell (1996).

⁵Mele (1981) addresses *prohairesis* from this perspective, arguing that even though *prohairesis* is of things *pros* an end, Aristotle does have a unified conception of *prohairesis* which can accommodate choosing things *for themselves*. On Aristotle’s account of choosing something for itself, see also Whiting (2002a).

⁶See Müller (2016), who argues that this condition should be relaxed.

⁷See §4.4 below.

⁸*βουλευόμεθα δ' οὐ περὶ τῶν τελῶν ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰ τέλη.*

⁹One prominent view is that there is deliberation about ends in the sense that reason plays a crucial role in *specifying* ends; see, e.g., Kolnai (1978, Ch. 3) and Wiggins (1980). In contrast, Moss (2012, Part III) argues for the “face-value” reading of Aristotle’s claim that virtue makes the goal right. And Millgram (1997, §6.7) argues against specificationism as the right account of deliberation, not restricted to Aristotle.

objects of *prohairesis*; he seems to assert the stronger claim that *prohairesis* requires deliberation. This brings out a second potential sense of the ‘*pro*’ in *prohairesis*: Choosing one thing “*pro*” another may mean choosing one thing “in preference to” another. In this sense, the ‘*pro*’ might express the weighing of alternatives often thought to be involved in Aristotelian deliberation.¹⁰ In both the Eudemian and Nicomachean discussions, Aristotle works his way to a redescription of *prohairesis* as ὄρεξις βουλευτική, “deliberative desire” (*EE* II.10, 1226b17; *NE* III.3, 1113a11). In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle clarifies: “By ‘deliberative’ I mean the starting-point [ἀρχή] and cause [αἰτία] of [the desire] is deliberation—it is desired through having deliberated” (*EE* II.10, 1226b19-20).¹¹ Aristotle makes a similar point in the corresponding Nicomachean discussion.¹² This raises an interesting question about what *kind* of a thing *prohairesis* is. It may be that *prohairesis* is not straightforwardly classified, as these passages might suggest, as a *desire* (a desire with a certain relationship to deliberation). This redescription is one of three: Aristotle elsewhere says that “...*prohairesis* is either ‘desiderative thought’ [ὀρεκτικὸς νοῦς] or ‘thoughtful desire’ [ὄρεξις διανοητική]” (*NE* VI.2, 1139b4-5). These descriptions, and especially the way in which Aristotle takes them to apply *equally* to *prohairesis*, might be taken to indicate the status of *prohairesis* as a special kind of thing, neither fully a desire nor fully a thought; but this is beyond our present discussion.¹³

Deliberation is a process of *inquiry* concerning how to *realize* some end.¹⁴ A person

¹⁰The ‘*pro*’ is taken in this way by, e.g., Broadie (1991, 220).

¹¹λέγω δὲ βουλευτικήν, ἧς ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία βούλευσις ἐστὶ, καὶ ὀρέγεται διὰ τὸ βουλευσασθαι.

¹²He justifies this description there (*NE* III.3, 1113a11-2), saying: “for discerning through deliberation we desire in accordance with our deliberation” (ἐκ τοῦ βουλευσασθαι γὰρ κρίναντες ὀρεγόμεθα κατὰ τὴν βούλευσιν). There is a textual issue here, but one which does not affect the present point. Most manuscripts read κατὰ τὴν βούλευσιν, “in accordance with deliberation”; but at least one manuscript and a reading found in Aspasius have κατὰ τὴν βούλησιν, “in accordance with wish.” Irwin, for instance, adopts this reading, which has the advantage that it nicely brings together the elements of *prohairesis*: the desire for something on the basis of deliberation according to an end set by *boulēsis*. However, *boulēsis* is not required to make Aristotle’s point that *prohairesis* is ὄρεξις βουλευτική, and it may be that here Aristotle is more closely focused on this point. In any case, Aristotle’s claim that *prohairesis* involves “discerning through deliberation” makes clear the necessity of deliberation.

¹³Mele (1984, 152-55) surveys three possible relationships between *prohairesis* and *boulēsis*: *boulēsis* is a compound element in *prohairesis*; *prohairesis* is partially derived from *boulēsis*, but is not, even in part, a desire; and the desiderative element in *prohairesis* is derived from but not an instance of *boulēsis*. Whiting (2008, 106-8) emphasizes the importance of Aristotle’s description of *prohairesis* as both ὀρεκτικὸς νοῦς and ὄρεξις διανοητική.

¹⁴See esp. *NE* III.3, 1112b11-24 and *NE* VI.9. Just as we need not limit the means chosen by *prohairesis* to merely instrumental means (see above), we need not confine the *deliberation* about those means to deliberation about merely instrumental means—deliberation may include deliberation about what *constitutes* the realization of some end. On this point, see, e.g., McDowell (1996).

deliberates about what she should *do*. Thus one only deliberates about matters within the domain of things which are *doable* (*NE* III.3, 1112a30-31). In figuring out how to bring about some end, a person works backwards from the end to some action which will promote the end and which the person is *capable* of doing (either *here and now* or at least without further deliberation) (*NE* III.3, 1113a5-7). This requirement places important limits on the objects of deliberation; and because it is the result of deliberation which seems to be the object of *prohairesis*, it places important limits on the objects of *prohairesis* (which will be especially relevant to our discussion of *NE* VIII.5, since we must consider what aspects of *philia* could be the proper objects of *prohairesis*). The process of working, in some sense, backwards from an end brings out the final possible meaning of ‘*pro*’: It might be taken *temporally* to indicate that the thing chosen is chosen *before* other things as the first step which the agent can perform in bringing about the end.¹⁵

In outline, then, a *prohairesis* is the *choice* of something on the basis of *deliberation* towards some *end* set by a *boulēsis*. Given the centrality of *prohairesis* in Aristotle’s ethics—and the way in which *prohairesis* is connected to these other important elements, such as *boulēsis*, deliberation, and living well—this argument in VIII.5 represents a significant point of engagement between Aristotle’s account of *philia* and his ethics more generally.

3.2 The Argument That *Philia* is a *Hexis* in *NE* VIII.5

Consider, again, our argument from VIII.5:

Fondness [*philēsis*] seems to be a feeling, and friendship [*philia*] [seems to be] a state [*hexis*]; for there is fondness no less towards inanimate things, but they [sc., friends] love [each other] in return involving decision [*prohairesis*], and decision comes from a state; and they wish good things to those whom they love for their own sake not according to a feeling but according to a state.¹⁶ (*NE* VIII.5, 1157b28-32)

¹⁵Lorenz argues for this understanding, according to which by means of the ‘*pro*’ “...Aristotle is noting that forming a decision is always a matter of opting for something or other as a preliminary to something else” (2009, 188). To the extent that the *sequence* is determined with reference to the end, this temporal sense of ‘*pro*’ may come close to the teleological sense.

¹⁶ἔοικε δ' ἡ μὲν φίλησις πάθει, ἡ δὲ φιλία ἔξει· ἡ γὰρ φίλησις οὐχ ἦπτον πρὸς τὰ ἄψυχά ἐστιν, ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις ἀφ' ἑξέως· καὶ τὰ γαθὰ βούλονται τοῖς φιλουμένοις ἐκείνων ἕνεκα, οὐ κατὰ πάθος ἀλλὰ καθ' ἕξιν. (On the translation of this passage, see above, 12n8.)

We might start to work through this argument by setting aside, for now, Aristotle’s claim that there can be “*philēsis* no less towards inanimate things.” Given the compound conclusion announced at the start, we might have expected this claim to figure in an argument that *philēsis* is a *pathos* (alongside a parallel argument that *philia* is a *hexis*). But this argument is not forthcoming: It is clear enough that the fact that *philēsis* can have inanimate objects is not a self-standing argument that *philēsis* must be a *pathos* rather than a *hexis*. *Pathē*, of course, such as anger, can have *animate* objects; and Aristotle’s notion of a *hexis* is quite broad—certainly the things with which *hexeis* are concerned are not *restricted* to animate things.

The positive argument we *are* given is rather an argument that *philia* is a *hexis*. Sarah Broadie is likely right that Aristotle is implicitly invoking his standard trichotomy of capacity, *pathos*, and *hexis*: If neither *philēsis* nor *philia* are plausibly capacities, then if *philia* is a *hexis* but *philēsis* is not, then *philēsis* must be a *pathos*.¹⁷ This veiled structure perhaps accounts for some of the awkwardness of this passage. But even if this structure is in the background, Aristotle does not complete the disjunctive syllogism by explicitly arguing that *philēsis* cannot be a *hexis*. Any interpretation of this passage must fill in exactly how the contrast is meant to exclude *philēsis*—what it is about *philēsis* for inanimate objects which shows that *at least according to the considerations adduced here*, *philēsis* is not a *hexis*. Of course, there can also be *philēsis* for *living* things, and so we must take into account that this argument is an argument from *limit* cases; and we will find that the standard interpretation has a difficult time making sense of this.¹⁸ Aristotle may be reluctant to over-emphasize the extent to which *philēsis* is a *pathos*, since as I argued in Chapter 2, *philēsis* itself seems to have *hexis*-like features, and so he highlights the argument that *philia* is a *hexis*, which runs through *prohairesis*. This is where we should focus our attention. As we will see, most

¹⁷Broadie and Rowe (2002, 412).

¹⁸Although I disagree with Stewart’s interpretation of the passage, he rightly recognizes the difficulties involved in the structure of the argument. Commenting on *ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως*, Stewart says: “This is not a very true or relevant remark if intended merely to bring out the difference between *φιλία* and *φίλησις*: *ἄψυχα* indeed cannot love in return, but there are many other objects of mere *φίλησις* which render *φίλησις* in return, *ἄνευ προαιρέσεως*, and even in many *φιλίαι* so called, viz. in many of those *δι’ ἡδονήν* (cf. especially viii.3.5), love is mutually given *ἄνευ προαιρέσεως*. The words *ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως* serve to distinguish not so much between *φιλία* and *φίλησις*, as between *ἡ τελεία φιλία* and the inferior kinds...” (1892, 290).

commentators fail to make sense of this argument because they are too quick to latch onto a particular understanding of the contrast with *philēsis*, as I warned against in Chapter 2, before properly understanding the role of *prohairesis*.

This small argument raises three large questions which will concern us for the next three chapters: (i) Why and in what way does reciprocal loving involve *prohairesis*? (ii) Why and in what way does *prohairesis* come from a *hexis*? (iii) And even if reciprocal loving involves *prohairesis* and *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*, what licenses the conclusion that *philia* is that *hexis*? Here, I will focus on the first question, What is the connection between *philia* and *prohairesis* presumed by this argument? We can gain a foothold for answering this question by considering a related, narrower question: What is the *object* of the *prohairesis* in this argument?

This passage has received relatively little attention, but to the extent that it has, commentators broadly agree that the object of the *prohairesis* at issue is in a way the *philia* itself or the *love* involved in the *philia*. This is because they see *prohairesis* as required for the *reciprocation* required for *philia*.¹⁹ The claim that friends reciprocate love or affection in *philia* might be taken in two ways, either *generally* or *particularly*. Taken generally, it might be a claim about the broad attitudes of love and affection friends have towards each other of the sort invoked in Aristotle's succinct definition of a friend in the *Eudemian Ethics*: "He becomes a friend whenever being loved, he loves in return and this does not in some way escape their notice" (*EE* VII.2, 1236a14-15).²⁰ We might instead focus on reciprocation at the level of *particular* actions performed *within* the context of *philia*. Perhaps to reciprocate love or affection is simply to act towards one's friend with certain motivations.

Those who adopt what I will simply call the "consensus interpretation" do seem to understand the required reciprocation in *general* terms, so I will first address this version of the interpretation. Then, I will consider a version in *particular* terms.

¹⁹Versions of this interpretation can be found in: Broadie and Rowe (2002, 412), Burnet (1900, 370), Fraisse (1974, 195, 268-70), Fritzsche (1847, 32-33), Gauthier and Jolif (1958, II.681), Grant (1866, II.261), Pakaluk (1998, 86), Stewart (1892, II.290), and Ward (1996, 159). (Irwin (1999), Ross and Brown (2009), and Reeve (2014) do not comment on this aspect of this passage.)

²⁰ φίλος δὲ γίνεται ὅταν φιλούμενος ἀντιφιλῆ, καὶ τοῦτο μὴ λανθάνῃ πως αὐτούς.

3.3 Against the Consensus Interpretation

Most commentators interpret this argument as indicating that *prohairesis* plays a *foundational* role in *philia*. Michael Pakaluk, for instance, puts this point in terms of the directness or aiming involved in *philia*:

For the argument to have force, we need to understand *antiphilēsis* here not extensionally, to indicate simply the symmetry of a relation, but rather intensionally, in the sense of *showing friendly affection with a view to some anticipated result, or in response to such affection*. This implies a measure of deliberateness and control which is reasonably taken to be characteristic of choice. (Pakaluk, 1998, 86)

Pakaluk understands the kind of loving involved in *philia* as having the friend's love in view²¹—either as aiming to bring about or continue that love or as being in response to it.²² It therefore involves a kind of intensionality which requires *prohairesis*. Friends *decide* to love each other with particular reasons or aims. Broadie makes a similar point in terms of the “value” of each friend's love to the other:

...hence we now learn that reciprocal loving [sc. *antiphilēsis*²³] (anyway in the paradigm case of friendship) is more than *M*'s loving *N* plus *N*'s loving *M*, plus their both knowing about it (2, 1155b33-4). What ‘decision’ adds is that intrinsic to *M*'s love for *N* is a sense of the value of *N*'s love for him, and vice versa...²⁴ (Broadie and Rowe, 2002, 412)

In reciprocal loving, each friend's love is in a way in *response* to the other friend's love. Broadie understands this as a response to the perceived *value* of the other friend's love, so that friends are taken to *decide* to reciprocate love at least in part because of the way they *value* the other friend's love.

²¹I will use “love”, “loving”, “reciprocal loving”, etc. to capture Aristotle's claim that friends love each other in return (*antiphilousi*), i.e., *philein* each other, even though Pakaluk here and Broadie below put their points in terms of *antiphilēsis*, which I would rather translate as “reciprocal fondness”. See 12n8 above and discussion below.

²²It is not entirely clear what Pakaluk means by “showing friendly affection with a view to some anticipated result.” But I assume that he does not mean to include one-off displays of affection merely in order to achieve some particular good. These would not constitute *philia*. I take it, then, that at least part of the “anticipated result” is the affection of the friend in return, which serves to constitute and continue the relationship.

²³That Broadie intends *antiphilēsis* here is clear from the text on which she is commenting, which is given as “reciprocal loving [*antiphilēsis*] involves decision, and decisions flow from dispositions.”

²⁴Broadie's comment continues: “and presumably, therefore, a settled commitment on each side to maintaining the other side's valuation, and to making it true by living up to it.” I take this to be a separate point meant to gesture to the relationship between *prohairesis* and *hexis*.

According to the consensus interpretation, then, this argument turns on the notion of reciprocation. One-directional fondness (*philēsis*) does not require *prohairesis*, but reciprocating love *does*. Reciprocation is at least in part an *intentional* act requiring *prohairesis* because of the way it takes into account the other friend’s love. *Philia* (at least) requires that friends love each other in return, and so the *prohairesis* involved in reciprocating love is foundational to *philia*; it is in essence a decision to be friends. This is especially clear from Broadie’s claim that *prohairesis* forms an *additional* condition on *philia* beyond those laid out by Aristotle in *NE* VIII.2-3. This claim also highlights what is at stake in interpreting this passage: How exactly do we understand *philia*—its requirements, its constituents, its basic structure?

3.3.1 Two questionable assumptions of the consensus interpretation

I will argue that the consensus interpretation should be rejected. As outlined in §1.1 above, I argue that the consensus interpretation faces a number of problems. I begin with two assumptions which have made this shape of the argument seem especially clear to commentators.

3.3.1.1 This argument concerns *antiphilēsis*

First, as seen in Pakaluk and Broadie, commentators routinely assume that this argument concerns the opposition between *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis* (§1.1, problem 1).²⁵ On this assumption, hardly a second thought would be needed to locate the role of *prohairesis* in the act of reciprocation (and I imagine that this partly accounts for the lack of attention this passage has received). If the argument is framed as a contrast between *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis* and if *antiphilēsis* involves *prohairesis* but *philēsis* does not, then surely, it might seem, the explanation of that fact lies in the “*anti-*” prefix which distinguishes *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis*. The “*anti-*” prefix is taken to indicate reciprocation, and so the consensus interpretation easily concludes that the *prohairesis* on which this argument relies must be,

²⁵This argument is recast in terms of *antiphilēsis* by, e.g., Broadie and Rowe (2002, 412), Burnet (1900, 370), Gauthier and Jolif (1958, II.681), Pakaluk (1998, 86), Tracy (1979, 69), and Ward (1996, 159).

in some sense, a *prohairesis for reciprocation*.

There are two problems with this assumption. First, it rests on the further assumption that *philēsis* is simply the activity of *philia* in a way that corresponds to τὸ φιλεῖν. But as I argued in Chapter 2, this assumption is a mistake. *Philēsis* is a complex emotional condition which involves elements of both *philia* and τὸ φιλεῖν, and each of these elements plays an important role in understanding this argument. Similarly to *philia*, *philēsis* seems to be a kind of attachment which has some persistence and takes time and familiarity to develop (I will return to this point in connection with the possible objects of *prohairesis*). Similarly to τὸ φιλεῖν, *philēsis* involves a range of attitudes and motivations which *includes* those involved in loving, but crucially, *extends beyond* them. I argued in Chapter 2 that it is likely that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle restricts τὸ φιλεῖν to living objects and introduces *philēsis* at least partly to account for the kind of love or fondness directed at inanimate objects. This seems to be the case because τὸ φιλεῖν—and certainly the kind of τὸ φιλεῖν involved in *philia*—involves wishing goods to its object. But as Aristotle points out (and we discussed in §2.2.1 above), inanimate objects do not have “a good” such that one might wish goods things *to them* (I will return to this point in giving my own interpretation of this argument). By collapsing the distinction between *philēsis* and τὸ φιλεῖν (or in this case, the distinction between *antiphilēsis* and *antiphilein*), the consensus interpretation overlooks the possibility that the point Aristotle is making depends upon a contrast between *philia* and *philēsis* other than reciprocation.

Second, by conceptually substituting the noun ‘*antiphilēsis*’ for the finite verb ‘ἀτιφιλοῦσι’, the consensus interpretation erases the *subject* of the verb. Commentators generally agree that this passage concerns primary *philia*, and the subject of the verb seems to be “good people,” introduced when Aristotle switches midway through VIII.5 to focus on the “*philia* of the good” (φιλία ἢ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, 1157b25). It may be, then, that this focus on primary *philia* provides important information for interpreting this argument: Perhaps the argument depends upon some feature Aristotle takes to be exclusive to or particularly associated with primary *philia*. But *antiphilēsis* occurs in all three forms of *philia* and so obscures this possibility.

3.3.1.2 ‘*Anti*’ indicates thick reciprocation

The second assumption commentators often make (§1.1, problem 2) is that “*anti*” implies a thick sense of reciprocation. Reciprocation in this sense does not merely indicate that a relationship is *symmetrical*—A loves B and B loves A—but also that the fact of *being loved* figures into the relationship on each side—A loves B in part *because* B loves A and *vice versa*. This is the new condition on *philia* which Broadie thinks is revealed by this argument, that intrinsic to each friend’s love is “a sense of the value” of the other’s love for her.²⁶ Pakaluk goes so far as to say that “[f]or the argument to have force, we need to understand *antiphilēsis* here not extensionally...but rather intensionally...”²⁷ But I think that there is good reason to suppose that “*anti*” does *not* entail such a thick conception of reciprocation, and so to the extent that such a sense is required for the consensus interpretation, this is an indication that the consensus interpretation is on the wrong track.

It is difficult to establish with certainty that “*anti*” does not normally convey a thick sense of reciprocation, but considering a few passages in which ‘*antiphilēsis*’ and ‘*antiphilein*’ are used strongly suggests that it indicates *symmetry* rather than *intention*. Consider first an important passage in the *Lysis*, which I quote in full because of the way we can see Socrates using ‘*antiphilein*’ as he works toward the conclusion that friends must love each other:

“So tell me: when someone loves someone else, which of the two becomes the friend of the other, the one who loves or the one who is loved? Or is there no difference?”

“I don’t see any difference,” he said.

“Do you mean,” I said, “that they both become each other’s friend when only one of them loves the other?”

“It seems so to me,” he said.

“Well, what about this: Isn’t it possible for someone who loves somebody not to be loved by him in return [*ἀντιφιλεῖσθαι*]?”

“Yes, it’s possible.”

“And isn’t it possible for him even to be hated? Isn’t this how men are often treated by the young boys they are in love with? They are deeply in love, but they feel that they are not loved back [*ἀντιφιλεῖσθαι*], or even that they are hated. Don’t you think this is true?”

“Very true,” he said.

“In a case like this, one person loves and the other is loved. Right?”

“Yes.”

²⁶Broadie and Rowe (2002, 412).

²⁷Pakaluk (1998, 86).

“Then which is the friend of the other? Is the lover the friend of the loved, whether he is loved in return [*ἀντιφιλήται*] or not, or is even hated? Or is the loved the friend of the lover? Or in a case like this, when the two do not both love each other, is neither the friend of the other?”

“That’s what it looks like anyway,” he said.

“So our opinion now is different from what it was before. First we thought that if one person loved another, they were both friends. But now, unless they both love each other [*ἂν μὴ ἀμφοτέροι φιλωσιν*], neither is a friend.” (*Lysis* 212a8-d3)

Each time Socrates uses ‘*antiphilein*’ the focus seems to be on whether the love is *mutual*, that is, on whether the one whom someone loves also loves her. I see little indication that the *grounds* or *aims* of the love are at issue (although of course these issues will come to the fore over the course of the dialogue, but not in terms of *antiphilein*). Rather, ‘*antiphilein*’ seems to be simply a useful way to distinguish the two sides of the relationship so that Socrates can ask about the love of A for B and the possible love of B for A. Socrates also considers that the one who is loved may respond in at least two ways, by *loving in return* or even by *hating*. But surely Socrates is not suggesting that the hating would be *because* of being loved; rather, both loving in return and hating seem to be considered as attitudes which are independent of the fact of being loved. Finally, and most telling, when Socrates summarizes the conclusion, after repeatedly using ‘*antiphilein*,’ he says simply that “unless both love, neither is a friend” (212d3).²⁸ “*Anti*” has been dropped, and Socrates seems to think that each friend loving the other captures the sense in which each friend’s love is *returned*.

We find a similar focus on the symmetry of the relationship in Aristotle’s uses of ‘*antiphilein*.’ For instance, when Aristotle argues that *loving* is more characteristic or essential to *philia* than *being loved*, he appeals to the case of *asymmetrical* maternal love:

An indication is that mothers enjoy loving. For some give away their own children to be raised, and knowing [the children,] they love [them,] but they do not seek to be loved in return [*ἀντιφιλείσθαι*], if both [*ἀμφοτέρα*] are not possible; rather, it seems to be enough for them if they see that they are doing well, and they love them even if on account of ignorance they render none of the things befitting a mother.²⁹ (*NE* VIII.8, 1159a28-33)

Aristotle’s appeal to familial relationships raises interesting questions about the structure and unity of his account of *philia*, given that these relationships can lack features which

²⁸...ἂν μὴ ἀμφοτέροι φιλωσιν, οὐδέτερος φίλος.

²⁹σημίον δ’ αἱ μητέρες τῶ φιλεῖν χαίρουσαι· ἔναι γὰρ διδάσαι τὰ ἐαντῶν τρέφεσθαι, καὶ φιλοῦσι μὲν εἰδυῖαι, ἀντιφιλείσθαι δ’ οὐ ζητοῦσιν, ἐὰν ἀμφοτέρα μὴ ἐνδέχῃται, ἀλλ’ ἰκανὸν αὐταῖς ἔοικεν εἶναι ἐὰν ὀρώσιν εὖ πράττοντας, καὶ αὐταὶ φιλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς κἂν ἐκείνοι μηδὲν ὦν μητρὶ προσήκει ἀπονέμωσι διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν.

appear essential to Aristotle’s “official” analysis. Maternal *philia*, as we see here, may even lack reciprocation, and yet Aristotle views this case as paradigmatic enough to draw conclusions from it about *philia* in general. We might view this as further evidence against over-intellectualizing *philia*, since surely mothers do not “decide” to love their children in the way suggested by the consensus interpretation; but I will not pursue that point here.

However, this passage does clearly suggest that the significance of *antiphilein* is in the symmetry of the relationship. Mothers “...do not seek to be loved in return, if both are not possible...” From the context, “both” seems to refer to both *loving* the child and *being loved* by the child. There is no need to supply a thick sense of reciprocation.³⁰ The point is rather that *loving* is more characteristic of *philia* than being loved, because in some cases, such as maternal love, asymmetrical loving is enough to preserve a kind of *philia*.

The strongest evidence comes from the way in which Aristotle himself builds up to the claim that *philia* involves *antiphilēsis* in *NE* VIII.2-3. When Aristotle first considers the common understanding of *philia* as “goodwill among those who bear it in turn (*ἐν ἀντιπεπονθόσι*)”, he immediately raises the question of whether the qualification must be added that this goodwill “does not go unnoticed” (*μὴ λανθάνουσιν*). And Aristotle *does* think that this qualification is required, because it could happen both that someone has goodwill towards people she does not know and that one of these people has goodwill towards her, in which case there would be goodwill “among those who bear it in turn” (*NE* VIII.2, 1155b32-1156a3); but of course we would not call this a *philia*.³¹ Clearly then the ‘*anti*’ in *ἀντιπεπονθόσι* does not imply intentional reciprocation. So when a few lines later at 1156a8-9 Aristotle attaches the same qualification, that it not go unnoticed, directly to *antiphilēsis*, not only would this qualification be redundant, if *antiphilēsis* implied intentional reciprocation, but there is also positive reason to think that it does *not*, given Aristotle’s concerns with

³⁰Certainly mothers may love their children *as their children*, and they may wish to be loved in return by their children *as their mothers*. But I do not think that these relational terms indicate the kind of thick reciprocation assumed by the consensus interpretation. This is clear from the way in which Aristotle will go on to analyze parental love: Parents love their children “as being something of themselves” (*ὡς ἐαυτῶν τι ὄντα*), and children love their parents “as being something from them” (*ὡς ἀπ’ ἐκείνων τι ὄντα*) (*NE* VIII.12, 1161b18-19). On this passage, see Whiting (2006, §8) whose translation I follow.

³¹Thus Ross’ translation of “*τοῦτο δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ κἂν ἐκείνων τις πάθει πρὸς τοῦτον*” at 1156a1-2 as “and one of these might return this feeling” is liable to obscure Aristotle’s point if “return” is taken as intentional reciprocation.

ἀντιπεπονθόσι just before. Thus, I think it is likely that the “*anti*” in *antiphilēsis* (and *antiphilein*) indicates *symmetry* rather than intentional reciprocation.³²

3.3.2 Reciprocation and the objects of *prohairesis*

The consensus interpretation is often unclear on exactly what one is choosing when one is choosing to reciprocate. For instance, Pakaluk puts it in terms of “affection” and seems to especially have in mind the reciprocation of *philēsis*; Broadie refers to “love” in general, perhaps intending to capture more than affection; and Ward even says directly that the *hexis* of *philia* is a “chosen state.”³³ However, as the general account of *prohairesis* above suggested, *prohairesis* deals with a certain domain of objects—not just *anything* can be *chosen* by *prohairesis*. Thus even if we were to allow that *antiphilēsis* and *antiphilein* imply the thick sense of reciprocation invoked by the consensus interpretation, we must still consider whether Aristotle would take such reciprocation to be a matter of *prohairesis*. I argue that *prohairesis* cannot play the foundational role envisioned by the consensus interpretation because *philēsis* and *philia* seem to be the wrong kind of things to be the object of *prohairesis*.

As we saw above, the general view that emerges from Aristotle’s discussion of *prohairesis* in *Eudemian Ethics* II and *Nicomachean Ethics* III is that acting on the basis of *prohairesis* is a particularly robust kind of intentional action. This is because a *prohairesis* is a decision to perform some action on the basis of deliberation about how to achieve some end. A *prohairesis* is thus the choice of something, in some sense, *as* a means—every *prohairesis* is, as Aristotle says, “of something and for the sake of something” (*EE* II.11, 1227b36-7).³⁴ This structure and the role of deliberation impose two constraints on the objects of *prohairesis* which are particularly important for the present discussion.

³²The concept of mutual or reciprocal exchange, which Aristotle addresses in *NE* V.5/*EE* IV.5, is clearly relevant here, although beyond the scope of this discussion. However, note that there Aristotle especially connects τὸ ἀντιπεπονθός (often translated “reciprocation” or “reciprocity”) with a kind of equality, and it seems to refer to the symmetry of the *items to be exchanged* rather than to the *act of exchange*. “There will be reciprocation whenever there is equality...” (ἔσται δὲ ἀντιπεπονθός, ὅταν ἰσασθῆ, 1133a31-2), and this symmetry makes possible the exchange, which may require a notion of intentional reciprocation, i.e., giving X *in order to receive* Y, etc.

³³Ward (1996, 160).

³⁴Again, we need not understand “means” here in a way which requires that the “means” to an end be sharply distinguished from an instance of or realization of the end.

Deliberation is essentially about what one should *do*. The end of the deliberation involved in *prohairesis* is thus an end in the domain of things which are *doable*. Aristotle puts this point by saying that the objects of deliberation are things which are “up to us.”³⁵ Deliberation involves reasoning about how this end is to be brought about, and it proceeds until one determines what step can be taken towards bringing about this end the execution of which does not itself require further deliberation.³⁶ Deliberation ceases when one “brings the starting-point back to oneself” (*NE* III.3, 1113a5-6) The product of deliberation, which is also the object of *prohairesis*, is thus a determinate action which can be taken with a view towards realizing the end.³⁷ Thus an object of *prohairesis* must be (1) “up to us” and (2) suitably specific to be performed without further deliberation.

These restrictions make *prohairesis* ill-suited to play the kind of foundational role in *philia* that the consensus interpretation assigns to it. One way to see this is to consider the categories involved in the argument: *pathos* and *hexis*. The consensus interpretation often conceives of the argument in terms of the reciprocation of *philēsis*, and in any case, *philēsis* is required for love (*philein*) and friendship (*philia*). But here we find out that *philēsis* is a *pathos*, and *pathē* do not seem to be proper objects of *prohairesis*. A *pathos*, as the term indicates, is something that in a way *happens to* someone—it is a way in which one *is affected*.

Aristotle appeals to this fact in his earlier discussion of virtue in *NE* II.5. There Aristotle asks of virtue the same question we are considering of *philia*: What kind of a thing is it? Aristotle narrows the candidates down to those things which “come about in the soul”—*pathē*,

³⁵E.g., *NE* III.3, 1112a30-31: “We deliberate about the things that are up to us and doable” (*βουλευόμεθα δὲ περὶ τῶν ἐφ’ ἡμῶν καὶ πρακτῶν*).

³⁶On this point especially see Cooper (1975, Ch. I). Cooper emphasizes the distinction between the operation of *reason* involved in deliberation and the operation of *perception* involved in implementing deliberation such that deliberation can conclude in an object of *prohairesis* which can be implemented by perception without further deliberation. If, as McDowell has argued, deliberation is itself the operation of a perceptual capacity, then it may be that deliberation is more involved in implementing a *prohairesis* than Cooper supposes (1996). However, this would *not* make the object of *prohairesis* more general, but rather make the operation of deliberation more *particular*.

³⁷*NE* III.3, 1113a2-5: “The object of deliberation and the object of *prohairesis* are the same, except the object of *prohairesis* is already determinate; for what has been judged from deliberation is an object of *prohairesis*.” (*βουλευτὸν δὲ καὶ προαιρετὸν τὸ αὐτό, πλὴν ἀφωρισμένον ἤδη τὸ προαιρετὸν· τὸ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς βουλῆς κριθὲν προαιρετὸν ἐστίν.*) There is a question whether the conclusion of deliberation and object of *prohairesis* is a particular *action* which can be done *here and now* or a particular *action type* which can be done *at some point* without further deliberation, although the answer to this question does not matter for present purposes. See Cooper (1975, Ch. I).

dunameis, and *hexeis* (*NE* II.5, 1105b19-21).³⁸ And he eliminates *pathos* as a candidate for virtue partly on the grounds that “we get angry and feel fear without *prohairesis*, but the virtues are *prohaireseis* of a sort or not without *prohairesis*” (*NE* II.5, 1106a2-4).³⁹ *Pathē* are not under our control in the way required for an object of *prohairesis*. We cannot simply *decide* to become angry. The *pathē* are involuntary *responses*, or at least not sufficiently voluntary to be the objects of intentional actions done by *prohairesis*.⁴⁰ Virtue, however, involves just such prohairetic actions, and so virtue cannot be a *pathos*.

And so *philēsis*, as a *pathos*, does not seem up to us in a way such that it can be the object of a *prohairesis* which establishes a *philia*.⁴¹ Additionally, *philēsis* does not seem to be *specific* enough to be the object of *prohairesis*. Becoming fond of something—having *philēsis* for it—is not a *single* action which might be chosen. Aristotle makes this clear when he contrasts *philēsis* and goodwill (*eunoia*) in *NE* IX.5. Part of the difference between them is that *philēsis* requires time and familiarity to develop, whereas goodwill can come about suddenly (*NE* IX.5, 1166b34-1167a1). *Philēsis* is developed gradually, and as such, cannot be the object of *prohairesis* as a whole. We might instead think of the object of *prohairesis* as that first step in the *process* of developing *philēsis*—introducing oneself, inviting the person to lunch, etc.—but this would still run up against the problem that *philēsis* is not up to us, and moreover, this would not seem to count as *reciprocating philēsis* in the way envisioned by the consensus interpretation.

Although Broadie and Pakaluk *treat* this argument as though it concerns the contrast between *philēsis* and *antiphilēsis*, as I discussed above, Aristotle in fact contrasts *philēsis* with *antiphilein*, loving or having *philia* with each other. Recognizing this, we might say that

³⁸ ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γινόμενα τρία ἐστί, πάθη δυνάμεις ἕξεις, τούτων ἄν τι εἴη ἡ ἀρετή.

³⁹ ἔτι ὀργιζόμεθα μὲν καὶ φοβούμεθα ἀπροαιρέτως, αἱ δ' ἀρεταὶ προαιρέσεις τινὲς ἢ οὐκ ἄνευ προαιρέσεως. Burnet refers to this passage in his comment on our argument from *NE* III.5. But this attempt to locate a parallel fails for two reasons. First, Aristotle does not here use the fact that virtue involves *prohairesis* as a *direct* argument that virtue is a *hexis*, as he does in VIII.5; rather, he uses this fact to eliminate *pathos* as a candidate for virtue as part of a *disjunctive* argument. Second, the way in which virtue turns out to involve *prohairesis* is not that it is *established* by *prohairesis*, as the standard interpretation understands Aristotle's argument in VIII.5.

⁴⁰ This is not to say that there are not steps one could take to try to *make* oneself feel some *pathos*. One might try to make oneself angry by calling to mind instances of injustice, but this still seems to fall short of *deciding* to be angry.

⁴¹ Fraisse (1974, 195) rightly acknowledges the “passivity” of *philēsis* but fails to recognize the consequences of this.

the thing being reciprocated—the object of *prohairesis*—is in some sense *philia*, not *philēsis*. Of course, as discussed in Chapter 2, *philia* involves *philēsis*, and so insofar as *philēsis* is not a proper object of *prohairesis*, then it seems that *philia*, as a whole, will not be a proper object of *prohairesis* either. But it might be objected that even though *philēsis* is a part of *philia*, *philēsis* does not have to be understood as part of the *object* of the *prohairesis* at issue; rather, we might think that where *philēsis* already exists between two people, *prohairesis* could be involved in making a kind of *rational commitment* which forms the *philia*. Pakaluk notes that the view expressed in VIII.5, at least as he interprets it, is plausible at least in those cases “...in which the reciprocity is expressed in an agreement, vow, or oath...”⁴² Along similar lines, Gauthier and Jolif suppose that after a potential friend’s character is tested, there is an “intervention of the intellect” to act on the wish to be friends.⁴³

But Aristotle does not seem to think that primary *philia* involves this kind of explicit *agreement*. In fact, as I will argue more fully in Chapter 5, Aristotle seems to contrast the other forms with primary *philia* on precisely this point. Primary *philia* takes a long time to develop, whereas utility *philia*, in which Aristotle includes *contractual* relationships, and pleasure *philia*, which includes erotic relationships, can come about *quickly*—even, we might think, *by agreement* or *by decision*. Given that the argument in VIII.5 seems to concern primary *philia* in particular, it a problem for the consensus interpretation if it seems better fitted to other kinds of *philia*.

It would be a mistake, I think, to view the process of becoming friends in the artificially regimented way suggested by Gauthier and Jolif. We need not think that potential friends go through a “testing phase” and then each make a rational commitment which establishes their friendship. The *process* of two people spending time with each other, getting to know each other, learning about and testing each other’s characters just is the process of *becoming* friends. It is the process of acquiring the *hexis* of *philia*. In this respect, the process of becoming friends mirrors the process of becoming virtuous. Certainly, as Aristotle says in the passage cited by Gauthier and Jolif, two people cannot be friends until they both know that the other person is “lovable” (*NE* VIII.3, 1156b25-32); but there is no reason to suppose

⁴²Pakaluk (1998, 86).

⁴³Gauthier and Jolif (1958, II.681).

that when this becomes known there is a further act of the intellect needed to constitute the *philia*. Indeed it is often difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint the moment at which you “became friends” with someone, and we need not interpret Aristotle, who shows remarkable sensitive to the nuances of human relationships, as denying this point.

It is also not clear what aspect of *philia* this “rational commitment” might add. We are assuming that it does not add the *philēsis*, and it also seems unlikely that it would add the other main feature of *philia*, rational desire (*boulēsis*) for goods for one’s friend.⁴⁴ There is good reason to suppose (as we saw in §2.2.3.2) that *philēsis* may already bring with it a connection to *boulēsis*. Moreover, *boulēsis* itself, like *philēsis*, does not seem to be a proper object of *prohairesis*. This seems to be part of Aristotle’s notorious claim that we “deliberate not about the ends but about the things towards the ends” (*NE* III.3, 1112b11-12). Ends, which are set by *boulēsis*, establish the framework within which one makes a *prohairesis* of some means as being toward that end, and so however we understand Aristotle’s claim about deliberation, it at least seems clear that one does not *choose* an end.⁴⁵

Finally, while the exact relationship between *prohairesis* and *hexis* will require a thorough investigation in Chapter 4, thinking of the object of *prohairesis* as a rational commitment does not seem to help us explain why, according to this argument, *philia* is a *hexis*. It is not clear why whatever a rational commitment adds would be the thing which somehow *constitutes* or *establishes* the *hexis*. And in fact, once we frame the issue in this way, we can see that we might doubt whether this is even *possible*. In general, a *hexis* is a particular kind of durable condition. Aristotle offers two examples of *hexeis* in the *Categories*, virtue and knowledge (*epistēmē*). Virtue, as we find out in the *Ethics*, is a state of the non-rational part of soul which is developed over time through habituation. Moreover, Aristotle even claims

⁴⁴I focus here on *philēsis* and wishing goods for each other because these are the two primary features Aristotle identifies in *NE* VII.2-3. It seems equally unlikely that *prohairesis* would *add* any of the other features Aristotle discusses, e.g., in *NE* IX.4.

⁴⁵This issue is complicated and contentious. It has seemed to many commentators that Aristotle must be understood as leaving room for deliberation about ends in the sense of deliberating about what would count as a realization of some end or how to specify some end. But even if we do acquire *boulēseis* through deliberation in the sense of coming to have *boulēseis* for narrower specifications of the end or for intermediate ends or means towards the end, it still does not seem right to say that these *boulēseis* are *chosen*. The object of choice is the *result* of deliberation, what has already been made *determinate* by deliberation (*NE* III.3, 1113a2-5). More generally, what we choose is not whether to have some *boulēsis* or not, but what will help us to *fulfill* that *boulēsis*.

that knowledge, which we might think could be acquired *quickly*, e.g., through teaching, must “grow together, and this requires time” (*NE* VII.3, 1147a22). It is possible that Aristotle holds generally that *hexeis* (at least of the sort relevant to psychology) are developed over time, and as we have already seen, Aristotle does hold that both *philia* and *philēsis* take time to form. And thus whatever is added by the *prohairesis*, it does not seem that it could be the thing which constitutes or establishes the *hexis*.

3.3.3 “*prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*”

Finally and most importantly, taking *prohairesis*—whatever its object—to play a foundational role in *philia* does not make sense of Aristotle’s argument. I have thus far appealed to considerations about what constitutes a proper object of *prohairesis* or how the object of *prohairesis* might be understood on the consensus interpretation, and these are difficult issues in their own right; but the consensus interpretation is open to the stronger objection that its general form does not fit Aristotle’s argument. Consider again Aristotle’s argument in VIII.5:

Fondness [*philēsis*] seems to be a feeling, and friendship [*philia*] [seems to be] a state [*hexis*]; for there is fondness no less towards inanimate things, but they [sc., friends] love [each other] in return with decision [*prohairesis*], and decision comes from a state; and they wish good things to those whom they love for their own sake not according to a feeling but according to a state.⁴⁶ (*NE* VIII.5, 1157b28-32)

Aristotle is arguing that *philia* is a *hexis* because of the involvement of *prohairesis*. And according to the consensus interpretation, the involvement of *prohairesis* is in *establishing* the *philia* through reciprocation requiring *prohairesis*. If *this* involvement of *prohairesis* were to show that *philia* is a *hexis*, then Aristotle would need to rely on the claim that *hexeis* come from *prohairesis* in order to conclude that *philia* is a *hexis* because it is established by *prohairesis*. But in fact Aristotle relies on the opposite claim, that *prohairesis* come from *hexeis*. And so if the role of *prohairesis* in this argument were as the consensus interpretation claims, then Aristotle’s argument here would not show that *philia* itself is a *hexis*, but rather

⁴⁶ ἔοικε δ' ἡ μὲν φίλησις πάθει, ἡ δὲ φιλία ἔξει· ἡ γὰρ φίλησις οὐχ ἦττον πρὸς τὰ ἄψυχά ἐστιν, ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις ἀφ' ἕξεως· καὶ τὰ γὰρ βούλονται τοῖς φιλουμένοις ἐκείνων ἕνεκα, οὐ κατὰ πάθος ἀλλὰ καθ' ἕξιν.

that there is a *prior hexis* from which the *prohairesis* establishing the *philia* arises. Thus if there is a way to interpret the role of *prohairesis* in this argument which makes sense of it as an argument for the claim that *philia* is a *hexis*, then we should prefer that interpretation.

3.3.4 Particular reciprocation

As stated, the consensus interpretation makes reciprocation seem monolithic: It is a matter of reciprocating the *general* attitudes which constitute *philia*. In order to rescue the consensus interpretation from the problems which arise from this general reciprocation, one might instead think of reciprocation in terms of the particular iterative actions done within the context of the *philia*—actions done in response to or with a view to other particular actions of one’s friend. Although this view would answer concerns about whether reciprocation can be the proper object of *prohairesis*, it would inherit some of the other problems of the consensus interpretation. It relies on “*anti*” implying the same thick sense of reciprocation, and because it still ties the role of *prohairesis* to reciprocation—particular instead of general—it similarly has a difficult time making sense of Aristotle’s argument. If there is no *philia* unless and until there is reciprocation, and if reciprocation requires *prohairesis*, then given Aristotle’s claim that *prohairesis comes from a hexis*, this view still fails to show that *philia* itself is a *hexis* (but rather shows that there is some other *hexis* from which the *prohairesis* which make *philia* possible arise). But let us set these difficulties aside.

If we emphasize a concern with reciprocation in the sense of responding to past and prompting future friendly actions, then it makes it look as though friends are motivated by and value *the relationship*, the *philia* itself. Broadie perhaps comes close to this view when she claims that “intrinsic” to each friend’s love is “a sense of the value” of the other friend’s love.⁴⁷ It is more explicit in Nussbaum’s view that in Aristotelian *philia* “...lovers will have emotions toward their relationship itself, and the activities it involves.”⁴⁸ Konstan has argued against this view on the grounds that Aristotle would place *philia* in the category of *relation*, but he says, “It is hard to imagine experiencing love for a relation, as Aristotle understands

⁴⁷Broadie and Rowe (2002, 412).

⁴⁸Nussbaum (2001b, 474).

the term.”⁴⁹ Whether friends *could* value *philia* according to Aristotle is a difficult question.⁵⁰ A full answer to it would need to take into account Aristotle’s identification of *philia* as a kind of *koinōnia*, “community” (which I discuss further in Chapter 5). If a *koinōnia* is a matter of having a common good made possible by the relationship, then it is perhaps possible that friends might value this good as a proxy for the relationship.

But Konstan is certainly right that, whether it is possible or not, Aristotle’s account *does not* make valuing the relationship itself an important element of *philia*. In fact, Aristotle seems much more concerned to show that friends are motivated by the interests of their friends *themselves*. Thus this interpretation of VIII.5 as emphasizing particular reciprocation appears to skew Aristotle’s account of *philia* by making friends more concerned about the *relationship* than their *friends*. And further, if we were to characterize the kind of *hexis* associated with this particular reciprocation (again, bracketing the previous concerns), it would seem to imply a *hexis* for *keeping up* the *philia* more than a *hexis* constituting the *philia* itself.

Perhaps the term “reciprocation” makes the claim sound more complicated than it is meant to be: Perhaps the consensus interpretation could be taken to mean that to reciprocate is merely to interact with the person *as a friend*. But even in this case, it does not make sense to treat the *philia* itself as the object of *prohairesis* because choosing to do the actions within *philia* is not the same thing as choosing to have the *hexis* from which these actions arise. This would be to make the mistake of thinking that the *hexis* is purely constituted by the actions. But it is the nature of a *hexis* to continue to exist even when not being actualized. Indeed this is part of Aristotle’s point in arguing that *philia* is a *hexis*: Friends continue to be friends even when they are not interacting.

It is helpful to compare *philia* with virtue in this regard. We would not *identify* virtue with virtuous actions themselves. This is clear from Aristotle’s claim that you cannot do the virtuous actions *as the virtuous person would do them* before *becoming* virtuous (*NE* II.4).

⁴⁹Konstan (2018, 44). Cf. Konstan (2006, 178): “Philia does not, I think, have the abstract status of a relationship, in the sense of a bond distinct from each friend’s love. It is not the kind of entity of which it is possible to say that friends ‘will have emotions toward their relationship itself,’ any more than it can impose obligations on those who love each other.”

⁵⁰Konstan is surely right you could not *love* a relation, if loving involves wishing for the good of the object to be promoted. So I refer to “valuing” more generally, which is more in line with Broadie and Nussbaum.

It is the *hexis* of virtue which makes possible the performance of actions in a certain way. Likewise, it is the *hexis* of *philia*, I think, which makes possible the performance of actions *as a friend*. So even if we think of reciprocation at the level of particular actions, because you cannot do those actions *as a friend* before actually *being friends*, this reciprocation does not involve a *prohairesis* to be friends.

3.4 An Alternative Interpretation: The Decisions of Friends

I conclude that the consensus interpretation will not work. However, when we clear away the two assumptions on which it was based and give proper attention to the structure of the argument, things easily fall into place.

Aristotle asserts that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*. If *this* claim is to be used to show that *philia* itself is a *hexis*, then when Aristotle says that *philia* involves *prohairesis*, he must have in mind *prohairesis* which comes *from philia*—not *prohairesis* to reciprocate which *establishes philia*. *Prohairesis* which comes *from philia* is readily intelligible. Aristotle requires that friends have goodwill towards each other; but as we saw in *NE IX.5*, *mere* goodwill is only a hollowed-out sense of *philia*. Friends *act* on their goodwill towards each other. More than that, friends act in the deliberate, thoughtful, and intentional way described by *prohairesis*. These *prohairesis* actions flow *from* their *philia*.

According to the consensus interpretation, we find out about a *new* requirement for *philia*: It requires a thick sense of intentional reciprocation; each friend loves the other by *prohairesis* with the love of the other in view. This would be a substantial new requirement. It would be surprising for Aristotle to introduce this requirement with so little discussion and after the main account already seems to be in place (and especially surprising, given that there is reason to doubt that Aristotle uses ‘*anti*’ to indicate such reciprocation). But if this argument in *VIII.5* concerns the *prohairesis* which friends make regarding each other in the context of a *philia*, then we “learn” something which would have been natural to assume all along: Friends not only wish good things to each other, but act on this wish. Thus what we find in this argument is an analogue to the *Rhetoric*’s claim that $\tau\omicron\ \phi\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$ involves both

wishing good things to your friend and “being inclined, so far as you can, to bring these things about” (*Rhet.* II.4, 1380b34-1381a3).

The consensus interpretation has a difficult time making sense of the contrast with *philēsis* (§1.1, problem 5). The claim that “there is *philēsis* no less towards inanimate things” is meant to play *some* role in the argument. But if, as the consensus interpretation holds, you can reciprocate *philēsis* by *prohairesis*, then you must be able to have *philēsis* by *prohairesis*. The consensus interpretation offers no explanation for why one could decide to have *philēsis* for a person but not an inanimate object.⁵¹ And so if it is this *prohairesis* which implies a *hexis*, then the same argument could be used to show that the *philēsis* which one has for an inanimate object by *prohairesis* is also a *hexis*. The consensus interpretation can rightly claim that it is impossible to *reciprocate philēsis* to an inanimate object, because it cannot have *philēsis* for you in the first place. But we have been given no reason to think that a *prohairesis* to *reciprocate* bears a different relationship to a *hexis* than a *prohairesis* for *philēsis* on its own.

According to my interpretation, the *prohairesis* in this argument refers to the way in which friends act on their goodwill by *prohairesis*. My interpretation thus appeals to the *other* feature which Aristotle claims distinguishes *philēsis* from *philia* in VIII.2. There Aristotle argued that *philēsis* for inanimate objects is not *philia* because it lacks reciprocation *and* because it lacks well-wishing. My interpretation thus provides a clean contrast and explains why this argument cannot be used to show that *philēsis* for inanimate objects is a *hexis*: Inanimate objects do not even *have* a good such that one could wish good things to them and act on those wishes by *prohairesis* (which *prohairesis* implies a *hexis*).⁵²

In general, the consensus interpretation is vague on the way in which this argument *shows* that *philia* is a *hexis*—as I have argued, necessarily so, because the consensus interpretation’s understanding of the role of *prohairesis* would better fit the claim that a *hexis* come from *prohairesis*, rather than the reverse, as Aristotle claims. My interpretation offers a clear answer to the question of why *prohairesis* requires a *hexis*. I will argue for this answer more

⁵¹If the consensus interpretation were to explain this by appealing to a difference between *philēsis* and τὸ φιλεῖν—even though expositors of the consensus interpretation often put it in terms of *philēsis*—then this would only further indicate that it is *not* reciprocation which is at issue.

⁵²Although I do not explore it here, I take it to be a virtue of my interpretation that it could be used to show that certain instances of non-reciprocal loving also count as *hexeis*, such as maternal love.

fully in Chapter 4, but in sum: *Prohairesis* requires an end set by one's *hexis*. This answer fits Aristotle's moral psychology more generally. As discussed above (§3.1), Aristotle seems to require that the end of a *prohairesis* be set by a *boulēsis*, and he closely connects *prohairesis* with a person's character. This answer also fits with the context of this argument. Aristotle continues, with no explicit transition, to say that "they wish good things to those whom they love for their own sake not according to a feeling but according to a *hexis*." This suggests that the way in which friends wish good things to each other and act on that wish has been at issue all along. Friends act to promote the good of their friend not *as they feel like it* but *deliberately, intentionally* and from the stable *state* of *philia*.

4.0 *Boulēsis*

The argument that *philia* is a *hexis* in *NE* VIII.5 crucially relies upon the premise that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*. I have argued that we should reject the consensus interpretation of this argument, which connects *prohairesis* to reciprocation. We should rather understand *prohairesis* in this argument to refer to the way in which friends act on *prohairesis* towards the good of their friend. In this chapter, I support this understanding of the argument in VIII.5 by providing an explanation for the connection between *prohairesis* and *hexis*.

It is fairly easy to find the rough *outline* of such an explanation in Aristotle: As Anscombe suggests, Aristotle seems to connect *prohairesis* to one's conception of the good or living well and then to connect one's conception of living well to one's *hexis* of character.¹ This suggests that in some sense the end with reference to which a *prohairesis* is made must be set by one's *hexis*. However, the *details* of such a view are quite controversial, and so it would be worth thoroughly reviewing it (and I do discuss many of the details below). But here I take a slightly different approach offered by Aristotle's argument in VIII.5, which has received much less attention.

I begin in §4.1 by suggesting that there is a recognizable way of desiring something as good which does not relate to one's *conception* of the good: Sometimes something just strikes us as good, and I call this "spontaneous *boulēsis*." Most interpretations of Aristotelian *boulēsis* rule out spontaneous *boulēsis* because they connect *boulēsis* as such to a conception of one's good. But I argue in §4.2 that Aristotle recognizes in *NE* VIII.5 a distinction between two ways of having *boulēsis*, according to *pathos* (κατὰ πάθος) and according to *hexis* (καθ' ἕξιν). I further argue in §4.3 that this distinction should be understood in terms of desiring something as good *on a whim* and desiring something as good in a way which relates to one's *conception of the good*. Thus if, as I argue in §4.4, Aristotle *does* connect *prohairesis* to one's conception of the good, then we can offer the more specific explanation that *prohairesis* requires a *boulēsis* which is had as a matter of one's *hexis*, but not all *boulēseis* are like this.

¹Anscombe (1965, 61).

4.1 The Possibility of “Spontaneous *Boulēsis*”

It is intuitively true that some of our desires are more important to us than others. Not necessarily in the sense that we *value* those desires themselves more than others—that they have a higher second-order value—although this may be the case. Rather, some of our desires are more reflective of “who we really are.” They are more deeply embedded or play more central roles in our motivational framework. Bennett Helm fashions this intuition into a distinction between “values” and “cares.”² To *value* something is to see its import as connected to one’s own self. One *identifies* (an aspect of) oneself with the object in such a way that one’s own sense of self-worth is tied to the object.³ By contrast, to *care* about something is to recognize that thing as having *shallower* import, not connected to one’s self. “Values are, therefore, deeper than cares insofar as they provide a framework of meaning in terms of which one can understand who one is, a framework that can provide direction to one’s life as a whole.”⁴

According to Helm’s distinction, the desires which are more important are those which are aimed at *values*. They have as their *objects* things which are deeply connected to one’s self through identification. But we might instead take the perspective of the *origin* of the desire. Gary Watson appeals to such a distinction to make sense of free will: Roughly, we act freely as long as we do not act on a desire which arises *independently* and *in opposition* to our rational evaluation. In order to explain how we might *fail* to act freely in this sense, Watson appeals to a roughly Platonic division between reason and appetite according to which each is capable of motivating *independently*.⁵

Watson distinguishes between what he calls the “valuational system” and the “motiva-

²See Helm (2001, §4.1). Helm’s distinction is a distinction between kinds of *import*, general value. However, I will be concerned with desires. The relationship between value and desire may be complicated, but on Helm’s view at least, desires are “felt evaluations” which motivate “in light of an essential connection with import” (2001, 82). I take it, then, that Helm’s distinction can be applied to desires as well as directly to values.

³The distinction Helm makes between valuing and caring is thus, as Helm acknowledges (2001, 100), a distinction within Harry Frankfurt’s more general notion of caring as involving identification, as Frankfurt explains: “A person who cares about something is, as it were, invested in it. He *identifies* himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending on whether he cares about is diminished or enhanced” (Frankfurt, 1988, 83).

⁴Helm (2001, 101).

⁵Watson (2004, 17-18).

tional system.” The valuational system encompasses an agent’s ability to make *judgments* about what should be done. This involves assigning values to states of affairs and ranking them such that an agent can form “all things considered” judgments about what should be done in given circumstances.⁶ The motivational system is the “set of considerations which move [an agent] to action.”⁷ An agent’s all things considered judgments about what should be done *are* among the considerations that motivate her to action, and to that extent, an agent’s valuational system and motivational system overlap. The possibility of *con lict* between what an agent *values*, as part of her valuational system, and what she *wants*, as part of her motivational system, exists because there can be motivations which arise *independently* of judgments of value.

Watson argues that appetites and passions are capable of moving us to action *directly* because they do not motivate through evaluative *judgments*.⁸ These motivations are in a sense “blind.”⁹ They allow for the possibility of being motivated independently of, and even in conflict with, an agent’s judgments of value. Thus an agent can be unfree in the sense that what she *does* is not what she most *wants* to do: An appetite or passion may move her to an action which conflicts with her considered judgment about what she should do. And of course what makes such action “unfree” is that the agent is identified with her valuational system, her rational and evaluative capacities. This gives sense to a distinction between desires in terms of their origin: Some desires are more important to us because they come from who we really are, our rational selves, whereas other desires come from, as it were, outside us—outside our system of values. (However, as Watson notes, this is not at all to deny that appetites and passions *can* be integrated into our valuational system; it is only to draw out the importance of the possibility of conflict.¹⁰

Watson’s distinction is a distinction in *kind*. It is a distinction between “blind” motivations—bare urges or pleasure-directed appetites—and motivations involving judgments of value.

⁶Watson (2004, 25).

⁷Watson (2004, 25).

⁸Watson allows for a distinction between mere passions and more complex emotions which although similar to passions in some regards, may involve evaluations and beliefs of the valuational system. This, Watson comments, “may be the basis for Plato’s positing a third part of the soul which is in a way partly rational—viz. *Thumos*” (2004, 21n6).

⁹Watson (2004, 22-23).

¹⁰Watson (2004, 22-23).

Although they together comprise the motivational system, they are very different kinds of motivation. However, I think we can recognize a similar distinction in *degree* or *quality* even *within* Watson’s evaluative desires. Among desires which involve a judgment about what to do (or desires which are formulated in terms of goodness rather than pleasure), some are more important to us than others. Even if the agent is identified with her rational valuational system, some value-based desires are more fundamental, more central to who she is. This distinction can be seen in (at least) two cases: First, low-stakes desires for things like harmless pleasures—things which might fall under “tastes”—which although often connected with pleasure, need not be pursued in purely appetitive ways. Second, “one-off” desires for things which strike one as good, but which might even conflict with one’s considered views about the good.

As an example of the first sort, imagine standing in line at an ice cream shop: How do you come to desire a particular flavor? It could be that you form a purely appetitive desire for fudge swirl: You see the glistening chocolate ribbons and straightaway, impulsively desire the pleasure of those contrasting textures, the richness of the chocolate, etc. Or you could form a *reasoned* desire for vanilla: “Blueberry will stain my teeth (and I just had them cleaned); coffee will keep me up (and I have an early meeting), etc. So I think it would be good to choose vanilla.” But there seems to be room *between* these desires: You might have a desire for mint chocolate chip which is formulated in terms of *goodness* rather than pleasure, and so not a mere appetite, but which is not the result of a reasoned process of evaluation.¹¹ You are not seized by pleasure and you are also not engaged in forming an all things considered judgment about what flavor to choose. It just seems to you to be a good thing to order mint chocolate chip. If there is room for such a desire, then it is (in some sense) a *rational* desire, but one far removed from one’s self. It is not a desire either aimed at an object one values as part of oneself or a desire which arises from who one really is.¹²

If this kind of desire were limited to harmless pleasures or tastes, then we might worry

¹¹On “reasoned” versus “unreasoned” desire, see Grönroos (2015, 6), who argues that “wish is a basic, unreasoned desire for the human good...”

¹²Again, this is not to say that tastes, for example, could *never* be integrated into one’s conception of oneself. Of course they could: “Sophisticated people eat pistachio,” “my mother always loved praline,” etc. This is rather to point out the space for desires which are neither purely appetitive nor deeply connected to one’s self.

that it is restricted to low-level objects or objects about which one has no prior evaluation. But examples of the second sort suggest that there is room for this kind of desire at higher levels. Imagine a cinephile who believes that proper enjoyment of cinematic works is an important part of the good life and whose own devotion to the cinema forms an important part of who she is. She has exacting standards for what counts as worthy of cinematic appreciation. She reveres Kurosawa and despises bland, consumer-driven Hollywood blockbusters. But going to the cinema one afternoon, it *just seems good* to her to see the latest Marvel movie—she decides to see it *on a whim*.¹³ This desire is not a mere appetite, and it is certainly not a reasoned desire or a desire involving an all things considered judgment of her valuational system. In fact, if she thought about it too much, she might talk herself out of seeing it. Certainly if she started regularly seeing such movies, we might say that her conception of the good life had changed or we might even doubt her past devotion to the cinematic classics. But there does seem to be room for this sort of “one-off” desire or whim.

Aristotle distinguishes between pleasure-directed appetite (*epithumia*) and a form of rational desire aimed at the good (*boulēsis*). So to put this distinction into Aristotelian terms, we would say that some *boulēseis* are more important, more central than others. The *boulēsis* for mint chocolate chip ice cream or for seeing the latest Marvel movie is less reflective of who one really is than, for example, the *boulēsis* for the health of one’s spouse, for a fulfilling career, or for a meaningful hobby. The kind of less reflective *boulēsis* I have in mind has at least two important phenomenological features: (1) It seems to come about *suddenly*. It is not a desire formulated through a process of reasoning. As such, (2) it appears to spring up *independently* of one’s valuational system, to use Watson’s term. It is a desire which does not bring with it connections to one’s system of values. Call this *spontaneous boulēsis* to call attention to both its suddenness and independence (the way it seems to arise “*sua sponte*”).

Does Aristotle allow for spontaneous *boulēsis*? Most *accounts* of Aristotelian *boulēsis*, at least, make it difficult to see how he could. There is broad agreement that the sense in which *boulēsis* is aimed at “the good” is that the goodness of the object is explained with reference to *one’s own good*—the general conception one has, *in some sense*, of one’s good

¹³Thanks to Jennifer Whiting for this example.

(or doing well, living well, *eudaimonia*). All *boulēseis* would thus invoke one's good in a way that spontaneous *boulēsis* might not.

Interpretations of Aristotelian *boulēsis* can be roughly categorized, as Giles Pearson usefully articulates, along two dimensions.¹⁴ First, views differ on the way in which an agent's conception of her good figures into her occurrent *boulēsis*, the having of the desire. According to some accounts, the object of *boulēsis* is desired *as* being conducive to or part of an agent's conception of the good.¹⁵ Following Pearson, I will call these "direct reference" views. When an agent has a *boulēsis* for some object, she *has in mind* or *directly refers to* the connection between that object and her conception of the good. Other accounts require only that an agent's *boulēsis* "*express*" her conception of the good ("reflect," in Pearson's terminology). On these views, the object of *boulēsis* does fit into her conception of the good, and that is why she desires it; but she need not have that connection in mind when desiring it.¹⁶

Second, there are differences in what it means to say that an agent "has a conception" of the good. It may mean that an agent possesses something like a system of ends which either (a) can be and is articulated (i.e., it is explicit) or (b) can be but is not necessarily articulated.¹⁷ Or (c) to have a conception of the good may not involve content which can be articulated in the form of general, universal ends; but rather to have a grasp of one's good may be, as McDowell has argued, to have something like an habituated perceptual capacity.¹⁸

These dimensions can be put together in complex ways—perhaps more complex than Pearson acknowledges. Pearson recognizes three kinds of views: *direct reference* views with *explicit* conceptions of the good, *expressive* views with *explicit* conceptions of the good,

¹⁴Pearson (2012, 143). My discussion here and below is indebted to Pearson (2012, Ch. 6). I agree with him that *boulēsis* does not always invoke a conception of one's good, but as I discuss below, I disagree with him on the relationship between *prohairesis* and one's good.

¹⁵Anscombe suggests that *boulēsis* "...should be explained in terms of what is wanted being wanted *qua* conducive to or part of 'doing well,' or blessedness" (1965, 67). See discussion in Mele (1984, 144).

¹⁶See, e.g., Mele (1984).

¹⁷(a) is often associated with "grand end" views; see, e.g., Cooper (1975, 59) and Kraut (1993). Pearson does not distinguish category (b), but Broadie's discussion of articulacy may suggest such a view, although it does not appear to be hers (1991, 237).

¹⁸As McDowell puts it, "In this contrasting picture, there is nothing for grasp of the content of the universal end to be except a capacity to read the details of situations in the light of a way of valuing actions into which proper upbringing has habituated one" (1996, 26).

and *expressive* views with *inarticulable* conceptions of the good.¹⁹ I will briefly mention two difficulties with Pearson's classification, although these difficulties will not concern us. First, if we allow for a middle category—conceptions of the good which can be but are not yet articulated—then there may be additional possibilities. This would seem to be an importantly distinct category, because (i) given that the end is not *yet* articulated, the agent's subjective grasp of the end will importantly differ from explicit views, and (ii) given that the end *can* be articulated, it involves a different kind of content than *inarticulable* views. Second, it may be more difficult to categorize views as direct-reference or expressive than Pearson supposes. It may be that having a *boulēsis* involves the *thought* that realizing the end would contribute to one's good (or an *application* of the concept '*eudaimonia*') without involving an articulated or even articulable grasp of one's good. This kind of view would seem to be closer to a direct reference view than an expressive view, if expressive views do not require that an agent think in terms of one's good or *eudaimonia* at all. Thus direct reference views may not be restricted to explicit conceptions of one's good. This distinction between direct reference and expressive views is the most important for bringing out the difficulty of accommodating spontaneous *boulēsis*, but a rough distinction will be sufficient.

According to direct reference views, the agent's subjective description under which an object of *boulēsis* is desired makes reference to the agent's conception of the good. If direct reference views are restricted to explicit conceptions of the good, as Pearson supposes, then it is clear why direct reference views might have a hard time accommodating spontaneous *boulēsis*. An agent can express the general values which make up her conception of the good life and roughly how these values fit together, and she can reason about particular ends using these values. If every *boulēsis* is aimed at something which is good in the sense of fitting into such a conception of the good, then every *boulēsis* brings with it connections which prevent it from seeming to arise *spontaneously*. Such *boulēsis* might arise *suddenly*—although this view naturally lends itself to generating reasoned desires—but the suddenness is explained in terms of an agent's facility in recognizing the relationships to higher-order ends which make particular ends desirable. But spontaneous *boulēsis* seems to lack precisely this recognition. (If direct reference views are relaxed to include inarticulable conceptions of the good, then

¹⁹Pearson (2012, 144)

there is still the problem that every *boulēsis* at least explicitly invokes the *concept* of one's good, but this concept does not seem to be involved in spontaneous *boulēsis*.)

Expressive views may capture the *phenomenon* of spontaneous *boulēsis* but at the expense of the *distinction* between spontaneous and other *boulēsis*. According to expressive views, the object of *boulēsis* is an object the goodness of which is explained by reference to one's good, but the agent need not be able to articulate the system of values which make up her good or the precise way in which a particular object of *boulēsis* fits into that system. In desiring the object of *boulēsis*, an agent need not even invoke the concept of "a good." A *boulēsis* might arise, like spontaneous *boulēsis*, suddenly and apparently independently, because it is merely the *expression* of one's conception of the good, which may be "grasped" only intuitively. But nevertheless every *boulēsis* does arise from a conception of one's good, and thus every *boulēsis* is reflective of who one really is and what one values (in the stronger sense of what constitutes living well, not merely what one "cares" about). There is in a sense only a single source for *boulēsis*—one's conception of one's good, however inarticulate or even inarticulable it might be—but spontaneous *boulēsis* seems to depend on a *distinction* between the desires which arise, as it were, within and without of one's valuational system.

It would be disappointing if Aristotle could not accommodate spontaneous *boulēsis*. It seems to be a recognizable feature of human psychology—sometimes we desire things because they seem *good* but not in a way which rises to the level of invoking our conception of our good. More importantly, if the process of *acquiring* a conception of the good is to be a partly *cognitive* process—involving something more than Watson's "blind" appetites and emotions—then we need something like spontaneous *boulēsis* to capture the way in which we desire things as *good* before the point at which we can be said to *have* a conception of the good.²⁰ It is plausible that at some point it seems good to a child, for example, to tell the truth, but not yet because this refers to or expresses a conception of the good (or to put this into Aristotelian terms which will presage my argument, not because the desire arises from the child's *character*). And even with mature agents, we may want to make room for *uncharacteristic* action: Actions done on the basis of *boulēsis* but without a view to or

²⁰Burnyeat (1980, e.g., 76-77) argues that learning to take pleasure in something in the right way involves an important cognitive element. Jimenez (2015) argues against the "pleasure-centered" view of moral development and in favor of a larger role for the noble. See also Broadie (1991, §2.X).

even in conflict with one's conception of one's good. Uncharacteristic action may play an important role in our ability to purposefully *change* our conception of the good—to alter aspects of our character.²¹

I think there is *prima facie* reason to suppose that spontaneous *boulēsis* would pose a problem for views of *boulēsis* which tie *boulēsis* to a conception of one's good. But even the brief summary above suffices to make clear that such views are complex combinations of subtle elements and can take a variety of shapes. It may be that this kind of view could be adapted to accommodate spontaneous *boulēsis*, perhaps by: recognizing multiple ways of conceiving of and relating to one's good; combining articulated and unarticulated elements in one's good; or allowing for conflicts, compartmentalization, blind spots, etc. in one's good. So in my argument below, I will focus on the fact that Aristotle recognizes a distinction in *boulēsis* which *needs* to be accommodated, rather than the secondary question of *how* this distinction might be accommodated by existing views. And it is by focusing on this distinction, I think, that we can see why Aristotle claims that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*.

4.2 Ways of Having *Boulēsis*

4.2.1 *Boulēsis*, *prohairesis*, and suddenness

Aristotle does point to one feature of spontaneous *boulēsis*—suddenness—in the course of giving his account of *prohairesis*. In both the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle outlines his own account of *prohairesis* by distinguishing *prohairesis* from various candidates, including the voluntary, belief, spirit, appetite, and *boulēsis*. In both the Eudemian and Nicomachean accounts, *prohairesis* is partially distinguished by the fact that *prohairesis* is *not* sudden. In the Nicomachean discussion, this fact is used to distinguish *prohairesis* from voluntary action in general (*NE* III.2, 1111b6-10); but in the Eudemian discussion, Aristotle directly contrasts *prohairesis* with *boulēsis* on this point:²²

²¹Callard (2018) argues that acquiring new values is a distinctive process of aspiration in part because the values which one is aiming to acquire are only partially intelligible from one's current condition.

²²I do not think this indicates a difference in the view of *boulēsis*, since I see no suggestion in the Nicomachean discussion that *boulēsis* cannot be sudden. It might have to do with the curious feature that in

We do many things that we wish suddenly, but no one decides on [προαιρείται] anything suddenly.²³ (*EE* II.8, 1224a3-4)

And a bit later:

Therefore since *prohairesis* is neither belief nor *boulēsis* individually and it is not both (for no one decides [προαιρείται] suddenly, but people do think they should²⁴ act and they wish [suddenly]), it is then from both.²⁵ (*EE* II.9, 1226b2-4)

In both of these passages, Aristotle contrasts *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* on the grounds that *boulēsis* can be “sudden” (ἐξαίφνης) but *prohairesis* cannot, although he emphasizes different aspects in each passage. In the first passage, the emphasis is on the *action*: It is possible to *act* suddenly on a *boulēsis*. And in the second passage, the emphasis is rather on the *boulēsis* *itself*: It is possible to *come to have* a *boulēsis* suddenly.²⁶

Aristotle accepts that *boulēsis* is somehow involved in *prohairesis*, as the second passage makes clear (and see §3.1 above). But however *boulēsis* figures into *prohairesis*, *boulēsis* cannot in that context manifest the same characteristics that it can on its own. It is tempting to see here something like the rejection of a “common factor” explanation at the level of *boulēsis*: It is not *boulēsis* as such which is involved in *prohairesis*, but rather a particular *kind* or *quality* of *boulēsis* which would explain the difference in characteristics within and without of *prohairesis*. This would parallel, as I understand it, the move Aristotle *does* make to limit the *boulēseis* which may be involved in *prohairesis* to those towards which there can be deliberation. “Idle wishes” are importantly different from the kinds of *boulēseis* which can figure in *prohairesis*.²⁷ Similarly, we might look to explain this difference in suddenness

delineating the voluntary in *EE* II.7, Aristotle makes a point of distinguishing the voluntary from *boulēsis*, but *boulēsis* is generally left out of the discussion in *NE* III.1.

²³ πολλὰ δὲ βουλόμενοι πράττομεν ἐξαίφνης, προαιρείται δ' οὐδείς οὐδὲν ἐξαίφνης.

²⁴ Following Inwood and Woolf, I translate with Susemihl's proposed supplement, δεῖν.

²⁵ ἐπειδὴ οὐδ' οὔτε δόξα οὔτε βούλησις {ἐστὶ} προαίρεσις ἐστὶν ὡς ἐκάτερον, οὐδ' ἄμφω (ἐξαίφνης γὰρ προαιρείται μὲν οὐθείς, δοκεῖ δὲ πράττειν καὶ βούλονται) ὡς ἐξ ἄμφοῦν ἄρα.

²⁶ Translations often obscure the point of the second passage by not getting the right relation between the “thinking” (δοκεῖ) and the “wishing” (βούλονται). Thus Inwood and Woolf translate the καὶ as “or”, presumably treating it as an exegetical; and Kenny changes subjects from “one” to “people.” However, Aristotle is here giving a reason why *prohairesis* is not the same thing as belief and *boulēsis* together (having already distinguished them individually earlier). And the reason is that even the *combination* of belief and *boulēsis* has a characteristic that *prohairesis* lacks: One and the same person can *suddenly* come to have both the belief that she should act and a *boulēsis*, but *prohairesis* is not sudden in this way. It is important, then, that belief and *boulēsis* are treated as distinct elements had at the same time.

²⁷ I agree with Pearson's general point that idle wishes seem to indicate that not all *boulēseis* are connected to one's good (2012, §6.2(a)).

by appealing to a difference between an end (*boulēsis*) being set or arrived at suddenly, on the spur of the moment, or more slowly, enduringly, *as a part of one's character*.

But it may be too quick to conclude that these passages support any distinction within *boulēsis* itself. Of course it could be that the difference in suddenness is to be explained not by reference to a difference in *boulēsis*, but by reference to the operation of *deliberation*. It could be that *prohairesis* cannot be sudden because it involves a temporally extended process of deliberation. However, many would be reluctant to accept this explanation, because then, as Cooper puts it, “...Aristotle would seem to hold that moral decisions are much more excogitated than in general they are.”²⁸ But if (a) *boulēsis* can be sudden and *prohairesis*, which involves *boulēsis*, cannot and (b) the difference is not to be found in deliberation, then we may want to pursue a distinction in *boulēsis* to explain this difference.

This denial of sudden *prohairesis* also needs to be squared with a passage in *NE* III.8 where Aristotle appears to claim that not only is sudden *prohairesis* possible, but sudden *prohairesis* action is in some sense *better*:

...but it is characteristic of a courageous person to endure things which are and appear fearful to humans because [enduring them] is noble and not [enduring them] is shameful. And that is why it seems to be characteristic of a more courageous person to be without fear and untroubled in *unforeseen* fears than foreseen ones; for it is more from *hexis* because less from preparation. For someone might choose things which are foreseen from calculation and reason, but sudden things are [...] according to one's *hexis*.²⁹ (*NE* III.8, 1117a16-22)

This is a dense and difficult passage. One central issue concerns how to understand “more courageous” in the second sentence. As C.C.W. Taylor notes, this may be taken either in the sense of indicating a *person* who is more courageous or in the sense of “more strongly *indicative* of courage.”³⁰ Both senses seem to be in play. Sudden actions are especially revealing of one's *hexis* or character, and by revealing one's character, they also reveal the extent to which one has acquired, for example, the *hexis* of courage. Sudden actions come more directly from one's *hexis* because they come less from “preparation.” Such actions reveal one's *hexis* more fully because they present one's *hexis* unobscured by rational measures

²⁸Cooper (1975, 7).

²⁹ἀνδρείου δ' ἦν τὰ φοβερὰ ἀνθρώπων ὄντα καὶ φαινόμενα ὑπομένειν, ὅτι καλὸν καὶ αἰσχρὸν τὸ μῆ. διὸ καὶ ἀνδρειότερον δοκεῖ εἶναι τὸ ἐν τοῖς αἰφνιδίους φόβοις ἄφοβον καὶ ἀτάραχον εἶναι ἢ ἐν τοῖς προδήλοις· ἀπὸ ἕξεως γὰρ μᾶλλον ἦν, ὅτι ἦττον ἐκ παρασκευῆς· τὰ προφανῆ μὲν γὰρ κἂν ἐκ λογισμοῦ καὶ λόγου τις προέλοιτο, τὰ δ' ἐξαίφνης κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν.

³⁰Taylor (2006, 188).

aimed at making up the shortfall in one’s character. Sudden actions in the face of fear also seem to indicate that the agent is *more* courageous in the sense that the agent has more fully realized the virtue of courage which, as a *hexis* itself, rests not in one’s *actions* but in one’s *character*. The person who can do the courageous action straightaway is in this sense “more courageous” than the person who can do the courageous action after giving herself a pep-talk, even though *under a certain description* they both do the same action in the end (although of course only the truly courageous person does the courageous action *as* the courageous person would do it).

The *way* in which one’s character is revealed in this passage appears to be through *prohairesis*, as Aristotle claims elsewhere.³¹ Different circumstances of action impact what *prohairesis* is able to reveal. Foreseen things, Aristotle says, *might* be *chosen* (*προέλοιτο*) “from calculation and reason,” but sudden things *are*, presumably, chosen “according to one’s *hexis*” (*κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν*). There is no verb provided in the second clause (as indicated by the ellipsis), leaving open the possibility that we are meant to supply a form of “to be,” so that sudden actions merely *are* “according to one’s *hexis*.” However, as Alfred Mele points out, if this were meant to mark a contrast, then it would have the odd result of making the actions which are said to be either characteristic of a more courageous person or more indicative of a courageous person be done not by *prohairesis*; but virtue and virtuous actions are especially associated with *prohairesis*.³² It seems, then, that we should supply ‘*προέλοιτο*’ from the previous clause (but with an important change in mood discussed below).

If this passage is taken to refer to sudden *prohairesis* actions, then it appears to directly contradict the passages in which Aristotle asserts that *prohairesis* is not sudden. However, most of the attention on this passage has focused on another apparent inconsistency: In the accounts of *prohairesis* in *EE* II and *NE* III, Aristotle heavily emphasizes the role of deliberation, to the extent that it may seem that explicit deliberation is required prior to a *prohairesis*. But the sudden *prohairesis* actions in this passage, especially given that they are contrasted with actions chosen “from calculation and reason,” do not seem to involve prior deliberation.

³¹*EE* II.11, 1228a1-4; *NE* III.2, 1111b5-6.

³²Mele (1981, 419).

Interpreters have pursued at least three strategies for explaining how sudden *prohairesis* actions might nonetheless involve deliberation. Richard Sorabji points out that there is something at least “analogous” to deliberation in cases of sudden action because there is still the identification of some particular as being conducive to an end.³³ This process may be similar enough to deliberation to allow for sudden *prohairesis*. Mele argues that we need not label this process as merely “analogous” to deliberation because even according to Aristotle’s account, deliberation itself may be sudden and does not require an extended process.³⁴ Taylor argues that a sudden action, even though not *deliberated*, may be *deliberate* in the sense of being an intentional action in accordance with a “pattern of practical reasoning” which has been “internalized.”³⁵ It may be either that this internalized pattern can be *brought to mind* and applied quickly enough to explain sudden action or that it is enough that the agent can explain *after the fact* the kind of reasoning in the *background* of her action.³⁶

It is likely that the sense in which sudden actions might nonetheless involve deliberation can be explained in one or more of these ways.³⁷ But focusing on deliberation can only get us so far: Attempting to *vindicate* sudden *prohairesis* action in this passage only makes the conflict with apparent *denials* of sudden *prohairesis* action more vivid; and explaining sudden *prohairesis* action by allowing sudden deliberation only makes the conflict seem more difficult to resolve. If it is not an extended process of deliberation which explains why *prohairesis* cannot be sudden, then what is the explanation?³⁸ We could provide such an explanation if we could appeal to differences in the *boulēsis* involved in *prohairesis*.

Although most of the attention on this passage in *NE* III.8 has been focused on *deliberation*, the emphasis both in this passage and its larger context is rather on the way in which the virtue of courage *sets the end*. Just what it *means* that virtue sets the end and *how* it might do so is very controversial; but it is clear enough that there is an important

³³Sorabji (1974, 112), with discussion in Mele (1981, 420-21).

³⁴Mele (1981, 420-21). Cf. Broadie (1991, 252).

³⁵Taylor (2006, 189).

³⁶Taylor especially emphasizes the latter. Cf. Broadie (1991, 79-80).

³⁷At *EE* II.10, 1226b9 Aristotle himself says that *prohairesis* is “from deliberative belief” (διὸ ἐκ δόξης βουλευτικῆς ἐστὶν ἢ προαίρεσις). Perhaps, then, sudden *prohairesis* might come from previously held beliefs arrived at through deliberation.

³⁸Mele (1981, 419n23) suggests that perhaps Aristotle only means that there are *some* instances of sudden action which are voluntary but not by *prohairesis*. But not only does this not seem to be what Aristotle means at *NE* III.2, 1117b7-8, this ignores the more emphatic denial at *EE* II.8, 1224a3-4.

connection (and I will gesture again at this connection at the end of chapter). In *NE* III.7, Aristotle asserts that there is a correspondence between the end of an activity and the end of the corresponding *hexis*. Aristotle then uses this correspondence to argue that because the end of the *hexis* courage is the fine, the end of courageous action is likewise the fine. And thus, “It is for the sake of the fine that the courageous person endures and does the things in accordance with courage” (1115b17-24). Aristotle repeatedly emphasizes this claim (e.g., 1116a10-13). If we focus our attention on the role of the *end* instead of *deliberation*, then we can *both* explain the contrast Aristotle makes between acting on *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* and square the apparent denial of sudden *prohairesis* action with the apparent endorsement of sudden courageous action we have been considering.

The key claim to be supplied is that *prohairesis* requires an end set by one’s *hexis*, although this is not the *only* way to have an end. Given this claim, we can understand the contrast Aristotle makes in this way: We can get and act on an end suddenly, an end which is set by *boulēsis*; but such action is not *prohairesis* action at least because the kind of end required for *prohairesis* cannot be gotten suddenly. If the contrast is understood in this way, then we can likewise explain away Aristotle’s apparent contradiction concerning sudden *prohairesis* actions: If the end with reference to which a *prohairesis* is made is *already* set as a matter of one’s character, then (perhaps with the addition of previously held deliberative beliefs) sudden *prohairesis* action is possible. But if the end is not yet set and must be “acquired,” then sudden *prohairesis* action is impossible because the kind of end required for *prohairesis* cannot be acquired suddenly—in contrast to the way that one might have and act on mere *boulēsis* suddenly. Understood in this way, there is a kind of scope ambiguity in Aristotle’s apparent denial and assertion of sudden *prohairesis* action. Recall that a *prohairesis* is both of something and for the sake of something: If the process of making a decision is restricted to the “of something” then sudden *prohairesis* is possible, but if the process of making a decision includes *both* elements (although of course not both as *objects* of decision), then sudden *prohairesis* is not possible.

This view is not as odd as it might seem at first. A *prohairesis* reveals the *ends* or *values* of a person because these values are in a sense embedded in the *prohairesis*. Deciding, for example, to go for a walk for the sake of *health* and deciding to go for a walk for the sake of

money are different *prohairesis*. As I will argue in §4.4 below, *prohairesis* relates to one's conception of living well, and so *prohairesis* ultimately engages, in some way, the values which inform one's conception of the good life. Certainly these values themselves cannot be acquired suddenly; but Aristotle may also have in mind the way in which in particular circumstances it can take time to figure out—and here deliberation may reenter—the way in which one's values bear on a situation, and thus it can take time to “acquire” in the sense of “locate” the kind of end required for *prohairesis*. Other times the bearing of one's values may be obvious. But in either case, there is a sense in which a full explanation of one's *prohairesis* reveals that the *prohairesis* as a whole was not sudden.

If we return to the passage above from *NE* III.8 where Aristotle contrasts acting *prohairesically* in the face of foreseen and unforeseen dangers, we might worry that the proposed distinction in ways of having *boulēsis* implies that the person deciding on foreseen dangers does *not* act on a *boulēsis* had as a matter of character or *hexis*. There Aristotle seems to *contrast* the way the person acting on foreseen dangers acts “from calculation and reason” with the way the person acting on unforeseen dangers acts “according to one's *hexis*.” This implication would be problematic because as I will argue, (a) we should align the *boulēsis* had as a matter of character or *hexis* with the *boulēsis* connected to one's good and (b) every *prohairesis* invokes one's good. But the passage from III.8 does not have this implication.

Aristotle's primary focus in that passage is on the *attribution* of motive. The courageous person decides to endure fearful things *because* doing so is *fine*, and this is more readily apparent in reacting to sudden dangers than foreseen dangers. This is not because decisions in the face of foreseen dangers do not involve one's *hexis*, but rather because the potentially more elaborate chain of reasoning involved may obscure one's motive, and so we are less inclined to attribute the *evident* motive to one's *hexis*. This is the importance of the change in mood between Aristotle's claim that one *might* choose foreseen things from calculation and reason which invoke motives which are not immediately apparent, but one *does* choose sudden things according to one's *hexis*. One may do “the fine thing,” but if one does so reasoning on the basis of other ends—safety, reputation, etc.—then what might have *appeared* to be the motive is not the real motive. Whatever *boulēsis* is involved in one's *prohairesis* is in fact, as I will argue, attributable to one's character, and Aristotle's point in this passage is

that in the case of foreseen dangers we are less certain exactly what that *boulēsis* is.

4.2.2 A distinction in *boulēsis*

Up to this point, I have suggested that we might reconcile Aristotle’s apparent denial and assertion of sudden *prohairesis* by *positing* a distinction in ways of having *boulēsis*. But it would be helpful to have more direct evidence of a distinction in *boulēsis*, and I think we find that evidence in our touchstone passage from *NE* VIII.5. After arguing, as we saw in Chapter 3, that the role of *prohairesis* in *philia* shows that *philia* is itself a *hexis*, Aristotle adds:

...and they wish good things to those whom they love for their own sake not according to a feeling [*κατὰ πάθος*] but according to a state [*καθ’ ἕξις*].³⁹ (*NE* VIII.5, 1157b31-32)

The disinterested wishing of goods for one’s friend, i.e., wishing goods for one’s friend for her own sake, is a key component of *philia*—or rather, as I will argue in Chapter 5, *primary philia*. Here Aristotle indicates a qualification in the way that is done: It is done “not according to a feeling [*κατὰ πάθος*] but according to a state [*καθ’ ἕξις*].” In order to fully understand this qualification, we need to understand both what *aspect* of disinterested well-wishing is being qualified and how it is being qualified. In the rest of this section, I argue that this is a qualification in the *way* the wisher wishes—it is a qualification in the *way* the *boulēsis* is had. Then in §4.3, I argue that the qualification introduced by this distinction corresponds to the distinction posited earlier: A *boulēsis* may be either a longer-lasting, more stable part of one’s character (*καθ’ ἕξις*) or a more sudden, fleeting whim (*κατὰ πάθος*).

In order to see in this passage the kind of distinction in *boulēsis* which I suggest, we need to see three things:

(a) *This is not a distinction in the object.* Connecting *hexis* to character, the phrase “*καθ’ ἕξις*” might remind us of Aristotle’s description of primary or virtue *philia* as *character philia*.⁴⁰ Then we might think that this is another way of putting Aristotle’s point that in primary *philia* friends love each other *for who they really are*—they love each other’s character or *hexis*. But we should not understand *καθ’ ἕξις* in this way for at least two reasons. First, if

³⁹καὶ τὰγαθὰ βούλονται τοῖς φιλουμένοις ἐκείνων ἔνεκα, οὐ κατὰ πάθος ἀλλὰ καθ’ ἕξις.

⁴⁰E.g., *NE* IX.1, 1164a12; *NE* IX.3, 1165b8-9. See Cooper (1977a, 628-9).

we are to keep the distinction consistent, then we must hold that just as the *hexis* is a *hexis of the object*, so the *pathos* of *κατὰ πάθος* is a *pathos of the object*. But it is not clear that the distinction between *hexis* and *pathos* lines up with the distinction between essential and accidental features. Certainly we would want more information to confirm that the *pathos* for which the person is loved is not an essential feature or caused by an essential feature of the person. Moreover, the idea of loving someone for her *pathos* itself is not quite clear; certainly Aristotle himself does not seem to appeal to this notion elsewhere. And while it might be made to fit pleasure *philia*, it would not seem to fit *utility philia*.

Second, taking this distinction to refer to the object of well-wishing makes less sense in context. This claim immediately follows the argument examined in Chapter 3 that *philia* is a *hexis*. In fact, it is so closely connected that it looks like it is meant to support that conclusion, either by providing another argument or recapitulating the main point of the argument from a slightly different angle. But if we understand the distinction between *καθ' ἕξις* and *κατὰ πάθος* as a distinction in the object, then this distinction provides no support for the conclusion that *philia* is a *hexis*. Goodwill, as Aristotle explains it in *NE* IX.5, may involve wishing goods to someone on account of her character, but such goodwill need not be a *hexis*. In fact, as we saw in §2.2.3, Aristotle contrasts goodwill with *philēsis* on this point: Goodwill may come about *suddenly* and seems to lack the stability of a *hexis*. If, on the other hand, we understand this distinction, as I suggest, as a distinction in ways of having *boulēsis*, then this distinction supports the claim that *philia* is a *hexis* by pointing out that one of the central features of (primary) *philia*—wishing goods to one's friend—is itself had as a *hexis*.

(b) *This is not the distinction between dispositional and occurrent desires.* We might think that with the qualification *καθ' ἕξις* Aristotle is marking a contrast between *dispositional* and *occurrent* desires. To the extent that *philia* is an extended relationship characterized by wishing goods in some sense, friends will have what we might call a standing or dispositional desire for good things for their friends. But I do not think the contrast between merely dispositional and active or occurrent desires is what Aristotle has in mind here. First, this might seem to be an odd choice of terms to convey this point. At the start of this chapter, *NE* VIII.5, Aristotle distinguishes between being called good *καθ' ἕξις* and *κατ'*

ἐνέργειαν (“according to activity”). Here Aristotle does seem to contrast the *inactive hexis* of *philia* with the *activity* of *philia*, and this might seem to be a clearer way to mark the distinction between dispositional and occurrent desires. But second, the distinction between dispositional and occurrent desires does not seem to fit the context. Surely Aristotle does not mean to say that those who wish good things to their friends for their own sake have *merely* dispositional desires? Aristotle’s point is rather, I think, that the *occurrent* desire for goods for one’s friend might be either *καθ’ ἑξῆς* or *κατὰ πάθος*, and that this distinction indicates an important difference in the character of the desire itself.

(c) *Boulēsis κατὰ πάθος is not impossible.* Finally, it might be that there is no real *distinction* here because one of the options, *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος*, is not a live possibility. Then Aristotle might be taken to argue along the lines that *of course* the kind of *boulēsis* involved in wishing goods to one’s friend for her own sake is *καθ’ ἑξῆς* because it cannot be *κατὰ πάθος*. In fact, the way in which *boulēsis* is often treated as a *rational* desire might seem to support this interpretation. *Boulēsis* is often held to be rational in the sense that it is a desire *of reason*, belonging to the rational part of the soul.⁴¹ If *boulēsis* is reason’s “own form of desire,” as Lorenz puts it, we might wonder what it might mean for there to be *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος*—or whether this might even be possible.⁴²

However, it is clear that Aristotle *does* recognize *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* because this is the kind of well-wishing which, as we will see, characterizes some pleasure *philiai*, especially erotic *philiai*. This recognition of *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* has two important consequences. First, it suggests a closer link between *boulēsis* and non-rational elements, such as *pathē*. It may point towards the kind of view defended by Jessica Moss according to which *boulēsis* may be rational desire in the weaker sense that “wishes are based on beliefs which are mere assents to appearances.”⁴³ I touch on this issue in developing the distinction below, although my primary focus is defending this distinction and its relevance for *prohairesis*. Second, if *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* is the kind of well-wishing which at least sometimes characterizes, for example, erotic *philiai* and Aristotle is *contrasting* this kind of well-wishing with the kind had by those who wish good things for their friends *for their own sake*, then this is yet another

⁴¹See, e.g., Irwin (1975, 570-1) and Lorenz (2009, 184). Cf. discussion of this view in Grönroos (2015, §2).

⁴²Lorenz (2009, 184).

⁴³Moss (2012, 170). Cf. Müller (2016).

piece of evidence that not all kinds of *philia* must involve genuine goodwill (I address this issue more fully in Chapter 5).⁴⁴

4.3 *Boulēsis Kath Hexin and Kata Pathos*

The distinction between *boulēsis kath' ἔξω* and *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* is bound up with the issue with which we began, the relationship between *boulēsis* and a conception of one's good, so I will treat these issues together. Aristotle does not explain this distinction, nor does he give an explicit account of the relationship between *boulēsis* and one's good. This passage in *NE* VIII.5 is the only place I find where Aristotle explicitly contrasts talk of something *καθ' ἔξω* with talk of that thing *κατὰ πάθος*, but he does use these qualifications elsewhere independently.

In this section, I will focus primarily on Aristotle's use of 'κατὰ πάθος,' which is especially revealing. I argue that Aristotle uses the qualification 'κατὰ πάθος' to refer to the kind of disorder and instability which would indicate a lack of a conception of one's good. It is then natural, especially given Aristotle's views on character, to connect *boulēsis kath' ἔξω* with *boulēsis* in accordance with a conception of one's good, and this connection is strengthened by considering the relationship between *hexis* and *prohairesis* in the next section. Aristotle especially applies the qualification 'κατὰ πάθος' to the operations of the young and the base or vicious; and I consider these cases in turn. My argument will proceed along parallel tracks, arguing in each case both that the use of 'κατὰ πάθος' fits my proposed interpretation of the distinction and that the young and the vicious likely have *boulēsis* but lack a conception of the good.

Before turning to the passages, it will be useful to address two preliminary points. A prominent theme in these passages is the contrast between between living *κατὰ πάθος* and living in some sense *according to reason*. First, if this is a contrast between, roughly, living *emotionally* and living *rationally*, then we might think that *boulēsis* would fall on the rational

⁴⁴Admittedly, one might alternatively read this contrast as the claim that all *philiai* involve genuine goodwill, but some *κατὰ πάθος* and some *καθ' ἔξω*. But as I argue more fully in Chapter 5, I think the balance of evidence is against this reading.

side. And if so, then we might worry about understanding *boulēsis katà páthos* along the lines of living *katà páthos*. But of course this worry is based on the assumption that *boulēsis* is rational in a sense which *excludes boulēsis katà páthos*. If, as I have argued, Aristotle recognizes *boulēsis katà páthos*, then we need not take living *katà páthos* in these contrasts to indicate living *completely* without reason, i.e., without even the *thought*, intimately connected to or perhaps constitutive of *boulēsis*, that something is *good*. If we make this allowance, then the distinction as drawn in these passages fits the distinction between *boulēsis kath' éxiw* and *katà páthos*, as I understand it. If *boulēsis kath' éxiw* is *boulēsis* which invokes one's good, then it is precisely this kind of *boulēsis* which would allow the orderly, rational pursuit of ends which Aristotle contrasts with living *katà páthos*. Second, we need not take the discussion of reason in these passages to indicate that reason rather than one's *hexis* of character sets one's ends. There is still a substantial and important role for reason to play in determining *which* ends to pursue *when* and *in what way*, although I will largely set aside this difficult issue.

4.3.1 *Boulēsis* of youths

In a famous passage from *NE* I.3, Aristotle explains why youths cannot yet benefit from lectures on politics, including ethics, presumably of the sort Aristotle will go on to give:

That is why a youth is not a suitable student of political [science], for he is inexperienced in the actions of life, and the accounts are from these and concerning these. Furthermore, since he is prone to follow his feelings, he will listen in vain and without use, since the aim is not knowledge but action. And it makes no difference whether one is young in age or youthful in character. For the defect is not a matter of time but on account of living according to feeling [*katà páthos*] and pursuing each thing [according to feeling].⁴⁵ (*NE* I.3, 1095a2-8)

Youths have a tendency to follow their feelings: They live *katà páthos* and pursue each thing *katà páthos*. Youths are poor students of ethics because they are less able to translate *knowing* what to do into actually *doing* it, which is the aim of ethics. This is because they cannot yet bring their reason to bear on their desires. They do not have, we might think,

⁴⁵διὸ τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκείος ἀκροατῆς ὁ νέος· ἄπειρος γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων, οἱ λόγοι δ' ἐκ τούτων καὶ περὶ τούτων· ἔτι δὲ τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀκολουθητικὸς ὢν ματαίως ἀκούσεται καὶ ἀνωφελῶς, ἐπειδὴ τὸ τέλος ἐστὶν οὐ γνώσις ἀλλὰ πράξις. διαφέρει δ' οὐδὲν νέος τὴν ἡλικίαν ἢ τὸ ἦθος νεαρός· οὐ γὰρ παρὰ τὸν χρόνον ἢ ἔλλειψις, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ κατὰ πάθος ζῆν καὶ διώκειν ἕκαστα.

the right kind of desires to be rationally ordered. Instead, they desire and act *as it strikes them*.

Aristotle returns to this point in *NE* X.9 in considering how one might go about making citizens more virtuous. Instruction through *argument* will not be enough: “For the one who lives *κατὰ πάθος* will not listen to or furthermore understand dissuading argument: How is it possible to persuade such a person to change?” (*NE* X.9, 1179b26-28).⁴⁶ The problem posed by living *κατὰ πάθος* is not so much the mere *fact* of living on the basis of one’s emotions. Aristotle’s solution is not that the *pathē* should somehow be *disregarded* or *bypassed*. Rather, “There needs to be in a way beforehand character suitable for virtue, loving the fine and hating the shameful” (*NE* X.9, 1179b29-31).⁴⁷ One’s character needs to be shaped in such a way that one has the fine as an end, loving it and taking pleasure in it (setting aside the question of how this relates to reason). Living *κατὰ πάθος* is problematic because it especially implies that one’s emotions have not yet been *shaped* into a form which either allows for or constitutes having a conception of one’s good on the basis of which and with the aid of reason one might structure and order one’s pursuits.

We see this more explicitly in Aristotle’s discussion of the *philiai* of youths, who love much the same as they live. The fact that youths live *κατὰ πάθος* explains why their *philiai* are generally on the basis of pleasure:

The *philia* of youths seems to be on account of pleasure; for they live *κατὰ πάθος*, and they especially pursue what is pleasant to them and what is present. And as their age changes their pleasures also become different.⁴⁸ (*NE* VIII.3, 1156a31-34)

And then, continuing this passage, the fact that youths live *κατὰ πάθος* also explains why their *philiai* seem to come and go quickly:

And that is why they become friends and stop [being friends] quickly; for their *philia* changes along with what is pleasant, and the change of such pleasure is quick. And youths are prone to erotic love; for the greater part of erotic [*philia*] is *κατὰ πάθος* and on account of pleasure. That is why they love and stop [loving] quickly, often changing in the same

⁴⁶ οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἀκούσειε λόγου ἀποτρέποντος οὐδ' αὖ συνέη ὁ κατὰ πάθος ζῶν· τὸν δ' οὕτως ἔχοντα πῶς οἶόν τε μεταπέισαι;

⁴⁷ δεῖ δὴ τὸ ἦθος προϋπάρχειν πῶς οἰκείον τῆς ἀρετῆς, στέργον τὸ καλὸν καὶ δυσχεραίνον τὸ αἰσχρόν.

⁴⁸ ἢ δὲ τῶν νέων φιλία δι' ἡδονὴν εἶναι δοκεῖ· κατὰ πάθος γὰρ οὔτοι ζῶσι, καὶ μάλιστα διώκουσι τὸ ἥδὸν αὐτοῖς καὶ τὸ παρόν· τῆς ἡλικίας δὲ μεταπιπτούσης καὶ τὰ ἡδέα γίνεται ἕτερα.

day. But they do wish [βούλονται] to spend time together and to live together; for in this way what is in accord with their *philia* comes about for them.⁴⁹ (*NE* VIII.3, 1156a34-b6)

To live *κατὰ πάθος* is particularly associated with pursuing pleasure, so youths, who live *κατὰ πάθος*, generally form *philiai* on the basis of pleasure, especially erotic *philiai*. But youths do not pursue pleasure in a reflective way, like a committed hedonist aiming to maximize pleasure. Youths also do not pursue pleasure according to a fixed sense of what is pleasant; what pleases them quickly changes. Rather, living *κατὰ πάθος* is especially to pursue the *present* pleasure in an unstable, disorganized manner—whatever strikes one as pleasant at the moment.⁵⁰

These youths clearly have *boulēsis*: They are said to *wish* to live together, and there is no suggestion that their *philiai* lack well-wishing of some sort, which is a feature of all *philiai*, including pleasure and erotic *philiai*. I suspect that in contrasting well-wishing *καθ' ἕξιν* and *κατὰ πάθος* in VIII.5, Aristotle has these sorts of *philiai* in mind. And the view of *κατὰ πάθος* which emerges from these passages is precisely the pursuit of things in the kind of unstable and disorganized way which would imply the lack of a guiding conception of the good. The kind of well-wishing *κατὰ πάθος* which we find in youthful *philiai*, then, seems to be a matter of wishing someone well *on a whim* or *as it strikes one*; and wishing someone well *καθ' ἕξιν* is rather to wish them well from a firm, stable aspect of one's *character* and as a part of one's conception of the good. More generally, then, in recognizing a distinction between *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* and *καθ' ἕξιν*, Aristotle recognizes a distinction between thinking something good in a fleeting, superficial way and thinking something good in an enduring, engaging way.

This distinction helps to solve a problem which confronts those who restrictively tie *boulēsis* to a conception of the good. These accounts generally deny that humans have *boulēsis* until the age at which they at least start to have something like a conception of their good. But youthful *philiai* certainly seem to imply *boulēsis*, and we cannot appeal to the fact that in these passages Aristotle refers to “youths” (νέοι), who may be older

⁴⁹διὸ ταχέως γίνονται φίλοι καὶ παύονται· ἅμα γὰρ τῷ ἡδέει ἢ φιλίᾳ μεταπίπτει, τῆς δὲ τοιαύτης ἡδονῆς ταχεῖα ἢ μεταβολή. καὶ ἐρωτικοὶ δ' οἱ νέοι· κατὰ πάθος γὰρ καὶ δι' ἡδονὴν τὸ πολὺ τῆς ἐρωτικῆς· διόπερ φιλοῦσι καὶ ταχέως παύονται, πολλάκις τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας μεταπίπτοντες. συνημερεύειν δὲ καὶ συζῆν οὗτοι βούλονται· γίνεται γὰρ αὐτοῖς τὸ κατὰ τὴν φιλίαν οὕτως.

⁵⁰We can see echoes of this in the passage above from *NE* I.3, where youths are said to pursue each thing (διώκειν ἕκαστα) *κατὰ πάθος*.

adolescents, because Aristotle also refers to *philia* between “children” (*παῖδες*)—and not referring to familial *philia* (*NE* VIII.4, 1157a28-29; IX.3, 1165b25-29). Furthermore, these youthful *philiai* fit a further piece of evidence which most views of *boulēsis* must reject: In the *Politics* Aristotle says:

And as the body is prior in order of generation to the soul, so the irrational is prior to the rational. The proof is that anger and *boulēsis* and appetite are implanted in children from their very birth, but reason and understanding are developed as they grow older.⁵¹ (*Pol.* VII.15, 1334b20-25)

Here Aristotle claims that the three forms of desire, including *boulēsis*, are present from birth. According to most accounts, this passage must be an anomaly—Aristotle cannot really mean what he says. And interpreters often take Aristotle to *really* mean that *boulēsis* is somehow “basic” to human nature and so to be placed on the innate side, but must await the development of reason to be realized. For instance, Grönroos suggests that this passage may just describe the “propensity for wish”; and Broadie attributes to Aristotle the very difficult view that children in some sense have *boulēseis* but not yet the means to satisfy them.⁵² However, Aristotle’s concern in this passage is *precisely* to distinguish between those things which are present immediately and those things which must be developed. It is unlikely, then, that he would be imprecise on this point.

We can make sense of attributing *boulēsis* to children by supposing that they are capable of *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος*: They can view things as *good* and pursue them on that basis.⁵³ But they are not yet capable of *boulēsis καθ’ ἑξῆς*: They do not have a conception of their own good such that they can have *boulēsis* for things *as* promoting their good or in a way that *expresses* their conception of the good. There is further evidence for this view, I think, in Aristotle’s discussion of self-love in the *Eudemian Ethics*, although I will only be able to sketch it here.⁵⁴ Aristotle argues that children do not yet have self-love:

But everyone seems good to himself...That is why in the human case each person himself

⁵¹ ὥσπερ δὲ τὸ σῶμα πρότερον τῇ γενέσει τῆς ψυχῆς, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἄλογον τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος. φανερόν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο· θυμὸς γὰρ καὶ βούλησις, ἐτι δὲ ἐπιθυμία, καὶ γενομένοις εὐθὺς ὑπάρχει τοῖς παιδίοις, ὁ δὲ λογισμὸς καὶ ὁ νοῦς προϋούσων ἐγγίγνεσθαι πέφυκεν.

⁵²Grönroos (2015, 68n20). Broadie (1991, 121n40).

⁵³This view would especially not be surprising, given that Aristotle allows that there can be utility *philiai* between animals, which seems to require some kind of awareness of the “friend” *as useful* (*EE* VII.2, 1236b5-10). I address Aristotle’s argument in this passage from the *Eudemian Ethics* in other work.

⁵⁴I discuss Aristotle’s account of self-love in other work.

seems to be a friend to himself, but not in the case of other animals; for example, a horse does not seem good to itself,⁵⁵ and so is not a friend [to itself]. But neither are children except at the time which they also have *prohairesis*. For at this time the child⁵⁶ disagrees with his appetites.⁵⁷ (*EE* VII.6, 1240b27-34)

Children do not have the reflexive capacity to seem *good to themselves*. This ability goes hand in hand with the capacity for *prohairesis*. Aristotle’s point, I think, is that this reflexive capacity to seem good to oneself is at least a conceptual prerequisite for having a conception of the good on which, as we will see, *prohairesis* depends. This also helps us to see how we might retain the manuscript reading of *παῖς*, “child,” in the last sentence: Aristotle elsewhere identifies a *human* as the kind of starting-point (*ἀρχή*) that is *prohairesis* (*NE* VI.2, 1139b4-5); so *prohairesis* and seeming good to oneself mark the ability to delineate *oneself* and what is *good for oneself* from the kinds of appetites which merely “happen” to oneself. So we can say that it is “*the child*,” identified as the *prohairesis* *ἀρχή*, that disagrees with his appetites. So then a child might have *boulēsis*— *κατὰ πάθος*, closely associated with his feelings and appetites—but lack a conception of the good, which rather goes along with *prohairesis*. We will find a similar situation in the case of the vicious.

4.3.2 *Boulēsis* of the vicious

Mele, for instance, argues on the basis of the passage from I.3 above, which argues that youths are not proper students of politics, that children do not have the kind of action-guiding principles he associates with *boulēsis*.⁵⁸ But Mele fails to note that that same passage applies not only to those young in age but also to those young in *character*. But it is more difficult to hold that Aristotle denies *boulēsis* to *adults*, particularly because Aristotle ascribes *boulēsis* to the base or vicious, whom Aristotle also describes as living *κατὰ πάθος*.⁵⁹

⁵⁵It seems that we need some supplement for the argument, and I prefer Ross’ supplement, <οὐ δοκεῖ ἀγαθός>, to Rieckher’s, <οὐκ ὀρεκτός>, accepted by the OCT. Ross’ supplement better fits the argument from 1240b27. However, both supplements would work for my purposes.

⁵⁶Retaining the *παῖς* of the MSS.

⁵⁷ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ πᾶς αὐτὸς αὐτῷ ἀγαθός...διὸ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπου μὲν δοκεῖ ἕκαστος αὐτὸς αὐτῷ φίλος, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων <οὐ>, οἷον ἵππος αὐτὸς αὐτῷ <οὐ δοκεῖ ἀγαθός>, οὐκ ἄρα φίλος. ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τὰ παιδιά, ἀλλ’ ὅταν ἤδη ἔχη προαίρεσιν· ἤδη γὰρ τότε διαφωνεῖ ὁ παῖς πρὸς τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν.

⁵⁸Mele (1984, 143).

⁵⁹Aristotle refers to bad people using a variety of terms, e.g., *φαῦλοι*, *κακοί*, *μοχθηροί*. The passages I discuss below typically refer to *φαῦλοι*, often translated as “base,” although I will use “base” and “vicious” interchangeably. See Müller (2015, 1) on Aristotle’s terms for the vicious.

There has been much debate about whether or not Aristotle offers a *single*, consistent account of vice and the vicious person.⁶⁰ Aristotle sometimes seems to describe the vicious person as someone who acts on *prohairesis* for things which are *bad*, thinking them to be *good*. Thus Aristotle describes vice as making “its *prohairesis* for the sake of the opposite things” as virtue (*EE* II.11, 1228a4-5).⁶¹ This vicious person appears to be remorseless because “vice escapes the notice” of the person who has it (*NE* VII.8, 1150b36). But sometimes, particularly in *NE* IX.4, Aristotle describes the vicious person as constantly in a state of turmoil and at odds with herself, which makes the vicious person seem “unprincipled.” This person is wracked with regret (*NE* IX.4, 1166b24-25). My own view is that these accounts cannot be reconciled: In attempting to accommodate *both* we inevitably fail to do justice to some feature of one or the other.⁶² But we need not settle this issue. I think there is good evidence that Aristotle allows for some kind of “unprincipled” vicious person. And this vicious person seems to have *boulēsis* but lack a conception of the good.

In *NE* IX.8, Aristotle contrasts the blameworthy self-love associated with the base or vicious person with the proper self-love of the virtuous:

That is why [the decent person] would especially be a self-lover, according to a different kind [of self-lover] than the one reproached, and differing so much as living according to reason [differs] from living *κατὰ πάθος*, and desiring the noble [differs] from desiring what seems beneficial.⁶³ (*NE* IX.8, 1169a3-6)

In describing the vicious person as living *κατὰ πάθος*, Aristotle does not seem to mean that the vicious lack *boulēsis* (they does not live *purely* according to feeling in the way that would be implied if *boulēsis* were put fully on the side of *logos*). Indeed they do desire what they think is beneficial or advantageous. As in the case of youths, these vicious live *κατὰ πάθος* in the sense that they do not live according to a conception of the good which (in *some* way) supplies a measure of order or structure. This fits the closely related chaotic depiction of

⁶⁰A good overview of the debate can be found in Müller (2015), who argues for a consistent account of “unprincipled” vice, and Nielsen (2017), who argues in favor of a “principled” account. But as I mention below, I think that both of these accounts fail to do justice to the full range of features found in Aristotle’s discussions of vice.

⁶¹ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ κακία τῶν ἐναντίων ἔνεκα ποιεῖ τὴν προαίρεσιν.

⁶²I am tempted to locate the “unprincipled” vicious person of IX.4 on a continuum below the “principled” vicious person and approaching the “beastly” person of VII.4.

⁶³διὸ φίλαντος μάλιστ' ἂν εἴη, καθ' ἕτερον εἶδος τοῦ ὀνειδιζομένου, καὶ διαφέρων τοσοῦτον ὅσον τὸ κατὰ λόγον ζῆν τοῦ κατὰ πάθος, καὶ ὀρέγεσθαι ἢ τοῦ καλοῦ ἢ τοῦ δοκοῦντος συμφέρειν.

the vicious in IX.4.

We find something similar in Aristotle’s discussion of the proper object of *boulēsis* in *NE* III.4. Some say that the proper object of *boulēsis* is what is *actually* good and others that it is the *apparent* good. Each view raises problems. Aristotle’s own account solves these problems by combining aspects of both:

But if these things are not satisfactory, should we then say that the proper object of *boulēsis* without qualification and in truth is the good, but to each person it is the apparent [good]? Then to an excellent person it is what is good in truth, but to a base person it is whatever chance thing [τὸ τυχόν]...⁶⁴ (*NE* III.4, 1113a22-26)

Aristotle’s claim that the vicious have *boulēsis* for the chance or happenstance thing (τὸ τυχόν) is noteworthy. It fits well Aristotle’s descriptions of those who are immature in character in I.3 and the vicious in IX.8, both of whom he describes as living *κατὰ πάθος*—pursuing things, especially the present pleasure, as it strikes them. Nielsen has argued that Aristotle often assimilates the vicious person to the “indulgent” person, the *akolastos*, who pursues the present pleasure on the basis of *prohairesis* and thus seems to have *some* conception of the good (*NE* VII.3, 1146b22-23).⁶⁵ However, a hallmark of the *akolastos* is that she has *no* regret; but the vicious in IX.4 are said to be *full* of regret. Moreover, it is not clear that the *akolastos* is *indiscriminate* in her pursuit of pleasures. Aristotle particularly associates the *akolastos* with bodily pleasure, especially shameful pleasures (*NE* VII.9, 1151b21-22). So while there may be a kind of person who pursues a certain kind of “present pleasure” on the basis of a conception of the good and thus feels no regret, I take it that there is also a person who pursues things *κατὰ πάθος* without a conception of the good and feels remorse as what strikes her as good changes.

If we can read III.4 in this way, then this helps to allay a worry we might have about distinguishing between *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* and *καθ’ ἕξιν*: There might seem to be a sense in which *every* *boulēsis* is *καθ’ ἕξιν* because one’s “character” determines which things appear good to one.⁶⁶ But the reference in III.4 to the chance thing might rather be taken to

⁶⁴ εἰ δὲ δὴ ταῦτα μὴ ἀρέσκει, ἄρα φατέον ἀπλῶς μὲν καὶ καθ’ ἀλήθειαν βουλευτὸν εἶναι τὰ γαθόν, ἐκάστῳ δὲ τὸ φαινόμενον; τῷ μὲν οὖν σπουδαίῳ τὸ καθ’ ἀλήθειαν εἶναι, τῷ δὲ φαίλῳ τὸ τυχόν...

⁶⁵Nielsen (2017).

⁶⁶For example, Meyer claims that “[a]n agent’s moral character will be the set of dispositions that together determine the full range of an agent’s sentiments and interests” (1993, 31).

indicate that some “characters” fail to determine that anything appears good to one in a consistent way. Their characters have not yet been shaped into something which might be said to possess or embody a conception of the good. It may be “characteristic” of these people to live *κατὰ πάθος*, but that is a wider use of ‘character.’ Or to put it another way, it may be a particular kind of *character* flaw to fail to live in a way according to which one might be said to live *καθ’ ἕξιιν*.

This seems to be the kind of character flaw Aristotle discusses in *EE* I.2:

Paying attention to these things, everyone capable of living according to their own *prohairesis* should⁶⁷ set some aim of living finely, either honor or reputation or wealth or education, looking to which one will perform all their actions (as not arranging one’s life in relation to some end is an indication of great folly)...⁶⁸ (*EE* I.2, 1214b6-11)

It is foolish not to organize or arrange one’s life, not to structure it in relation to some aim or end. This fits well the thought that someone—even someone mature in age but immature in character—might live and even have *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος*, while at the same time failing to have a conception of the good as a matter of character (*hexis*). (And we can accept this thought, I think, without worrying too much about the way in which one sets or comes to have this end. The process of establishing this end need not be as straightforward and rational as this passage might suggest.)

This passage from *EE* I.2 also brings *prohairesis* into view. I take Aristotle’s point to be here that having some “aim of living finely” is necessary for *prohairesis*. Aristotle thinks that some people are by nature incapable of *prohairesis* (e.g., *Pol.* III.9, 1280a32-4; VII.14, 1333a16-30). Of those who are *potentially* capable of *prohairesis*, it would be foolish not to set some end which would allow them to live according to their *prohairesis*.⁶⁹ This general thought is confirmed, as we will see, by *NE* VI.2.

⁶⁷I have translated with the reading *δεῖ θέσθαι*, as Inwood and Woolf do, from a marginal note accepted by Gigon.

⁶⁸*περὶ δὲ τούτων ἐπιστήσαντας, ἅπαντα τὸν δυνάμενον ζῆν κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ προαίρεσιν θέσθαι τινὰ σκοπὸν τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν, ἤτοι τιμὴν ἢ δόξαν ἢ πλοῦτον ἢ παιδείαν, πρὸς ὃν ἀποβλέπων ποιήσεται πάσας τὰς πράξεις (ὡς τό γε μὴ συντετάχθαι τὸν βίον πρὸς τι τέλος ἀφροσύνης πολλῆς σημεῖον ἐστίν)...*

⁶⁹McDowell (1980, §6) questions whether the supplement “should” is necessary (see 89n67 above) but allows for a reading similar to the one I offer. See also Nielsen (2017, 20-21).

4.4 *Prohairesis* and *Eupraxia*

I have argued that Aristotle makes a distinction between two ways of having *boulēsis*, *κατὰ πάθος* and *καθ' ἑξῆς*, and that we should understand this distinction in terms of desiring something on a whim, as it strikes one or rather desiring something as a stable aspect of one's *hexis*. I have further suggested that *boulēsis καθ' ἑξῆς* is *boulēsis* which relates to a conception of one's good. If *prohairesis* is linked to a conception of one's good, then we will have an explanation of the requirement that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis* (and also an explanation for the way Aristotle closely links these this requirement to the distinction in *boulēsis* in VIII.5).

The evidence that *prohairesis* is linked to a conception of one's good in the main discussions of *prohairesis* in *NE* III and *EE* II is disappointing. There Aristotle focuses on the general nature of *prohairesis* as being of a means towards *some* end without making explicit that this end is in some sense one's good or living well. Aristotle illustrates his point with comparisons to the crafts, which *might* be taken to suggest a connection: The doctor does not deliberate about *whether* to heal her patients, but *how*; the politician does not deliberate about *whether* to govern well, but *how*; etc. But the *telos* of the doctor is healing, as the *telos* of the politician is to govern well, so perhaps we should conclude that the end relevant to *prohairesis* is the *telos* of the agent, *living well*? But this conclusion is hardly clear: These comparisons might just as well support the view that Aristotle allows merely “technical” *prohairesis*.⁷⁰

4.4.1 *Prohairesis* and *eupraxia* in *NE* VI.2

Instead, commentators generally turn to *NE* VI/*EE* V for more direct evidence, especially *NE* VI.2, where Aristotle seems to connect *prohairesis* (and character) to “doing well” (*εὐπραξία*). Aristotle ostensibly sets out in VI.1 to investigate the “correct reason” (*orthos logos*) in accordance with which the mean-states at which the virtues aim are determined (1138b18-20). But then after quickly dismissing the character virtues, since they have already

⁷⁰On Aristotle's use of the craft analogy in this context, see Broadie (1991, §4.III). Anscombe (1965, 58-59) argues against *prohairesis* which is merely technical.

been discussed in Books III-V, Aristotle turns to examine the *intellectual* virtues (1139a1-3). (There is presumably a connection between the “*orthos logos*” and the intellectual virtues, but Aristotle does not make that connection explicit here.) The intellectual virtues can be identified by determining the best state(s) of the rational part(s) of the soul, and so Aristotle begins here, dividing the rational part of the soul into theoretical and practical parts. The best state of each part, in turn, is to be determined with reference to each part’s particular *telos*.

There is then a fairly abrupt transition to VI.2, which begins with the assertion that there are three elements in the soul which are controlling (*κύρια*) of action: perception, intelligence, and desire (1139a17-18).⁷¹ The relevance of this claim is not made immediately obvious, but we can make it clear by supplying that the *telos* of the practically rational part of soul is a certain kind of “truth” *in action*. So in order to determine the virtue of this part of soul, we must determine the proper state of the elements which lead to action. This explains the special emphasis on *prohairesis* in this chapter. Although other elements are “controlling” of action, it is *prohairesis* which Aristotle identifies as the starting-point or source (*ἀρχή*) of action:

[A]: Then the source of action is *prohairesis*—from which the *motion* [comes] but not that for the sake of which—[and the source] of *prohairesis* is desire and reason which is for the sake of something.⁷² (*NE* VI.2, 1139a31-33)

Desire and thought come together in *prohairesis* in such a way as to be the source or origin of (the motion of) action.

This has further implications for the condition of the agent who has *prohairesis*:

[B]: That is why without understanding and thought or without a *hexis* of character there is no *prohairesis*.⁷³ (*NE* VI.2, 1139a33-34)

Given that *prohairesis* requires reason (*λόγος*) and desire (*ὄρεξις*) in [A], *prohairesis* is also said to require understanding (*νοῦς*) and thought (*διάνοια*) and also a *hexis* of character here in [B]. This second set of requirements is supported by appealing to *εὐπραξία*:

⁷¹The chapter divisions are of course artificial, but in this case it is difficult to identify a nearby division which would make the transition in topics clearer.

⁷²*πράξεως μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ προαίρεσις—ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις ἀλλ’ οὐχ οὗ ἕνεκα—προαιρέσεως δὲ ὄρεξις καὶ λόγος ὁ ἕνεκά τινος.*

⁷³*διὸ οὐτ’ ἀνευ νοῦ καὶ διανοίας οὐτ’ ἀνευ ἠθικῆς ἐστὶν ἕξεως ἢ προαίρεσις.*

[C]: For there is no *εὐπραξία* and its opposite in action without thought and character.⁷⁴
(*NE* VI.2, 1139a34-35)

Thought and a state of character are required for *εὐπραξία* and its *opposite* (I return to this claim below). But if the requirements of *εὐπραξία* are to be a guide to the requirements of *prohairesis*, then there must be a strong connection between *εὐπραξία* and *prohairesis*. One way of filling out this connection would be to suppose that every *prohairesis* aims at *εὐπραξία*. And this supposition seems to be confirmed by the way in which Aristotle proceeds:

[D]: Thought itself moves nothing, but thought which is for the sake of something and practical [does]; for this rules productive [thought]. For everyone who produces does so for the sake of something, and what is producible [*ποιητόν*] is not the end without qualification (rather [it is] in relation to something and of something), but what is doable in action [*πρακτόν*]. For *εὐπραξία* is the end, and desire is of this.⁷⁵ (*NE* VI.2, 1139a35-b4)

This is a dense a difficult passage, but we can trace a path from from practical thought to *εὐπραξία*. The kind of thought which moves someone (presumably, *to action*) is *for the sake of something*. The unqualified end at which it aims is not the *product* (*ποιητόν*) but what is doable in *action* (*πρακτόν*). This is because the end in acting is acting *well* (*εὐπραξία*). Every action thus aims at *εὐπραξία*, and we can bring this back to *prohairesis* by supplying that *prohairesis* itself aims at some action (*πραξις*). Thus it seems that we should hear Aristotle's initial claim that *prohairesis* is the source of action with nomological force: Every action has a *prohairesis* as its source.

If every *prohairesis* ultimately aims in some way at *εὐπραξία*, then given the way in which Aristotle endorses connecting *εὐπραξία* to τὸ εὖ πράττειν and *eudaimonia* (*NE* I.8, 1098b20-22), every *prohairesis* in some sense aims at one's good. This sequence of connections in VI.2 also assigns some role to *hexis* of character. This fits well the thought that *prohairesis* requires a *hexis* because it requires an end set by a *boulēsis καθ' ἑξω*. However, there are a wide range of views about the role of a *hexis* of character in this passage. The important dividing line among these views for our purposes is between those views which allow for a *positive* contribution from a *hexis* of character and those which assign a *negative* role to it.

⁷⁴εὐπραξία γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον ἐν πράξει ἄνευ διανοίας καὶ ἤθους οὐκ ἔστιν.

⁷⁵διάνοια δ' αὐτῇ οὐθέν κινεῖ, ἀλλ' ἡ ἕνεκά του καὶ πρακτικῆ· αὐτὴ γὰρ καὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς ἄρχει· ἕνεκα γάρ του ποιεῖ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν, καὶ οὐ τέλος ἀπλῶς (ἀλλὰ πρὸς τι καὶ τινός) τὸ ποιητόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρακτόν· ἡ γὰρ εὐπραξία τέλος, ἡ δ' ὄρεξις τούτου.

Some scholars have claimed that a *hexis* of character is not required for the *prohairesis* itself but for *acting* on it. C.D.C. Reeve, for instance, comments on [B] and [C] above that *prohairesis*’ “effectiveness in achieving its end depends on whether the appetites and emotions in the soul’s desiring part are in a mean, and thus on the states of character that are the desiring part’s virtues (or vices)...”⁷⁶ Reeve supposes that *independently* of a *hexis* of character, there is already a *prohairesis* which has an end, and a *hexis* of character merely plays a role in determining whether that end can be achieved.⁷⁷ Thus Reeve and others take the reference to *hexis* of character to be a reference to *virtue* in particular—*prohairesis* as such does not require a *hexis* of character, but its smooth implementation requires *virtue*.⁷⁸ In order to find room for *boulēsis καθ’ ἑξῆς* as an integral part of *prohairesis*, we need to show that a *hexis* of character here plays more than a merely negative role.

4.4.2 *Eupraxia* and character

I think that VI.2 does show both that a *hexis* of character makes a positive contribution to *prohairesis* and that this positive contribution is the *desire* connected to *εὐπραξία*. We can see this more clearly by attending to two important features of the discussion which commentators often fail to note: (1) VI.2 appeals to *prohairesis* in general to support claims about excellent *prohairesis* in particular; and (2) Aristotle refers in [C] to both *εὐπραξία* and its opposite.

(1) VI.2 divides roughly in half: There is one line of argument running from the start of the chapter to the claim that the good state ($\tauὸ \epsilonῦ$) or *telos* of the practical part is “truth being in agreement with correct desire” (1139a29-31). Although it is very difficult to fill out exactly what Aristotle means by this statement, this stretch of argument clearly answers to the project announced at the end of VI.1 of finding the best states of the rational parts of the soul, beginning here with the practically rational part. And this argument runs through the claim that *excellent prohairesis* requires true reason and correct desire.

The second line of argument begins in [A] above, where Aristotle pivots to a claim about

⁷⁶Reeve (2014, 273n418).

⁷⁷Cooper (1988, 35-36) presents a similar view. He takes the virtuous person to act from *distinct* motives: the rational motive of *prohairesis* and the independent, non-rational motives of the character virtues.

⁷⁸Burnet (1900, *ad loc.*) takes this to be a reference to virtue.

prohairesis in *general*: It is the source of action (*πρᾶξις*), and the source of *prohairesis* is reason and desire. Aristotle supports this claim by working through a series of connections which are meant to show that *prohairesis* requires practical thought and desire for the end, *εὐπραξία*, in [D]. Thus if *prohairesis* as such requires these two elements, then *excellent prohairesis*, as the first argument assumed, requires that both of these elements also be in *excellent* condition, i.e., that the reason be *true* and the desire *correct*.

The importance of this structure is that whatever account we give of the relationship between a *hexis* of character, *εὐπραξία*, and *prohairesis* should not be *limited* to the case of excellent *prohairesis*, as some commentators assume. And the sequence of pairs in these passages strongly suggests that the role of a *hexis* of character is to supply the desire for the end, *εὐπραξία*, towards which *prohairesis* aims. In each section, Aristotle is careful to touch on both the rational and desiderative elements which are required for *prohairesis*. The rational elements run from reason in [A], to understanding and thought in [B], to thought again in [C], and finally to *practical* thought in [D]. The desiderative elements similarly run from desire in [A], to *hexis* of character in [B], to character in [C], and finally to desire for *εὐπραξία* in [D]. If, as I have suggested, the successive pairs are meant to help justify the initial claim that *prohairesis* depends upon reason and desire, then it certainly appears that *hexis* of character is meant to be connected to desire for *εὐπραξία*.

(2) We can reach the same conclusion by considering Aristotle's curious remark in [C] that “*εὐπραξία* and its opposite in action” require thought and character. What is the opposite of *εὐπραξία*? Assuming, as I think we should, that Aristotle connects *εὐπραξία* to *eudaimonia*, the opposite of *εὐπραξία* could perhaps be understood either *objectively* or *subjectively*. We might take *eudaimonia* in an objective sense to be the *proper* life for humans, which it is the aim of Aristotle's ethics to elucidate; and the opposite of *εὐπραξία* in this sense would be some kind of *failing* to do what is actually good. It would be a strange claim to make that failing to act well in this sense *also* requires character. Moreover, the claim that *εὐπραξία* and its opposite require character is meant to help *explain* the previous claim in [B] that *prohairesis* requires a *hexis* of character. But if *hexis* of character in [B] refers to *virtue*, as Reeve and others take it, then the fact that *both εὐπραξία* and its opposite require character hardly supports *this* claim.

It is much better, I think, to understand the opposite of *εὐπραξία* *subjectively*. In this sense, it would be *failing* to achieve whatever a person *takes* to constitute the good life (e.g. the life of pleasure, wealth, honor, etc.). This gives Aristotle a clear point connected to the argument: In order to count as *either* succeeding *or* failing in living well, an agent must have *some* conception of living well as a goal with respect to the attainment of which success and failure can be measured. The person who fails to even set up, in some sense, a goal around which she *might* organize her life has no standard for determining whether she has succeeded or failed. This person is like the foolish people in *EE* I.2, discussed above, who fail to set up some end so that they might actualize their capacity to live according to their own *prohairesis*.

Even an unsuccessful *prohairesis*, if measured as one which fails to achieve some aspect of *εὐπραξία*, still thereby *invokes* one's conception of living well. And Aristotle seems to hold that one's conception of living well is a matter of one's character, and so in this subjective sense, even the opposite of *εὐπραξία* requires character, as Aristotle claims in [B]. Thus, on a subjective interpretation of *εὐπραξία* and its opposite, Aristotle is indicating that every *prohairesis*, whether successful or not, still invokes one's conception of the good and thereby requires a *hexis* of character.⁷⁹ VI.2 seems to show, then, that every *prohairesis* relates to one's conception of the good and that this aspect of *prohairesis* is a positive contribution of a *hexis* of character.

However, some scholars have attempted to put some distance between *prohairesis* and a *hexis* of character. They argue that VI.2 shows that a *hexis* of character is required *in general* for *prohairesis*, but not every *prohairesis* derives from or reflects that *hexis*: One

⁷⁹This explanation of how both *εὐπραξία* and its opposite require character and how both *εὐπραξία* and its opposite relate to *prohairesis* helps to explain how the connection between *εὐπραξία* and character in [C] supports the connection between *prohairesis* and a *hexis* of character in [B]. Greenwood would delete [C], exclaiming: "If obvious and complete inappropriateness and logical unsoundness is warrant enough for bracketing a passage, the words *εὐπραξία γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον ἐν πράξει ἄνευ διανοίας καὶ ἡθους οὐκ ἔστω* ought to be bracketed" (1909, 176). And again: "So if the words *εὐπραξία γὰρ κτλ.* are to be kept, they must present the absurdity of a statement, hitherto unproved, about a derived notion, brought forward to support a statement, already proved, about the notion from which the former is derived" (1909, 176-7). But if the account I have given here is correct, then Greenwood misunderstands the relevance of this remark in supplying a connection between the *εὐπραξία* at which *prohairesis* aims and the *hexis* of character required for *εὐπραξία*. And in general, Greenwood seems to misconstrue the sequence of argument in this passage, given that Greenwood takes the meaning of *εὐπραξία* to depend on *prohairesis* rather than the other way around.

must be the kind of person with a *hexis* of character in order to be *capable* of *prohairesis*.⁸⁰ On this point our passage from *NE* VIII.5 provides an important bit of evidence. There Aristotle makes the general claim that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*. Alone, this claim *might* be read as requiring a *hexis* of character in general, although the “comes from” (ἀφ’ ἕξεως) makes this reading difficult.

But in context, Aristotle is using this claim to *argue* that *philia* itself is a *hexis*. First, I take it that Aristotle does not intend to show that *philia* is a *hexis* in the sense that it is one’s *hexis* of character in general; rather, as I will argue in Chapter 5, there is some specific *hexis* which is justifiably identified with *philia*. Thus Aristotle seems to have a more fine-grained understanding of the relationship between *prohairesis* and *hexis*. Second, Aristotle’s argument that *philia* is a *hexis* because it involves *prohairesis* would be a poor one, if *prohairesis* were as disconnected from *hexis* as this opposing view supposes. Instead, Aristotle seems to think that there is a strict enough and particular enough connection between *prohairesis* and *philia* that the mere fact of *prohairesis* (of a certain sort) in *philia* is enough to show that *philia* must be a *hexis*.

4.5 Conclusion: “Virtue Makes the Goal Right”

In this chapter, I have argued that Aristotle recognizes a distinction between two ways of having *boulēsis*, *κατὰ πάθος* and *καθ’ ἕξιν*, as illustrated by the contrast in *NE* VIII.5 between two ways of wishing goods to someone in *philia*. Aristotle’s use of the qualification *κατὰ πάθος* suggests that *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* is wishing for something on a whim or as it strikes one. This allows Aristotle to accommodate “spontaneous *boulēsis*.” *Boulēsis καθ’ ἕξιν*, by contrast, seems to be wishing for something stably, in a way which relates to one’s conception of the good. I have further argued that *prohairesis* requires an end set by *boulēsis καθ’ ἕξιν*, which helps to explain the key claim in the argument in VIII.5, that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*.

This distinction in *boulēsis* goes against the common view that *boulēsis* as such involves

⁸⁰Pearson (2012, 167). Cf. Charles (1984, 151-5).

some connection to one's good; and I have suggested that *boulēsis κατὰ πάθος* challenges the conception of *boulēsis* as reason's own desire. But the view that I have argued for could still be accommodated in a wide variety of ways: It could be that a *hexis* of character is itself a rational *hexis* which could directly produce *boulēsis*; or it could be that a *hexis* of character supplies content which gives rise to *boulēsis* through the assent of reason.⁸¹ The notion of *boulēsis καθ' ἑξῆς* is likewise consistent with a variety of ways of understanding the role and character of a "conception" of one's good. But I want to conclude this chapter by merely *gesturing* at the way in which the view I have defended would fit well with a straightforward understanding of Aristotle's famous claim that "virtue makes the goal right." And connecting my view with this claim would help to shore up two assumptions which I have been making along the way: First, that by 'hexis' in the claim that *prohairesis* comes from *hexis* Aristotle means a *hexis* of character; and second, that *boulēsis καθ' ἑξῆς* is the contribution of this *hexis*.

Aristotle describes virtue as a *ἕξις προαιρετική* (*NE* II.6, 1106b36; VI.2, 1139a23; *EE* III.1, 1230a27). And he explains what he means by this description in *EE* III.1, "...that it makes one choose everything for the sake of something, and this is that for the sake of which, the fine" (1230a27-29).⁸² The sense in which virtue is connected to *prohairesis* appears to be through its connection to the *end*. This is why Aristotle can claim that *prohairesis* are a good guide to a person's character, even better than actions are: A person's character is judged by her *end*, that for the sake of which she acts, and this is revealed through her *prohairesis* (*EE* II.11, 1228a1-4). This fits Aristotle's repeated claim that "virtue makes the goal right."⁸³ These claims have been very controversial; and most scholars have been reluctant to take them at face-value.⁸⁴ However, even without discussing these issues in detail, it is clear that Aristotle maintains *some* important connection between *prohairesis* and a *hexis* of character through the *end* involved in the *prohairesis*. And I take this connection to provide further support for the key claim that I build on in Chapter 5: When Aristotle asserts that *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis* in VIII.5, there is good reason to think that

⁸¹The first kind of view is suggested by the *kind* of account give by Lorenz (2009), although it may not be his view; the second kind of view is put forward by Moss (2012, 163).

⁸²ὅτι ἐνεκά τινος πάντα αἰρεῖσθαι ποιεί, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ οὐ ἐνεκα, τὸ καλόν

⁸³For example: *EE* II.11, 1227b23-25, 34-38; *NE* VI.12, 1144a7-9; VI.13, 1145a5-7; VII.8, 1151a15-19.

⁸⁴See Moss (2012, Ch. 7) for a thorough discussion of the opposing views.

Aristotle is especially concerned with the *ends* involved in *philia*.

5.0 *Eunoia*

In Chapter 4, I argued that the general connection between *prohairesis* and one's conception of the good or *εὐπραξία* shows that *prohairesis* must come from a *hexis* because the *boulēseis* which relate to one's conception of the good (and thus which figure in one's *prohairesis*) must themselves be had as a matter of one's *hexis*. We might still wonder how this general connection shows that *philia* itself must be a *hexis*: What licenses the conclusion that *philia* is that *hexis* from which the relevant *prohairesis* arises?

Answering this question requires examining the role of goodwill (*εὐνοια*)—wishing goods to someone for her own sake—in *philia*. And it is intimately connected to one of the problems which face the consensus interpretation of *NE* VIII.5 (§1.1, problem 6): The consensus interpretation cannot make sense of this argument as applying to *primary philia* in particular, given that reciprocation is a feature of all *three* kinds of *philia*. In §5.1, I argue that pleasure and utility *philiai*, unlike primary *philia*, do not require goodwill. I then appeal to Aristotle's connection between *philia* and *koinōnia* (“community”) to explain in §5.2 why Aristotle would extend his account of *philia* to cover self-interested relationships. Finally in §5.3, I use the structure of a *koinōnia* to show that pleasure and utility *philiai* depend upon one's antecedent values in a way that primary *philia* does not: Primary *philia* requires that one come to value one's friend herself and have her good as an end in a way which justifies describing this *philia* as a *hexis*.

5.1 *Philia* and Goodwill

5.1.1 Utility and pleasure *philiai* at first glance

It is hard to deny that Aristotle at least gives the impression that pleasure and utility *philiai* lack goodwill—an impression strong enough, I think, to make this the default view.¹

¹Historically, this has been the more prevalent view, from Aspasius on. I am especially indebted to the excellent treatment of Price (1989, Ch. 5).

There is a question of what exactly would count as lacking goodwill, and as we will see, part of the dispute on this issue concerns this question. *Philia* is partially distinguished from *mere* goodwill—the self-standing attitude—by the fact that friends *act* on their goodwill. One way in which a friend might exhibit *self-interested* well-wishing rather than *goodwill* would be to perform the activities of *philia* in some sense *directly* motivated by one’s own good; for example, if one benefits one’s friend *in order to* receive a benefit oneself. Another way would be to have one’s motivations *conditioned* on the good one receives from or gives to one’s friend; for example, if one must tally the “score” before deciding how to respond. Cooper, for instance, argues that utility and pleasure *philiai* do not lack goodwill in the first way and that the kind of conditioning of motive which *is* involved is not serious enough to *deny* goodwill in the second way.² But at least at first glance, Aristotle’s characterization of pleasure and utility *philiai* indicates that they lack goodwill in both ways.

This is suggested by several general features of pleasure and utility *philiai*. In both cases the relationship ceases whenever the pleasure or utility ceases; so not only are these sorts of relationships in some sense *based* on pleasure or utility, but there is clearly an *ongoing* concern with it. These relationships are also different enough from primary *philia* that Aristotle must pause at least twice to consider whether they should be counted as kinds of *philia* at all (*NE* VIII.4, 1157a25-33; cf. VIII.6, 1158b5-11). We might plausibly expect these relationships to differ from primary *philia* in a significant respect. And even the base, whom Aristotle characterizes as especially self-centered in IX.8, may be friends on account of pleasure or utility (*NE* VIII.4, 1157b1-3). This appears to be a departure from the *Lysis*, where Socrates argues that the wicked cannot be friends because they act unjustly (214c). Aristotle may be making room for friendships between the base by relaxing the kind of attitudes and actions required for these relationships.

The suggestion is even stronger in Aristotle’s characterization of utility *philia*. Utility *philia* occurs especially between people who are contrary to each other in some sense, each possessing something which the other wants (*NE* VIII.8, 1159b12-15). Utility *philia* is thus like an exchange of goods, and it is characteristic of “market-goers” (*ἀγοραῖοι*) (*NE* VIII.6, 1158a21). Those who are friends on account of utility may not even like to be around each

²Cooper (1977a, 639-40, *passim*).

other, “...for they are only pleasant to the extent that they have hopes of [something] good” (*NE* VIII.3, 1156a29-30).³ Utility friends seem to always have an eye on *prospective* benefits. Moreover, utility *philia* seems to have a transactional nature: It is not just that friends have a general concern that the relationship remain useful, utility friends interact within the relationship on transactional terms.

Aristotle divides utility *philia* into two kinds, ethical or character-based (*ἠθικῆ*) and legal (*νομικῆ*) (*NE* VIII.13, 1162b22-23).⁴ In legal utility *philia*, which includes contractual relationships and “hand to hand” exchanges, one may not *trust* the friend enough to reciprocate appropriately and so terms are set explicitly. It is *noble*, Aristotle says, to benefit someone *not* in order to be benefited in turn (*NE* VIII.13, 1162b36-1163a1), but this noble motive appears supererogatory in utility *philia*.⁵ In ethical utility *philia*, one gives “as a friend” in the sense that explicit terms need not be set beforehand, but one still gives thinking that one should “...receive equal or better, as it was not given but loaned” (1162b31-33).⁶ And in both types of utility *philia* one friend may help the other “...on the grounds that he receive the same” (*NE* VIII.13, 1163a18-19).⁷ Thus Aristotle says that utility friends are “not friends of each other but of profit” (*NE* VIII.4, 1157a14-16; cf. IX.1, 1164a10-11). As such, utility friends are especially prone to complaint, “...for using [or: dealing with] each other for advantage they always need more...” (*NE* VIII.13, 1162b16-17)⁸ Likewise in cases of mixed *philiai* in which, e.g., one friend loves on account of pleasure and the other on account of utility. In such cases, each friend “is intent on those things which he happens to lack—and it is for the sake of this, at any rate, that he gives these things” (*NE* IX.1, 1164a20-22).⁹ It

³ ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον γὰρ εἰσιν ἡδέεις ἐφ' ὅσον ἐλπίδας ἔχουσιν ἀγαθοῦ.

⁴ Cooper cites the claim that in ethical utility *philia* one gives “as a friend” (1162b31) as evidence that legal utility *philia* does not really count as a form of *philia* (1977a, 639n20). But Cooper ignores Aristotle’s following qualification of this claim, which undermines Cooper’s point: As I discuss below, even ethical utility friends give “as a loan” and expect equal return. It seems the worse for Cooper that, as he acknowledges, his own interpretation makes it the case that Aristotle’s view “would seem to imply that the *νομικῆ* is not in reality a friendship at all” (1977a, 639n20).

⁵ Aristotle characterizes even ethical utility *philia* as expecting an equal return (*NE* VIII.13, 1162b31-33). This indicates, I think, that the subsequent reference to someone being mistaken about being helped “neither by a *philos* nor by someone giving this on account of itself” (οὐ γὰρ ὑπὸ φίλου, οὐδὲ δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτο δρώντος) is a reference to the kind of benefiting which goes on within primary *philia*.

⁶ κομίζεσθαι δὲ ἀξιοὶ τὸ ἴσον ἢ πλεόν, ὡς οὐ δεδωκὸς ἀλλὰ χρήσας

⁷ ...καὶ ἐπαρκεῖ αὐτῷ ὡς κομιούμενος τὴν ἴσην·

⁸ ...ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ γὰρ χρώμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἀεὶ τοῦ πλείονος δέονται...

⁹ ὧν γὰρ δεόμενος τυγχάνει, τούτοις καὶ προσέχει, κακείνου γε χάριω ταῦτα δώσει.

seems that friends in pleasure and utility *philiai* may give *in order to* get.

There seems to be a strong *prima facie* case to be made that the *philiai* of pleasure and utility need not involve goodwill. Aristotle refers to the hopes, expectations, and grounds for particular actions in ways that suggest self-interestedness. I have confined this survey to the *Nicomachean Ethics* because it is generally agreed that the *Eudemian Ethics* is clearer on this point: There Aristotle plainly states that goodwill is not a feature of pleasure or utility *philiai* (*EE* VII.7, 1241a4 ff.). It could be that the Nicomachean and Eudemian accounts of *philia* differ on this point, although it would be a significant difference and one we might expect to be marked more clearly. But instead, there is the strong impression that the Nicomachean account *agrees* with the Eudemian on this point, which makes this impression all the more persuasive.

5.1.2 That all *philiai* involve goodwill

Motivation to reject the traditional view has come primarily from three issues, two philosophical and one textual.¹⁰ First, many of our relationships would seem to fall into the category of utility or pleasure *philia*. Certainly Aristotle sets a high bar for primary *philia*. But then if utility and pleasure *philiai* do not involve goodwill, we seem to be left with a dim view of human relationships—self-centered, egoistic, or even exploitative.¹¹ Second, despite the differences between relationships based upon the good, the useful, and the pleasant, Aristotle nonetheless identifies them as kinds of *philia*. Goodwill may seem to be so central that without it, we might wonder what would make these three kinds of the same thing, namely *philia*. This worry goes naturally with the thought that Aristotelian *philia* is something like *our* notion of friendship, which seems to require goodwill.¹² But this worry also has a basis in the third issue, which requires more explanation: *NE* VIII.2 is often read as culminating in a general definition of *philia* which *includes* goodwill.

In *NE* VIII.2, after determining the objects of love and characterizing *philēsis*, Aristotle

¹⁰Versions of the view that all three types of *philia* require goodwill can be found in, e.g., Cooper (1977a), Pangle (2002, Ch. 2), Whiting (2006), and Nehamas (2010).

¹¹Cooper, for example, worries that alternative interpretations “commit [Aristotle] to holding that almost everyone has nothing but selfish motivations” (1977a, 643). Joachim’s description of the friend on account of utility as “the man who exploits his friend” might incite this worry (1951, 248).

¹²Cf. Cooper (1977a, 643-4) and Nehamas (2010, 219).

begins to discuss *philia* and being friends. His starting point is the common view that “one should wish goods to one’s friend for his own sake” (1155b30).¹³ People call those who have this kind of well-wishing “good-willed,” and they think that when two people have goodwill for each other, this is *philia*. Aristotle argues for adding the qualification that this well-wishing “not go unnoticed,” because surely two people who happen to have goodwill towards each other without knowing it should not count as *friends*. This leads to his statement that they “need to be good-willed towards each other and wish goods, not escaping their notice, on account of some one of the things mentioned” (1156a3-5). This apparently general claim might be taken as a kind of *definition* of friendship each part of which is meant to apply to each kind of *philia*. Thus if “being good-willed” means having *disinterested* well-wishing for each other, then each kind of *philia* would involve wishing goods to one’s friend for her sake.

On this line of thinking, the room for disinterested well-wishing in pleasure and utility *philiai* is then found in two features of Aristotle’s subsequent account. First, Aristotle describes pleasure and utility *philiai* as “on account of” (*διὰ*) pleasure and utility (*NE* VIII.3, 10-16). If this is read as *prospective*, “for the sake of,” then pleasure and utility *philiai* would seem to be self-interested in the sense that friends aim at the pleasure or utility they receive from their friends. But as Cooper argues, we need not take ‘*διὰ*’ in this sense: We might instead read it as having a kind of *retrospective* force, describing the *ground* of the relationship.¹⁴ If pleasure and utility *philiai* are merely *based* on pleasure or utility in this way, then it might be that the *ground* of the relationship is separated from the *aims* of the friends within it—at least separate *enough* to allow for goodwill.

But Aristotle clearly holds that in some sense, pleasure and utility *philiai* are inferior to primary *philia*. The second important feature of Aristotle’s account of pleasure and utility *philiai* helps to explain how, if all *philiai* involve goodwill, as this interpretation supposes, nevertheless there are important differences between them. Aristotle claims that pleasure and utility *philiai* are based on (*διὰ*) *accidental* features of the friend. The basis, in some sense, of the *philia* is the pleasure or utility one gets from one’s friend, but the fact that one’s friend is pleasant or useful *to oneself* is merely an accidental feature of the friend. Aristotle

¹³ τῷ δὲ φίλῳ φασὶ δεῖν βούλεσθαι τὰγαθὰ ἐκείνου ἕνεκα.

¹⁴ Cooper (1977a, 632-3). Whiting (2006, §7) expresses more serious doubts that Aristotle does use ‘*διὰ*’ to express final causation.

contrasts this way of loving with primary friendship in which friends love each other *for themselves* (καθ' αὐτοὺς). On this view, then, all three types of *philia* involve goodwill, but only in primary *philia* is that goodwill for the friend herself in the sense of who she really is, not an accidental property of her.¹⁵

5.1.3 That not all *philiai* involve goodwill

This debate has been well-litigated, with diminishing hope of a decisive resolution. I will not touch on every point. Instead, discussing the main issues and contributing what I can, I will aim to make plausible the view that primary *philia* is partially distinguished by the presence of goodwill. We will then be in a position to see how this understanding of *philia* and my interpretation of the argument from VIII.5 are mutually illuminating. I consider the first and third motivations for attributing goodwill to all three kinds of *philia* here and consider the second motivation in §5.2 below.

5.1.3.1 Liminal *philiai*

Philia in the *primary* sense—*complete philia*—is between good, virtuous people who love each other on account of their virtue. Such *philiai* are necessarily rare, both because virtuous people are themselves rare and because the intensive nature of the relationship limits the number of such friends one can have. Does this imply that if goodwill is not required in pleasure and utility *philiai*, then as Cooper worries, “almost everyone has nothing but selfish motivations”?¹⁶ (Such relationships might not even seem to be friendships at all.) But limiting goodwill need not have this implication.

Cooper himself recognizes that we need not restrict primary *philia* to the fully virtuous. Aristotle also refers to this kind of *philia* as based on *character*. The important contrast for Aristotle seems to be between loving someone for an accidental property *in relation to oneself*—being pleasant or useful *to oneself*—and loving someone for “being who he is” in himself (*NE* VIII.3, 12-16). This means that many more *philiai* will begin to resemble the

¹⁵See, e.g., Cooper (1977a, 634-7) and Whiting (2006, 287).

¹⁶Cooper (1977a, 643).

primary sort. If you transition from thinking “this person makes me laugh” to “this person has a great sense of humor” or from “this person is useful to me” to “this person is good at her job”, then you are moving away from a relationship based purely on the pleasure or utility you receive yourself and towards a relationship based on character—with an accompanying change in the attitudes involved in the relationship. Starting to see this person as good at her job instead of merely useful to you, you may wish that she receive a promotion for her own sake, not yours.

Aristotle is also not unaware of the complexities involved in human relationships. Aristotle recognizes relationships in which parties want different things from the relationship, e.g., one pleasure and the other utility. Aristotle recognizes that the same relationship might involve multiple sources of motivation. It is rare, Aristotle thinks, that the same person has the accidental properties of being pleasant to you and useful to you, although it can happen. But it is an important feature of primary *philia* that it involve goodness, pleasure, and utility; so the closer a friendship comes to approximating the paradigmatic case, the more these motivations will converge (*NE* VIII.3, 12-15). Finally, Aristotle recognizes that relationships may involve a change in basis over time: A relationship may begin as an erotic relationship but transition to a relationship based on character (*NE* VIII.4, 1157a10-12).

The combination of these two factors—the role of character and the complexities of human relationships—means that many of our relationships will be “liminal” friendships, existing in between types or in transition towards one type or another. Many of our relationships will be *aspiring* primary *philiai*—based on features of the friend herself, her sense of humor or her skill, but in an incomplete way.¹⁷ This is what accounts for our intuition, I think, that even pleasure and utility *philiai* involve goodwill: In many of our relationships which are predominantly based on the pleasure or utility we receive, there is still an element of appreciating something about the friend herself, which can ground goodwill towards her.

The question is not, as this objection supposes: What would the possible absence of goodwill in pleasure and utility *philiai* imply about most human relationships? To answer this question, a relationship would first need to be categorized, and that may be more difficult than this question supposes—and I do not think that Aristotle is unaware of the

¹⁷Price (1989, 159) makes a similar point appealing to a kind of basic, universal goodwill.

difficulty. Aristotle recognizes the way in which a relationship may need to be tested in order to determine what kind of a relationship it really is (e.g., *NE* VIII.4, 1157a6-14).¹⁸ The question is rather: Does a relationship which does not involve goodwill still count as a kind of *philia*? There seems to be strong evidence that *philiai* based purely on pleasure or utility may lack goodwill (and as we will see in §5.2, there is good reason for Aristotle to consider this wider class of relationships). But this possibility has seemed to some to be ruled out by Aristotle's discussion of goodwill in VIII.2.

5.1.3.2 Goodwill and well-wishing in *NE* VIII.2-3 and IX.5

Aristotle concludes VIII.2 by saying, apparently referring to “friends,” that “they need to be good-willed towards each other and wish goods, not escaping their notice, on account of some one of the things mentioned” (1156a3-5).¹⁹ This might be read as a general definition which requires that each kind of *philia* involve goodwill. As Anthony Price notes, the chapter divisions are arbitrary; and if the division were shifted a few lines down, then this apparent definition would not look so final, since it is immediately qualified.²⁰ Even so, the place of this apparent definition at the confluence of two methodological tracks gives us ample reason to regard it as provisional. First, Aristotle is trying to identify the possible objects of love before explaining *philia* in relation to them. Second, Aristotle is considering the common opinion concerning what is required of a friend.

This common opinion, that friends must wish goods to each other for their own sake, is introduced as part of the argument that there is no *philia* with inanimate objects; and this argument itself is still part of Aristotle's identification of the objects of love, restricting *philia* to objects with goods capable of reciprocating. It is easy to see why, in order to distinguish *philia* from *philēsis*, Aristotle would reach for the case of wishing goods to someone *for her*

¹⁸This would also explain why Aristotle tends to use such stark examples of pleasure and utility *philiai*, erotic relationships and business relationships.

¹⁹As Irwin points out, this claim may refer either to (a) those who have goodwill from the previous sentence or to (b) friends in general; and if (a), the Aristotle “just says what needs to be added to mutual goodwill to create friendship” (Irwin, 1999, 275).

²⁰Price (1989, 150): “However, like Walker (as it happens), Cooper places too much weight on the traditional division between 8.2. and 8.3, and so draws a conclusion too soon: in the final definition at 1156a8–10 ‘wishing well’ survives while ‘for his sake’ disappears. It is unnecessary to take Aristotle, instead, at his penultimate word.”

own sake as a clearer contrast to the attitude one might have towards, for example, one's wine (which might up being quite close to Aristotle's account of utility *philia*). Once introduced, Aristotle works with this common opinion towards some notion of being a friend which can then be considered in relation to each of the objects of love.

Both of these methodologies suggest that Aristotle may be starting with the *paradigm* case before working out the way in which the inferior kinds relate to it (which better fits Aristotle's method in VIII.3-4). Cooper claims that because the three kinds of *philia* have not yet been distinguished, this apparent definition must apply to all three.²¹ It is just as plausible that *because* the three kinds of *philia* have not yet been distinguished, this must be merely a *provisional* definition, *pending* its application to each object of love.

If VIII.2 is taken to require goodwill in all three kinds of *philia*, then *something* must be said about Aristotle's discussion of goodwill in IX.5, which at least *appears* to deny goodwill in pleasure and utility *philiai*. Aristotle says that goodwill does not turn into pleasure or utility *philia*:

for goodwill does not come about towards these. For the one who has been benefited renders goodwill in return for what he has received, because he is doing what is just. And the one wishing to benefit someone because he has hope of assistance through him does not seem to be good-willed towards him, but rather to himself, just as [...] not a friend [...] if he attends him because of some use.²²

Aristotle clearly denies *something* about goodwill in relation to pleasure and utility *philiai*. Cooper argues that Aristotle denies here that goodwill can come about *prospectively* towards someone as pleasant or useful, leaving open the possibility that goodwill might be felt *retrospectively* for someone who has been pleasant or useful to oneself. As Price notes, not only is it difficult to get this distinction from “towards them” (*ἐπὶ τούτοις*), but also denying prospective goodwill based on utility conflicts with Aristotle's claim in VIII.2 that “many have goodwill towards those whom they have not seen, supposing them to be decent or useful” (1155b34-1156a1)²³ This strongly suggests that one could have goodwill prospectively towards someone on the grounds that she is useful (although perhaps not useful to

²¹Cooper (1977a, 625).

²²οὐδὲ γὰρ εὖνοια ἐπὶ τούτοις γίνεται. ὁ μὲν γὰρ εὐεργετηθεὶς ἀνθ' ὧν πέπονθεν ἀπονέμει τὴν εὖνοιαν, τὰ δίκαια δρῶν· ὁ δὲ βουλόμενός τιν' εὐπραγεῖν, ἐλπίδα ἔχων εὐπορίας δι' ἐκείνου, οὐκ ἔοικ' εὖνους ἐκείνω εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἑαυτῷ, καθάπερ οὐδὲ φίλος, εἰ θεραπεύει αὐτὸν διὰ τινος χρήσιμον.

²³πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσιν εὖνοι οἷς οὐχ ἐωράκασι, ὑπολαμβάνουσι δὲ ἐπιεικέεις εἶναι ἢ χρησίμους·

oneself).²⁴

It is perhaps better to suppose, as Jennifer Whiting argues, that IX.5 denies to pleasure and utility *philiai* a *technical* sense of goodwill as being based on some virtue or decency (1167a19).²⁵ This leaves open the possibility that Aristotle does require that these *philiai* have goodwill in the less-restrictive sense of wishing goods to someone for her own sake. However, Aristotle begins IX.5 with a backwards reference (apparently to the claim in VIII.2 that goodwill can come about towards those one does not know) and gives little indication that he is altering the sense of goodwill in this chapter.

Moreover, the attitude of the person to whom Aristotle denies goodwill in the final sentence of this passage seems quite close to Aristotle's description of utility *philia* elsewhere, as we saw above. It would be natural to supplement the final clause (as I have indicated with ellipses) with elements from the previous one, as Irwin does. Then this clause would read, "just as [he seems to be] not a friend [to him, but rather to himself] if he attends him because of some use." And Aristotle does make almost this same claim about utility friends elsewhere: They are "not friends of each other but of profit" (*NE* VIII.4, 1157a14-16; cf. IX.1, 1164a10-11). There is a case to be made, then, that *NE* IX.5 does deny goodwill to pleasure and utility *philiai*, just as *EE* VII.7 does.²⁶

What Aristotle *takes* from the apparent definition of being friends in VIII.2 is that *philia* requires *antiphilēsis* which does not go unnoticed and some form of wishing goods (*NE* VIII.3, 1156a8-10). The form of wishing goods is connected to the way of loving: "those who love wish goods to each other in the way in which they love" (1156a9-10).²⁷ Aristotle seems to have left goodwill behind, replacing it with different forms of wishing goods in the different kinds of *philia*. Those who argue that wishing goods *for the friend's sake* is presupposed in this claim appeal to two features of the way in which Aristotle applies this formula. As

²⁴Cooper cites in support of his view 1167a14-15: *ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐνεργηθεὶς ἀνθ' ὧν πέπονθεν ἀπονέμει τὴν εὐνοίαν, τὰ δίκαια δρῶν*. But if *δρῶν* has causal force, as strongly suggested by the parallel of *ἔχων* in the following line, then Aristotle may be arguing that goodwill is not a starting-point of utility *philia* either *retrospectively* or *prospectively*. Pakaluk (1998, 179) argues for this view.

²⁵Whiting (2006, 281).

²⁶Price (1989, 153-4) and Pakaluk (1998, 179) both argue for this interpretation on different grounds: Price takes the second sentence of this passage to describe an attitude which Aristotle allows might characterize utility *philia*; Pakaluk argues that these two sentences together form an argument that goodwill can come about towards utility *neither* retrospectively *nor* prospectively.

²⁷*οἱ δὲ φιλοῦντες ἀλλήλους βούλονται τὰγαθὰ ἀλλήλοις ταύτη ἢ φιλοῦσιν.*

we saw above, Aristotle describes each kind of *philia* as being “because of” ($\delta\iota\alpha$) the object of love, and this object of love is an *accidental* property in the case of pleasure and utility *philiai* but an intrinsic feature in primary *philia*. We should first note that while Aristotle does emphasize that pleasure and utility *philiai* are $\delta\iota\alpha$ an accidental property of the friend, he is careful to note (repeatedly) that this accidental property is *in relation to oneself*. And this feature may matter to Aristotle just as much as (or more than) the fact that the property is accidental. Whether this is the case depends on what exactly the relation is between loving and wishing goods.

Cooper argues that the loving and the wishing goods may come apart in the sense that the loving is based on or grounded in ($\delta\iota\alpha$) the pleasure or utility but pleasure or utility is not the *aim* of wishing goods to one’s friend. The plausibility of understanding Aristotle in this way has been taken to depend partly on whether or not $\delta\iota\alpha$ has efficient causal or final causal force. But before turning to that point, it is clear that the ground of the *philia* and the aims of the friends within it cannot be *completely* disconnected: Aristotle claims that *philiai* of pleasure or utility dissolve whenever the pleasure or utility is gone (e.g., *NE* VIII.3, 1156a22-24). This means that the pleasure or utility is not merely the *starting-point* of the relationship, but its *ongoing* basis. The attitudes of friends within *philia* must refer to the grounds of the relationship in *some* way. Cooper argues that part of the connection is that particular instances of wishing goods to one’s friend “...must be compatible with the retention of that special property under which, as his friend, one wishes him well in the first place.”²⁸ And he also recognizes that particular actions must not be so burdensome that they would somehow nullify the general benefit or pleasure on which the *philia* is based.²⁹ The need to honor this connection between the ground of the *philia* and the aims of the well-wishing within it raises two concerns about Cooper’s attempt to make room for goodwill. Together, they show the narrow path this interpretation must tread: If the connection between the ground and the aim is too close, then there does not appear to be room for goodwill; but if the ground and the aim are too far apart, this view is psychologically implausible.

First, once we admit that there must be *at least* the kind of connection Cooper acknowl-

²⁸Cooper (1977a, 637).

²⁹Cooper (1977a, 640).

edges, then we may worry that there is not enough room for goodwill. Nehamas puts the point well:

True, when I wish you good things provided they do not interfere with my interests, I do not do so for my own sake; but if I will stop when they do, I am not wishing them for your own sake either. That requires more of me: nothing less, in fact, than to be willing in some instances to sacrifice an interest of mine, whatever it might be, for yours—as we commonly and correctly say, for *your* sake. Without that, we are still within the domain of the instrumental. (Nehamas, 2010, 223-4)

If friends in a pleasure or utility *philia* wish each other goods *only* after first ensuring that their wishes are not contrary to their own interests in the *philia*, then this might seem to be a hollow sense of goodwill. (I return to this point below.)

But then, second, if the sense of *goodwill* is stronger the more the aims of the well-wishing are *removed* from the grounds of the *philia*, we might worry that this view becomes psychologically implausible. Cooper suggests that those who have enjoyed or been benefited by another person will “...tend to wish for and be willing to act in the interest of the other person’s good, independently of consideration of their *own* welfare *or* pleasure.”³⁰ (This claim itself may be too strong in light of the limitations which as we have seen, Cooper himself will go on to recognize, but set this issue aside.) But how psychologically plausible is it that the attitudes within a relationship would be this disconnected from the *ongoing* ground of the relationship? What plausibility this view has, I think, might rather rest upon a subtle shift of the sort I described in “liminal” *philiai*. It may be that being pleased or benefited by someone leads you to think of her as having qualities which go beyond her being pleasant or useful *to you*. I find it more psychologically plausible that the ground of the *philia* is more closely connected to the aims of the friends within it, and this also seems to be Aristotle’s understanding.

Whether friends aim at their own pleasure or utility in these sorts of *philiai* has been taken to depend on whether ‘ $\delta\acute{\alpha}$ ’ could imply final causation in Aristotle’s claim that friends in these relationships love each other $\delta\acute{\alpha}$ their own pleasure or utility. Whether Aristotle uses ‘ $\delta\acute{\alpha}$ ’ to describe final causation may be a difficult question to answer, but it may also

³⁰Cooper (1977a, 633-4). Cf. Whiting’s description: “So it is plausible to read Aristotle as claiming that people tend, as a matter of psychological fact, to become fond of those they find pleasant or those who have been useful to them; and that people tend, as a matter of psychological fact, to wish goods to those of whom they are fond and to do so for the latter’s sake (as distinct from their own)” (2006, 285).

not be required; this connection is suggested by several points:

(1) When Aristotle says that pleasure and utility *philiai* cease when the pleasure or utility ceases, he explains that the *philia* was *πρὸς* those things (*NE* VIII.3, 1156a23-24). This ‘*πρὸς*’ may, as Irwin translates it, suggest final causation; it at least makes clear that the pleasure and utility are the ongoing basis of the *philia*. (Aristotle also routinely uses ‘*πρὸς*’ to express that someone is a friend *to* someone else, which might suggest, as Aristotle does elsewhere, that pleasure and utility friends are really friends *to* the pleasure or utility.)

(2) Aristotle also appears to restrict wishing goods for the sake of one’s friend to primary friendship, when he says: “Those who wish goods to their friends for their sake (*ἐκείνων ἕνεκα*) are especially friends; for they are disposed in this way on account of themselves and not incidentally” (1156b9-11).³¹ Cooper argues that the context suggests that this should be understood as the claim that only primary friends wish goods for who the friend *really* is.³² However, it is striking that this is the first use of ‘*ἐκείνων ἕνεκα*’ in VIII.3, which certainly makes it look like this does not apply to pleasure and utility *philiai*, and we have not been prepared for a special use of this phrase as referring to “who the friend really is.” Rather, this seems to be a *general* claim: There is a change in subject to the general “those who wish” (*οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι*) and what looks to be a general connection between loving someone *for her sake* and loving her *for herself*.³³ Aristotle then uses this claim to draw the conclusion that primary friendship is especially stable (1156b11-12). And given that Aristotle allows some ongoing connection between the ground of the *philiai* and the friend’s attitudes within it, this general claim is intuitively plausible: If I wish goods to you for *your* sake, then this is not *διὰ* some property *in relation to myself*.

(3) Finally, Aristotle himself connects *διὰ* and *ἕνεκα* when he considers the kind of mixed *philia* exemplified by pederastic relationships in which one party aims to get pleasure out of the relationship and the other aims to get utility:

Such things [sc., complaints] happen whenever the one loves the beloved *διὰ* pleasure but the other loves the lover *διὰ* utility, but these do not belong to both. For when the *philia* is *διὰ* these things it is dissolved whenever [the things] do not come about for the sake of

³¹οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι τὰγαθὰ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκείνων ἕνεκα μάλιστα φίλοι δι’ αὐτοὺς γὰρ οὕτως ἔχουσι, καὶ οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός·

³²Cooper (1977a, 641).

³³Cf. Irwin (1999, 276).

which (ἔνεκα) they loved.³⁴ (NE IX.1, 1164a6-12)

Here Aristotle directly links the grounds διὰ which the *philia* exists to the aims ἔνεκα which each friend loves the other. When the parties are no longer pleasant or useful, then the *philia* dissolves because these are also the things at which each respective party aims. It certainly appears that each friend is really concerned about what accrues to *himself* from the relationship, such that Aristotle might plausibly deny that well-wishing with such aims really qualifies as for the sake of *one's friend* rather than for the sake of *oneself*.

It remains to explain why Aristotle employs the technical distinction between loving someone for an *accidental* property and loving someone *for herself*. Aristotle may, of course, have more than one purpose for this distinction. But what I think needs to be emphasized is that Aristotle clearly uses this distinction to make a point that he also makes in the *Eudemian Ethics*. In *EE* VII.5 (discussed in §2.1 above), Aristotle analyzes *philia* between opposites as instances of utility *philia*. Opposites desire each other as being useful for bringing themselves into the mean state. As such, opposites are only *incidentally* friends because their desire is really for the mean state and only incidentally for the friend (to the extent that the friend helps them achieve the mean). Moreover, whenever the mean state *is achieved*, they no longer desire the opposite and so are no longer friends (1239b27-28).

Aristotle makes the same point in the Nicomachean discussion, both using the technical distinction to make it more precise and applying it more generally to pleasure and utility *philiai*:

Indeed those who love on account of [διὰ] what is useful love [στέργουσι] on account of what is good to them, and those [who love] on account of pleasure [love] on account of what is pleasant to them, and not insofar as the one loved is [who he is] but insofar as he is useful or pleasant. These *philiai* are incidental [κατὰ συμβεβηκός]; for it is not insofar as the one loved is who is that he is loved, but insofar as some provide something good and others provide pleasure. Such [*philiai*] are easily dissolved, when they do not remain the same. For if they are no longer pleasant or useful, they cease loving.³⁵ (NE VIII.3, 1156a14-21)

³⁴ συμβαίνει δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἐπειδὴν ὁ μὲν δι' ἡδονὴν τὸν ἐρώμενον φιλεῖ, ὁ δὲ διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον τὸν ἐραστήν, ταῦτα δὲ μὴ ἀμφοῖν ὑπάρχει. διὰ ταῦτα γὰρ τῆς φιλίας οὐσης διάλυσις γίνεται, ἐπειδὴν μὴ γίνηται ὧν ἔνεκα ἐφίλουσιν· οὐ γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἔστεργον ἀλλὰ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, οὐ μόνιμα ὄντα· διὸ τοιαῦτα καὶ αἱ φιλίαι.

³⁵ οἷ τε δὴ διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον φιλοῦντες διὰ τὸ αὐτοῖς ἀγαθὸν στέργουσι, καὶ οἱ δι' ἡδονὴν διὰ τὸ αὐτοῖς ἡδύ, καὶ οὐχ ἢ ὁ φιλούμενός ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἢ χρήσιμος ἢ ἡδύς. κατὰ συμβεβηκός τε δὴ αἱ φιλίαι αὐταὶ εἰσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἢ ἐστὶν ὅσπερ ἐστὶν ὁ φιλούμενος, ταύτη φιλεῖται, ἀλλ' ἢ πορίζουσι οἱ μὲν ἀγαθόν τι οἱ δ' ἡδονήν. εὐδιάλυτοι δὲ αἱ τοιαῦταί εἰσι, μὴ διαμερότων αὐτῶν ὁμοίων· ἐὰν γὰρ μηκέτι ἡδέεις ἢ χρήσιμοι ᾖσι, παύονται φιλοῦντες.

This passage culminates in the claim that pleasure and utility *philiai* are incidental and easily dissolved. Certainly such *philiai* are less stable because accidental properties themselves are less stable, but that is only part the explanation.³⁶ Aristotle emphasizes here, as in *EE* VII.5, that the accidental property is *in relation to oneself*—getting pleasure or utility *for oneself*. Just as in *EE* VII.5, these *philiai* are incidental because the friend herself is only incidentally related to the reason why she is loved. And again just as in *EE* VII.5, such incidental relationships are unstable because the primary aim, for pleasure or utility, is more stable than the desire for the friend which *derives* from it. There is thus no need to search for a role for this technical distinction to play: Here too we find continuity with the *Eudemian Ethics* which further suggests that pleasure and utility *philiai* need not involve goodwill.

5.1.3.3 Qualified goodwill

I have argued that there is good reason to think that pleasure and utility *philiai* may lack goodwill: Aristotle's descriptions, especially of utility *philia*, give this impression; we need not read VIII.2 as offering a general definition of *philia*; Aristotle seems to understand the grounds of the relationship and the attitudes of the friends within it as closely connected; and we can see continuity with the Eudemian account, especially in the incidental nature of pleasure and utility *philiai* but perhaps also in the denial of goodwill in *NE* IX.5.

However, views which require goodwill in all three kinds of *philia* may still fit the argument I will go on to give, depending upon *how* goodwill is incorporated into pleasure and utility *philiai*. Nehamas, for instance, argues that the object of love in these *philiai* is the person as qualified by the accidental attribute. One loves the *pleasant Socrates* or the *useful Socrates*. The sense in which I have goodwill for my friend in this qualified manner depends upon the way in which my friend's good relates to the qualification on which our friendship depends. Some of the things which are good for my friend will also promote my own interests, some will harm my interests, and some will not concern me. According to Nehamas, I will wish goods to my friend *both* when it is in my interests *and* when it does not concern me. This preserves, Nehamas thinks, a sense in which I do not wish goods to

³⁶Cooper (1977a, 636).

my friend *only* for my own sake. But as Nehamas recognizes:

Since my own interests determine whether I will do so or not, it is clear that I do not wish you well for your *own* sake: that is the difference between benefit and pleasure, on the one hand, and virtue on the other. (Nehamas, 2010, 227)

Although I will sometimes wish goods for my friend which do not benefit myself, my own interests are still *controlling*. It is with reference to my own interests that the manner and extent of wishing goods within the *philia* is determined. This may create the space for wishing goods for the friend's sake in pleasure and utility *philiai*, but it also makes clear that in these relationships one is not, in a sense, *directly* related to the good of one's friend. Wishing goods to one's friend is always "filtered" through one's own interests. And this is the key claim moving forward: that in pleasure and utility *philiai* one is not properly related to the good of one's friend.

5.2 *Philia* and *Koinōnia*

We can see more clearly why Aristotle might be concerned with relationships of *philia* which *lack* goodwill and also work towards an understanding of the *hexis* of primary *philia* by considering the related concept of *koinōnia* (often translated as "community" or "association"). *Philia* and *koinōnia* (along with justice, which I will mostly set aside) share the same domain (*NE* VIII.9, 1159b25-31). And "every *philia* is in *koinōnia*" (*NE* VIII.12, 1161b11).³⁷ By examining Aristotle's conception of *koinōnia*, we can better understand both the structure of individual *philiai* and what unites the domain of *philia*.

A *koinōnia* is a matter of individuals *sharing* something *in common*. A *koinōnia* thus requires at least two *distinct* members. This prompts Aristotle to question whether one can *wrong* oneself or have *philia* with oneself. And in both cases, Aristotle allows a restricted or analogical sense of injustice or *philia* with oneself to the extent that there can be two or more "parts" of *oneself* (*NE* V.11; *EE* VII.6, 1240a14-21). Although *koinōniai* require multiple distinct members, their unity is not measured in the *number* of members, but in the

³⁷Ἐν κοινωνίᾳ μὲν ὄν πάσα φιλία ἐστίν...

closeness of their relations within the *koinōnia*. This prompts Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s *Republic* that by seeking to make the *polis* as unified as possible—by, for example, sharing wives, children, and property *in common*—Plato actually does away with the *polis* (*Pol.* II.2, 1261a13-22). The *koinōnia* which is the *polis* requires a certain degree of separation among its members; and Plato erases this separation, creating something more like a *family* than a *polis*.

Proper members of a *koinōnia* must be distinct from each other in then sense that they each possess their own independent good. As discussed in Chapter 2 (§2.2.1), Aristotle contrasts this with cases in which the good of one thing depends upon or rests in the good of another:

Since it holds likewise, soul in relation to body and craftsman in relation to tool and master in relation to slave, of these there is no *koinōnia*. For there are not two things, but the *one* and the other belongs to it.³⁸ Nor is the good for each separable, but rather the good of both is [the good] of the one for whose sake [the other] is.³⁹ (*EE* VII.9, 1241b17-22)

A tool or instrument, for example, is in a sense *for the sake of* the artisan. The instrument possesses no “good” independent of the good of the artisan served by it. A saw can be “taken care of” by being sharpened, but again, this does not benefit the saw *itself*, but rather makes the saw better suited for the artisan’s use (*EE* VII. 1242a13-19). There can thus be no *koinōnia* (or justice or *philia*) between the instrument and the artisan because there are not *two* things—*two* independent goods—but only one.

The requirement that members of a *koinōnia* possess independent goods seems to depend upon two further features of *koinōnia*. First, every *koinōnia* aims at some *good*, as Aristotle argues at the start of *Pol.* I.1:

We see that every *polis* is a *koinōnia* of some sort, and that every *koinōnia* is established for the sake of some good (for everyone performs every action for the sake of what he takes to be good). Clearly, then, while all *koinōniai* aim at some good, the *koinōnia* that has the most authority of all and encompasses all the others aims highest, that is to say, at the good that has the most authority of all.⁴⁰ (*Pol.* I.1, 1252a1-7; Reeve, trans., modified)

³⁸On the translation of this passage, see 22n37 above.

³⁹ἐπεὶ δ' ὁμοίως ἔχει ψυχὴ πρὸς σῶμα καὶ τεχνίτης πρὸς ὄργανον καὶ δεσπότης πρὸς δοῦλον, τούτων μὲν οὐκ ἔστι κοινωνία. οὐ γὰρ δύο ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἓν, τὸ δὲ τοῦ ἑνός. {οὐδέν}. οὐδὲ διαιρετὸν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἑκατέρω, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀμφοτέρων τοῦ ἑνός οὐ ἕνεκα ἐστίν.

⁴⁰Ἐπειδὴ πᾶσαν πόλιν ὀρώμεν κοινωνίαν τινὰ οὖσαν καὶ πᾶσαν κοινωνίαν ἀγαθοῦ τινος ἕνεκεν συνεστηκυίαν (τοῦ γὰρ εἶναι δοκοῦντος ἀγαθοῦ χάριν πάντα πράττουσι πάντες), δῆλον ὡς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγαθοῦ τινος στοχάζονται, μάλιστα δὲ καὶ τοῦ κυριωτάτου πάντων ἢ πασῶν κυριωτάτη καὶ πάσας περιέχουσα τὰς ἄλλας.

Aristotle clearly asserts here that “all *koinōniai* aim at some good.” The reasoning behind this claim is less clear. Although translators do not usually bring it out, this passage appears to give an *argument* from the claim that “every *koinōnia* is established for the sake of some good” to the conclusion that “all *koinōniai* aim at some good” (as indicated by the structure Ἐπειδὴ...δηλον ὡς).⁴¹ This may shed some light on Aristotle’s use of ‘διὰ’ in his account of *philia*, discussed above: Aristotle seems to think that *koinōniai* are *founded* with *ongoing* purposes. However, it is important that the purposes of a *koinōnia* may change, as Aristotle claims that the *polis* “comes to be for the sake of living, but it remains in existence for the sake of living well” (*Pol.* I.2, 1252b29-30).⁴² And depending upon when a *koinōnia* is taken to be *established*, the account of primary *philia* which I go on to give may assimilate primary *philia* to the *koinōnia* of the *polis* in this way: It may be that a *koinōnia*, once established, gives its members access to a good which they could not directly aim at beforehand.

The fact that a *koinōnia* aims at some good helps to show why each member of a *koinōnia* must have an independent good or well-being, because Aristotle also requires that each member of a *koinōnia* also *participate* in the good at which it aims (*Pol.* VII.8, 1328a25-33). Without an independent good, the good produced through the *koinōnia* would not be good *for* them, and so they would not really share in the good. Aristotle sometimes seems to claim that each member of the *koinōnia* must share in *the same thing*, like sustenance or land (as at *Pol.* VII.8, 1328a26-28). But given that Aristotle recognizes mixed *philiai* in which, for instance, one friend gets pleasure and another gets utility, it is perhaps better to require only that each member share in *some* good made *possible* by the *koinōnia*.

In Chapter 2, I argued that Aristotle’s introduction of *philēsis* allowed him to restrict τὸ φιλεῖν and *philia* to *animate* objects possessing independent goods. This enables Aristotle to match *philia* to the domain of *koinōnia* to which it belongs. *Koinōniai* describe the kinds of shared bases which allow individuals to be brought together in specific forms of interaction.⁴³

⁴¹The way in which this argument relies upon the premise that “for everyone performs every action for the sake of what he takes to be good” might make us doubt that it really shows that *all koinōniai* aim at some good, because at least some *koinōniai*, like that between parents and children, appear to be *non-voluntary*.

⁴²Whiting (2006, 286) appeals to this claim to support Cooper’s account of διὰ discussed above. However, I take the change in aim to correspond to a change in the ground of the *koinōnia* or *philia*.

⁴³A *koinōnia* explains how individuals can be brought together in what Michael Thompson calls a “practical nexus” (2004, 335). I am thus doubtful of Cooper’s claim that *koinōniai* are at bottom *actions* because of the way in which they supply the contexts for action; see Cooper (2010, 230).

For Aristotle, the important dividing line is between those things which *lack* independent goods and those things which *have* independent goods in virtue of which they can come together in certain sorts of relationships.

This helps to explain why Aristotle would treat even self-interested relationships as important forms of *philia*. Interacting with a *person*—someone with an independent good who might fare well or badly—is a completely different form of interaction than interacting with a mere *thing*. There can be mutually beneficial relationships of *philia* with a person—whether *self-interested* or not—and these relationships are in a different category than the *use* of a thing. Thus we can reject Joachim’s characterization of the utility friend as “the man who exploits his friend,” while allowing that pleasure and utility *philiai* are self-interested: Utility friends treat each other as persons, wishing each other well, while at the same time aiming to promote their *own* good through their relationship—but not at the *expense* of their friend.⁴⁴

5.3 The *Hexis* of Primary *Philia*

We can now bring this discussion of goodwill and *koinōnia* to bear on our main question concerning the argument that *philia* is a *hexis* in VIII.5: If *philia* involves *prohairesis* and *prohairesis* comes from a *hexis*, why conclude that *philia* is that *hexis*? I argued in Chapter 3 that the consensus interpretation misidentifies the *prohairesis* involved in this argument. It is not the *prohairesis* to *reciprocate* love that is at issue—I argued that it is difficult to even make sense of this as an object of *prohairesis*—but rather the *prohairesis* which friends make regarding each other. I then argued in Chapter 4 that the sense in which *prohairesis* “comes from” a *hexis* is that *prohairesis* requires an end, a *boulēsis*, set by one’s *hexis*. This already provides the outline of an answer to our question: *Philia* is the *hexis* which makes possible *prohairesis* concerning one’s friend. But we can say more to explain why *philia* requires something like *its own hexis* and cannot depend purely upon the fuller *hexeis* or characters of the friends.

⁴⁴Joachim (1951, 248).

5.3.1 The structure of *NE VIII.5*

I have argued that primary *philia* requires goodwill, but pleasure and utility *philiai* do not. The account of the argument in VIII.5 which I will give depends upon this difference. My account thus attempts to make good on the claim that this argument specifically concerns *primary philia*, a claim that the consensus interpretation cannot accommodate (§1.1, problem 6). The context of this argument strongly suggests that it is meant to apply to primary *philia*. In order to see this, I will quickly trace the argument of the chapter, at the same time challenging the claim mentioned at the start of Chapter 2 that VIII.5 lacks structure and unity. The primary topic of this chapter is in fact the way in which *philia* is a *hexis*, and its two foci are the way in which all *philiai* can be viewed as *hexeis* of a sort and the special way in which primary *philia* is a *hexis*.

Aristotle begins the chapter with the claim that *philiai* can be considered both according to a *hexis* and according to activity (1157b5-7). His argument for this claim is that even though friends may be asleep or apart, their *philia* persists (1157b7-11). But if inactivity goes on for *too* long then the *philia* is forgotten (1157b11-13). This naturally prompts a question about the role of “spending time together” (*συνημερεύειν*), and Aristotle argues that nothing is more characteristic of *philia* than “living together” (*συζῆν*). This helps to explain the role of pleasure in *philia* (since people do not spend time with those whom they do not enjoy) and also why those who are older or harsh-tempered are not “friendly” (*φιλικοί*) (1157b13-24). These considerations apply roughly to all sorts of *philia*, and Aristotle’s initial argument shows that all *philiai* can be considered “according to a *hexis*.”

At 1157b25 Aristotle then explicitly pivots to “the *philia* of good people,” which is *philia* in the highest degree. Aristotle supports this claim with the point he has made before that the good are lovable and choiceworthy for each other both on account of goodness and pleasure (1157b26-28). Then Aristotle moves directly to the argument that (this kind of) *philia* is a *hexis* (1157b28-31). Both this argument and the following claim include finite plural verbs, *ἀντιφιλοῦσι* and *βούλονται*, and the subject of both is apparently “good people.” Aristotle’s distinction between wishing goods *κατὰ πάθος* and *καθ’ ἑξῆς* (1157b32-33) raises the issue of friends as the object of love. In a way, friends love what is good *for them*, because “the good

person becoming a friend becomes good to the one to whom he is a friend” (1157b33-1158a1). The friendship of the good is thus the focus of the remainder of the chapter, from 1157b25 to the end, and there is good reason to suppose that the argument that *philia* is a *hexis* here concerns primary *philia* in particular and is aimed at showing that just as primary *philia* is especially *philia*, so too it is especially a *hexis*.

5.3.2 Pleasure and utility *philiai* as incidental *philiai*

Considered as *koinōniai*, which aim at some good, pleasure and utility *philiai* aim at the pleasure or utility *for oneself* which is enabled by the *philia*. Aristotle himself describes these relationships as “for the sake of” (ἐνεκα) these things (*NE* IX.1, 1164a6-12). This is why pleasure and utility *philiai* cease whenever the friend stops being pleasant or useful. This is also why, as I have argued, it is plausible that these relationships, in their pure form, do not require goodwill. The controlling or structuring end on the basis of which one interacts with one’s friend is *one’s own* pleasure or utility. We can now see why pleasure and utility *philiai* would not be *hexeis* according to the argument in VIII.5. I have argued that the connection between *hexis* and *prohairesis* is that the end with reference to which a *prohairesis* is made is set by one’s *hexis* of character. If we apply this connection to pleasure and utility *philiai*, then the end supplied by one’s *hexis* of character is one’s own pleasure or utility, which need make no reference to the friend.

Aristotle’s own account of pleasure and utility *philiai* bears this out: To the extent that the *philia* will dissolve when it no longer promotes this end and to the extent that this end is thus more stable than the *philia*, it is one’s “relationship” with pleasure or utility that would deserve to be called a *hexis* rather than one’s relationship with one’s friend. And this is *precisely* why Aristotle describes these *philiai* as incidental: The friend herself is merely incidental to the aims served by the *philia*. These *philiai* are not *hexeis* proper because as Aristotle says of utility friends, they are “not friends of each other but of profit” (*NE* VIII.4, 1157a14-16; cf. IX.1, 1164a10-11). However, these *philiai* might still be viewed “according to a *hexis*,” as Aristotle says at the start of VIII.5, because they do possess some persistence as long as the friend is coincident with the aim.

5.3.3 Primary *philia*

It is extremely difficult to give an account of the good at which primary *philia* aims. As Aristotle says of self-love, it would require a “major investigation” (*EE* VII.6, 1240a8-9).⁴⁵ Moreover, primary *philia* involves a *variety* of goods, given that the virtuous are good, pleasant, and useful to each other. Aristotle’s most detailed discussion of this topic comes in *EE* VII.12 and *NE* IX.9, where Aristotle addresses the question of whether the good person will have friends. These are especially challenging chapters, and there is disagreement about not just how to *interpret* the argument of these chapters but even, as in the case of *NE* IX.9, how *many* arguments there are. But we can bring out the contrast with pleasure and utility *philiai* by appealing to two claims granted by almost every account: First, at least *part* of the good at which primary *philia* aims depends upon Aristotle’s famous claim that one’s friend is “another self”; and second, being “another self” is something *special* about one’s *friend*—the virtuous person does not relate to *every* virtuous person as to “another self.”

In *NE* IX.9, on which I will focus here, Cooper detects *two* arguments for the claim that a virtuous person will *need* friends: one according to which friends are a needed aid to *self-knowledge* and another according to which friends are needed for *shared activity* which enhances one’s life.⁴⁶ In both cases, gaining the benefit of one’s friend—the self-knowledge or shared activity—depends upon being as intimately related to one’s friend as to “another self.” It is only by being “another self” that one comes to view the actions of one’s friend as *one’s own* in such a way that one gains knowledge about *oneself*; and the kind of shared activity of the *virtuous* depends upon the level of intimacy and knowledge available only within *primary philia*.⁴⁷ Whiting argues that Aristotle is less concerned in *NE* IX.9 with *justifying* the virtuous person’s need for friends than with *explaining* how virtuous friends are able to value each other *for themselves*.⁴⁸ This explanation likewise runs through the claim that a friend is “another self.” It is by being related to one’s friend as to “another self” that one can take the kind of *direct* interest in one’s friend that one does in oneself (without

⁴⁵In the translation of Inwood and Woolf.

⁴⁶Self-knowledge: Cooper (1977b, §I); shared activity: Cooper (1977b, §II).

⁴⁷Millgram (1987), who argues that we “make” other selves by contributing to their virtue, and Stern-Gillet (1995), who emphasizes self-realization, would also fit in here.

⁴⁸Whiting (2006, §10).

needing the further thought that the interests of one's friend are thereby *one's own*).⁴⁹ Such friends are likewise able to take pleasure in each other's activities directly.

Achieving the status of "another self" is the result of a long process. It involves coming to know the character of one's friend, developing *philēsis* for her, and coming to value her for who she really is and having goodwill for her on that basis. The kind of time, intimacy, and *effort* required to achieve this status prevents one from having many primary friends. Although primary friend's in some sense value the *virtue* of each other, Aristotle does not seem to allow that the virtuous thereby relate to all other virtuous people as to other *selves*.

These two facts help to explain why primary *philia* is itself a *hexis*. The good of primary *philia* depends upon coming to be related to someone in a special way, valuing that person *for herself* and wishing goods to her *for her own sake*. The good of primary *philia* thus does not depend upon one's antecedent values in the same way that the good of pleasure and utility *philiai* do: A primary friend is not loved *as contributing to* ends which one already had. As I argued in Chapter 4, *prohairesis* requires a *hexis* because the end with reference to which a *prohairesis* is made must be had as a matter of one's *hexis*. In primary *philia* one acts on the basis of *prohairesis* for the good of one's friend herself. The *prohairetic* structure of primary *philia* thus requires that one have the good of one's friend as a *hexis*. Primary *philia* can thus be identified with the *hexis* of valuing one's friend herself in a way that is not possible in pleasure and utility *philiai*, in which the valuing of one's friend is merely incidental. The way in which one loves one's friend in *primary philia* is not merely as incidental to one's prior ends.

The consensus interpretation argues that *philia* is a *hexis* because it requires reciprocation; and this reciprocation requires *prohairesis*, which (somehow) implies a *hexis*. The feature of friendship which the consensus interpretation seems to draw on is that *philiai* are *responses* to value—goodness, pleasure, or utility—supposing that one might *decide* to love someone on the basis of these values. I argued in Chapter 3 that *philēsis* and *philia* do not seem to be the proper objects of *prohairesis*, but we can now diagnose the error of the consensus interpretation in a different way (setting aside *philēsis*): To the extent that one can fully appreciate the value of one's friend prior to actually *being* friends—and thus

⁴⁹Whiting (2006, §11).

to the extent that one could *decide* to be friends—to that extent the value of the friend and the friendship is in relation to values and ends one already has. It is in this respect merely incidental and a deficient form of *philia*. A primary friend comes to have a kind of value in herself which was not accessible prior to actually being friends and coming to have the good of one's friend as an end.

Certainly, primary *philia* begins with a glimpse of goodness in a person which provokes one's interest in her. But this is only the beginning. In order to reach the point at which the value of one's friend is fully intelligible (or as fully as possible), on the basis of which one loves her and has goodwill for her, she must become "another self." And certainly, if a friend's character degrades, there may come a point where one can no longer love her. But we should not take this to show that primary *philia* has *similar* limitations to pleasure and utility *philiai*.⁵⁰ For Aristotle, ceasing to be virtuous is like ceasing to be *who one is*; and thus the *hexis* of primary *philia* provides all the stability of loving and valuing someone that is *humanly possible*.

⁵⁰E.g., as Cooper (1977a, 636-8) does.

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