

“For the Friend is Another Self”

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Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* speaks to us about what is most important to us.

Everything human beings do is goal directed; it aims at some good—whether real or only apparent. Each of these goods must be either an instrument for the sake of some further good or final and for the sake of itself. Now, if all goods were instrumental, their goodness would always be conditional, defined by another good, the goodness of which would, in turn, be derived from a still further good. As there would, in principle, be no end of such goods, they would also, in principle, have no beginning. Everything would, therefore, finally be good for nothing, and so nothing would be good. Still, we do experience things as good. So, must there not be a good that is final and for the sake of itself? We demonstrate our belief that there is such a good by agreeing on its name—happiness—while nevertheless disagreeing on what happiness is. What is most important for us, then, is answering the question, What is human happiness? To raise it in a serious way, we would first have to ask what human beings are, which would require, in turn, that we first ask after the function, task, or deed (*ergon*) that is specific to us as human beings. Now, we are distinct not insofar as we are alive (we share this with both plants and animals), nor because we have desires and move ourselves in keeping with these desires (we share this with animals), but rather insofar as we have *logos*—speech or reason. It stands to reason, then, that a distinctly human happiness would consist in the exercise of this distinctly human faculty in a way that allows its unimpeded activity. Accordingly, Aristotle defines human happiness, that good that is for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else, as activity of the soul in accordance with that virtue that is distinctively human—i.e., rational activity. Rational activity, however, takes two forms. On the one hand, reason may govern our desires or appetites; on the

other hand, it has its own ends. It is practical, and it is theoretical. Accordingly, there are two forms of virtue indispensable for human happiness—moral virtue and intellectual virtue.

Now, what I have just gone through is a summary (a far too simple summary) of the argument of the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. It prepares the way first for an account of moral virtue in general (Books 2–3.5), and then an account of the specific moral virtues (Books 3.6–5), followed by an account of intellectual virtue (Book 6). After this things get a little more complicated. Aristotle first finds it necessary to make a second beginning in Book 7 (this seems to have something to do with having down-played the power and importance of pleasure). He then turns to the question of friendship in Books 8–9 and finally concludes by examining the life of contemplation in Book 10. Aristotle, thus devotes a full fifth of his book on morality and human happiness to an issue—friendship—that much of the philosophy since him ignores altogether. Friendship doesn't even make the index of Immanuel Kant's great work on moral philosophy, *The Critique of Practical Reason* or John Rawls' famous, if somewhat less great work, *A Theory of Justice*. It appears twice, but very cursorily, in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (sections 179 and 181) (these are meant only as examples chosen at random). So, why is friendship so important for Aristotle? What connects it to the overall argument about morality in the *Nicomachean Ethics*? To address this question will involve talking about parts of the book that some of you have not yet read. I will try to fill in the gaps where I can. My apologies in advance if I don't quite succeed.

The account in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 8 begins in the following way:

And after these things it would follow to go through in detail concerning friendship. For it is some virtue, or with virtue, and further, it is most necessary for life. For without friends no one would choose to live, even having all the remaining goods. (1155a1–6)

This remark reminds us of another early in Book 1.

If there is really some end of things to be done that we will on account of itself, but the rest on account of this, and we do not choose all on account of another ... it is clear that this would be the good and the best. (1094a19–23)

If we put the two together, we see that Aristotle comes very close to suggesting that friendship is that for the sake of which we choose everything else. It is the good and the best. Our age may think friendship something of an appendix to the body of moral philosophy; Aristotle obviously thought otherwise.

At the very least, what this means is that for Aristotle happiness, in the name of which we choose everything else, has to be understood relative not to ourselves alone, but to others. While consistent with his earlier claim that if there is a highest good, its science would be *politikē* (1094a29), and with the high status of justice as somehow the sum of the virtues (1129b30), this seems not to consist so easily with the understanding of happiness as self-sufficiency that runs throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics*. So the status of friendship is puzzling.

Most of Book 8 is concerned with what friendship is; only at the beginning does Aristotle say anything explicit about why it is so good. Here he emphasizes how much friends are in need of each other—whether rich or poor, young or old. His single example of a friendship of human beings in the prime of life and of virtue is, to say the least, peculiar. Quoting from *Iliad* 10 to show that two are better than one “for beautiful actions” (1155a15), Aristotle calls our attention to a nighttime reconnaissance by Odysseus and Diomedes. In the course of spying, these two capture a Trojan, Dolon, sweet talk him into telling them what they want to know by promising to let him go, kill him, and then raid the Thracian camp, killing the Thracians in their sleep and stealing their horses. Beautiful deeds indeed. We still do not know why friendship is good.

In Book 9, Aristotle makes the connection between friendship as love of another and self-sufficiency—and therefore happiness. The friend, we are told, is “an other self” (*esti gar ho*

philos allos autos—1166a30). You need him to mirror you, for you cannot see yourself, and you cannot be happy without seeing yourself. Happiness requires complete virtue, but this does not mean simply acting in a certain way. It means esteeming yourself worthy of great things while in fact being worthy of them (*ho megalōn hauton axiōn axios ōn*—1123b3). Happiness means being good and knowing it. This self-knowledge was first introduced as the virtue, greatness of soul (*megalopsuchia*), but proved problematic. Now it is finally to be possible through friendship. The friend, as an externalized, objectified version of ourselves, is indispensable for that self-knowledge without which we can never say of ourselves that we are good. And, failing this awareness of our own goodness, “even having all the remaining goods,” “no one would choose to live.”

And yet this mirroring function of friendship is double-edged. Aristotle indicates as much by an apparently insignificant change. Late in Book 9 (1170b7), we are told “For the friend is another (*heteros*) self. The difference between the previous word for other (*allos*) and the one used here (*heteros*) is small but crucial. The one (*allos*) suggests something like simply or altogether other. It is often used in Greek for whatever is left over after one has specified something; it is “the rest.” The other (*heteros*) regularly suggests a comparison; it is a correlative term—an other that belongs with another. That the friend moves from being an altogether other self to another self understood as one of a pair suggests that the self must be understood as much in terms of the friend as *vice versa*. So, on the one hand you understand your friend to be an externalized version of yourself—that’s why you like him. On the other hand, if to know yourself means to know *another* self, then to know yourself means to know yourself *as other*. The friend, who is the condition for the possibility of self-knowledge, is simultaneously the sign of our self-ignorance. And if loving a friend is like loving oneself, loving oneself must mean

loving oneself as other. Self-love is possible only when we are somehow split off from ourselves—alienated. The account of moral virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, therefore, culminates in understanding the self in terms of the friend, the other, because it has been from the outset the character of morality to involve thinking of oneself as other. To see what this means we must make another beginning.

The problem that governs the movement of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is already present in its first sentences:

Every art and every inquiry, and similarly both action (*praxis*) and choice, seem to aim at some good. On which account the good was beautifully declared [to be] that at which all things aim. But a difference is apparent among ends. For, on the one hand, some are activities (*energeiai*), while, on the other, others are some works (*erga*) alongside them. And those of which some ends exist alongside the actions (*praxeis*), in these, the works (*erga*) are better by nature than the activities (*energeiai*). (1094a1–7)

Aristotle begins with an observation about particular kinds of human behavior—they each aim at what seems good. They are goal directed. He then generalizes and draws the conclusion that *all* things aim at *the* good, and he says the declaring of this generalization has been done beautifully—*kalōs*. This conclusion, not expressed in Aristotle’s own name, is extravagant to the extent that “*seem to aim at some good*” is not the same as “*aim at the good*.”

Now, the reason for this extravagance emerges in the sentences that follow. Aristotle first divides ends into two sorts—activities (*energeiai*) and works (*erga*) alongside and apart from the activities producing them. We dance and we make shoes. Then Aristotle seems simply to restate one side of the distinction as “those of which some ends exist alongside their actions (*praxeis*).” So actions (*praxeis*) divide into activities having their ends within them (here Aristotle is clearly helped by the etymology of *energeia* as what has its work/deed/product/*ergon* within it) and others with their *erga* apart from them. But now he adds “in these the *erga* are by nature better

than the *energeiai*.” Here, *energeia* cannot have its etymological sense of having its product within itself. Aristotle can only be using it as a synonym for *praxis*. Now, this ambiguity, not accidentally, reflects the difficulty of the exaggerated conclusion of the first sentence. We began with activities apparently perfectly complete in and of themselves. These are then quite literally transformed into activities understood as incomplete because having products apart from themselves. The transformation is the result of asking what these initially self-justifying activities are for. We may make shoes in order to dance, but now we also dance in order to be happy. The generalization about *the* good leads us to conclude that things that originally seemed good to us cannot be simply good. And we are moved to generalize in this way because we seek to understand what is good in the various goods of our experience. The underlying issue, then, of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the effect of the attempt to understand the good on the good. Aristotle wishes us to ask what the good is of trying to understand the good.

The beautiful generalization has the effect of transforming all goods experienced by us into instruments for the realization of one good, happiness, never simply experienced by us. This, of course, is not to say that we cannot frequently be quite satisfied, but as Aristotle makes quit clear “one swallow does not make spring” (1098a18–19). That we must be aware of the fact that we are happy in order to be happy is clear from the apparent agreement of all men that happiness is what they most want even though there is precious little agreement about what it is. To be happy one must be able to say “I am happy.” But can this sentence ever be uttered truly?

The explicit argument of the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not make the impossibility of happiness clear until the end of Book 7, where Aristotle indicates first that our natures are not simple, but require change, and then that such natures are not good (1154b22–31). However the impossibility of happiness is already implicit in the argument of Book 1. Asking whether we

should, following the advice of Solon, count no man happy until his is dead, Aristotle calls up the life of Priam to attest to the precariousness of premature judgment. No matter that you have fared very well for most of your life, if in your last days, your sons are killed, your wife and daughters raped, and the city over which you have ruled long and prosperously is ransacked and burned. It looks as though either you could never count yourself happy, or you could do so only if there were a place like Hades, a vantage point from which, after death, a judgment of one's life as a whole might be rendered. At this point Aristotle launches into a very peculiar digression about whether the dead in Hades can be made unhappy by the shameful deeds of their living descendants. It all seems quite bizarre until one realizes what is at stake—the possibility of a perspective from which one can judge one's life that is at the same time immune from the incomplete and precarious nature of life. Hades looks to be absurd (it means literally “the invisible place”), for either you do not live on, in which case there is no vantage point from which to judge your life, or else you do live on, in which case Hades is simply graduate school. In either case you will not be able to count yourself happy, and so will not be able to be happy in any final sense. You cannot say “I am happy” because the “I” does not remain constant.

It looks, then, as though saying what the highest good is places it out of reach. To ask for the complete good is to render every subordinate good incomplete. One can see in yet another way that this is the issue in Book 1. After arguing that instrumental goods require some final good for the sake of which they are instrumental, Aristotle names the knowledge that is devoted to this final good—political science (*politikē*). Fifteen lines later he identifies as the objects of *politikē* the beautiful and just things (1094b14). So the single final good that is the object of political science must apparently be understood as double. We come to think of something as good for its own sake, whole and self-sufficient, by reflecting on certain of our experiences that

do not seem for the sake of anything other than themselves. Despite Aristotle's apparent dismissal of the life of pleasure in Book 1, it is clear that he understands pleasure, insofar as it is an *energeia*, to be an experience of this sort. This experience of completeness is an experience of the *kalon*—the beautiful. Our experience of the various *kala*, the various beautiful things, enables us to think that our lives might be similarly whole and self-sufficient. Ironically, however, this reflection renders the many beautiful parts of our life instrumental to the larger whole of which they are parts and of which we have and can have no experience.

What substitutes for this experience of the whole is the collective good of the *polis*—of political or social life. *Politikē* is architectonic insofar as it fits together various individual goods into a larger whole. And yet, does the individual within political life ever experience this whole? Even the *politikos*, the political leader who metes out these various particular goods, does not experience them in their togetherness. What can be experienced, however, is the incompleteness of each particular good. Of all the virtues, justice is the most obviously political because the just is our experience of this partial character of the goods of our experience. For this reason, however, Aristotle is forced to distinguish two sorts of justice (Book 5, 1129a27–1131a9)—one, the sum of all virtues insofar as they pertain to other human beings, the other something he calls “particular justice.” Of the former we have and can have no direct experience whatsoever. It is a ratio of the appropriate distribution of goods to people. What are experienced are the goods received, not the ratio in accordance with which they were distributed. Justice as an experience, particular justice, is something altogether different. Aristotle approaches it through its opposite—particular injustice, behavior essentially antinomian. That is, insofar as we feel justice, it is the feeling of acting not against the law (*para ton nomon*) but rather according to law (*kata ton nomon*). It is the feeling of obedience to law for its own sake. But then, isn't it the case that

justice can only be experienced in a context where certain things are forbidden? As felt, it is essentially corrective. This is confirmed by what Aristotle says about equity—*epieikeia*. Equity is the recognition of the impossibility of perfect justice. As a longing “to get it right,” that overcomes the temptation to false precision, it is somehow morality overcoming itself. It is consequently called a correction of justice just after an account of justice as corrective (1137b20). Equity is therefore more just than justice. As the exception to the rule, it points beyond the law while nonetheless depending on the law. No rule, no exception. Equity is the distilled essence of justice that is impossible apart from a disillusionment with the beautiful.

Happiness requires that we contemplate our lives as wholes, but life itself seems to thwart such detached contemplation. Morality, the human response to this difficulty, appears to provide a way to contemplate ourselves without contemplating the whole of our lives. If there had been something so consistent in Priam that no adversity could have altered it, and if this something were the true Priam, then contemplation of it would have given Priam a sense of himself. Although the details would change, the character of one’s life would never change. Moral character is the attempt to lift ourselves out of time so as to be able to grasp ourselves. It is probably no accident that when confronted with a moral challenge we frequently talk to ourselves and say things like “Get a grip on yourself.”

That this is the task of morality begins to become clear at the end of Book 1 of the *Ethics*. Aristotle apparently divides the soul into rational and non-rational parts. The non-rational then subdivides into the vegetative and the appetitive, both goal directed, but only the latter being able to listen to reason. The rational part, in turn, seems to divide into a purely theoretical part for looking or contemplating and a part that gives commands, whether obeyed or not, to the appetitive part. Virtue, as the rational activity of soul, is either intellectual or moral depending on

the part of the rational soul of which it is the perfection. Moral virtue is linked to the changing character of human life insofar as it is connected to what we feel or suffer—the passions (*pathē*)—and this changes over time. At the same time, since it is a constant disposition of these *pathē*, it remains in some sense fixed. The courageous man suffers many fears, but he is someone you can always count on to rise to any given occasion.

Now, that things are not quite so simple begins to emerge when Aristotle twice tells us that this division between rational and non-rational might well be a division only by reason or in speech and not a real division (1102a30–14, 1102b25–26). The distinct parts of the soul might be like convex and concave—differing from one another, but correlative sides of the same curve, and requiring an act of thought to distinguish them. This must be understood in light of the odd fact that Aristotle never actually specifies what he means by that part of the soul that commands the appetites. The appetitive part of soul is capable of listening to reason, and in this way is also said to be rational. But when it comes to articulating the rational part of soul talking sense to it, Aristotle says only the following:

If one ought also to claim this [the appetitive] to have *logos* [speech or reason], then that having *logos* will also be double—on the one hand sovereignly and in itself, and on the other, just like something listening to a father. (1103a2–4)

Now the part compared to the child is clearly not in command; it is presumably no more praiseworthy or capable of virtue than are children (1100a1–4). It “has reason” from an external source in the way we are governed by our parents or our friends, and not in the way mathematicians are governed by reason (1102b31–35). But, if theoretical reason governs only itself, and practical reason means being governed rationally by another, how is it ever possible for one to govern oneself?

Were our desires to be governed perfectly by reason, it is difficult to see how the appetitive would differ from the vegetative part of soul. An altogether rational desire, not being opposed by anything, would provide no occasion for one to feel the rule of reason. Without alternatives, the sense of being commanded would not be present. Rule must mean rule perceived as in some sense foreign—from without. At the same time, virtue means self-rule. The condition of moral virtue, then, is that I perceive myself as other. Aristotle must divide the soul at the end of Book 1 in order to make it possible for the same soul to be both ruler and ruled. The division of soul is a demand of morality that is at odds with perfect morality. It is therefore no accident that in the context of defining virtue Aristotle should say that with regard to the passions, it is both a mean between two extremes (1106b36) and skill at aiming at this mean (1106b15). And yet, to aim at the mean is not yet to have achieved it. And if one is at the mean, what need is there to aim at it? If virtue is both aiming and being at the mean, the virtuous soul must be simultaneously both the same as and other than itself.

The project of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is therefore set out in the first book—in a way, in the first sentence. Human happiness requires that we understand ourselves as apart from ourselves without being altogether other than ourselves. Morality is the projection of such a self with a view to self-satisfaction. To the extent to which bad things are to be feared, courage, the virtue concerned with fear, is paradigmatic for all of virtue (1115a4–b6). The courageous man does not rid himself of fear. His virtue consists rather in being disposed toward fear in a certain way. And, while he takes pleasure in this disposition, he cannot take pleasure in his fear. What exactly is it then in which he takes pleasure? The courageous man is willing to die, but it cannot be for gain in any form whatever—whether in terms of one’s country, one’s family, or even for oneself in terms of an afterlife. Aristotle says true courage is for the sake only of the beautiful—

to kalon. What this proves to mean in practice is that the man of courage sees himself as a character in a story. It is not accidental that all of Aristotle's examples of true courage are fictional. Courage means being willing to die like Achilles, something that was, ironically, even true of Achilles. By projecting an image of oneself in this way, by writing oneself into a story, one is able to take pleasure in the end of one's action even though the real end may be one's death—and so the end of the ability to take pleasure in anything. To the extent that all moral virtue requires that the passion of which it is the mean persist along with the virtue that disposes it, all moral virtue will involve this sort of projection of an image of oneself in which one can take satisfaction.

Book 2 and the first part of Book 3 are devoted to the question of how such a projection is possible. How can obedience to external rule be transformed by means of habituation into self-rule so as to generate a morally responsible agent? As Aristotle suggests at the very outset of Book 2 (1103a14–19), the problem is akin to the etymological question of how *ethos* (habit) was transformed into *ēthos* (character). Accordingly, Book 2 gives a plausible “etymology”—a history of the development of the morally responsible agent. We are governed from the beginning by pleasure and pain. Through some agency external to us (usually our parents in lieu of the missing commanding element of the rational soul in Book 1), we are habituated by means of pleasure and pain to resist pleasure and pain. These rewards and spankings engender a split in the soul that makes it possible for us to take pleasure in our very resistance to pleasure and pain. At the same time, this distance from first order pleasures and pains makes self-awareness possible. Long before Freud, Aristotle gives an account of how external authority is internalized. But he is unwilling to leave it at the level of descriptive psychology. For it seems not enough for human beings to behave *as though* they were responsible agents even if they take pleasure in the

illusion. In Book 3, Aristotle therefore turns to the last of the issues preliminary to an account of the moral virtues severally. How is it possible for what comes to be by habit to be moral?

The most striking feature of this account is the way Aristotle keeps returning to the question of whether all human action might not be involuntary. Action, after all, always occurs within a context, and the context is not itself chosen. So, for example (Aristotle's example), to attempt to save one's life in a storm while at sea by throwing cargo overboard is at best a mixture of voluntary and involuntary action. It cannot be voluntary simply or in itself for one would not choose to be in a situation where it is necessary to make such a choice. But then, given that all action is either pleasant or painful, and given that we did not choose what pleases and pains us, in what sense can action ever be understood as voluntary? In its most radical version, this means that no being with a nature can be responsible for its own behavior.

Now, Aristotle twice (1110b10–18, 1114b20–25) responds to this radical argument with a threat that if it were true, we would be equally deprived both of praise and of blame. At first, this hardly seems decisive. Why is it assumed that we will not simply accept the loss of praise as the price to be paid for the loss of blame? Aristotle, however, has shrewdly seen that the issue of the voluntary comes up at all only because we want to escape feeling responsible for our actions. But only someone who already feels responsible wishes to escape responsibility. It may be true that “should one claim the pleasant and the beautiful things to be by force—for being external they necessitate—then everything would be by force in this way” (1110b9–10), but one cannot really affirm the protasis of this conditional. To say things are pleasant or beautiful is to have identified them as desirable. It is already to have pursued them in one's thoughts, and so to have thought of oneself as able to pursue them. Aristotle means to point to the fact that to have wondered about the moral is already to consider oneself moral. It is to have thought of oneself as

a responsible agent. For this reason, one can be ignorant of some of the facets of one's action so as to make it non-voluntary, but one can never not know that one is the agent of one's action.

“For how,” says Aristotle, “[could he be ignorant] of himself?” (1111a8).

While moral virtue requires the projection of the soul as other than itself, the reason for this projection is to be able to grasp the soul as a whole. Consequently, the soul that is projected must be understood as one and indivisible. Aristotle considers and rejects the possibility that it is desire or anger that are responsible for bad choices when they overrule the rational part of the soul, which, as rational, never errs (1111a22–b3). If involuntary action were caused by the lower, non-rational parts of the soul, reason would be the sole source of the voluntary. But then the real person would be reason, and our passions would have to be understood as forces external to us. If that were the case, however, the unity of the person, and therewith the value of moral virtue would be destroyed. Furthermore, as reason understood in this way could never err, what would it mean to understand its activity as voluntary? Accordingly, Aristotle insists on the unity of what is praised and what is blamed. The voluntary can exist only on the basis of this unity. Moral virtue remains only if what is subject to passion is also the same thing that acts. Aristotle makes this clear in a startling way when he remarks that “the irrational passions seem no less human” (1111b1–2)—this despite the fact that the essential feature of the human soul is reason.

We therefore have the following situation. Moral virtue requires the unity of the soul. But any attempt to understand the moral agent leads to an analysis, a division by *logos*, of the soul into parts. Moral virtue therefore seems to be at odds with inquiry, and so with intellectual virtue. The attempt to give an account of the soul as autonomous leads willy-nilly to an understanding of it as heteronomous, and therefore not moral. Nevertheless, the attempt to give an account of soul, whether because happiness requires self-knowledge or out of an attempt to undermine the

voluntary character of human action in order to avoid responsibility, is always moved by an essentially moral impulse. The division of soul at the end of Book 1 must, therefore, be understood in a double way. On the one hand it is an act of reason necessary to generate a moral agent—to locate a responsible soul. In this way it is a little like seeing oneself as a character in a book. At the same time, the division was an act of reason necessary to make reason intelligible to itself. It is the same *logos*, but it has a moral and an intellectual reading, and the two readings appear to conflict with each other. One sees voluntary action, the other only necessity. One sees final goods, the other only instrumental goods. This would be altogether distressing were it not for the fact that neither understanding of the soul quite captures the nature of the soul as projecting an image of itself. The animal with *logos* is neither theoretical nor practical, for *logos*, which makes an image of the soul for itself, makes the same image for both theoretical and practical reasons.

So, the self needs another in order to contemplate itself for its own satisfaction. This is its moral concern. At the same time, to accomplish this, the self must see itself as other, and so becomes aware that all understanding is understanding something as other. The self that to satisfy itself must seek to know itself is in that very activity estranged from itself, and, upon reflection, paradoxically thereby comes to know itself. This, the action that underlies the movement of the argument of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, bears the mark of all human action. We distance ourselves from ourselves and in this very act experience ourselves as whole. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* we discover that morality is different from moral philosophy, and then that it is the same.

Friendship is so central to Aristotle's account of morality, and of happiness, because in it, more than anywhere else, this movement is revealed. Friends are, on the one hand, useful to us—

instruments of whom we have need. In this they are unlike us. And yet, we need them as images of our own potentially non-instrumental completeness. They are our Doppelgänger. On this most ordinary level, it is the being of friends to be at once same and other. We would not need them if they were simply like us; we would not want them if they were altogether different. On the one hand, we choose our friends. On the other hand, our best of friends are said to be like sisters, or brothers, or, perhaps we say we are joined at the hip. True friends choose a bond that is so powerful and sure to endure as to be likened to bonds that are necessary, altogether unchosen, and so impossible to break. We may love our friends like sisters, but do we really choose to love our sisters? In friendship we experience directly the strange link between same and other that has echoes throughout our moral lives (where we characterize our choices in terms of what we have to do), and our intellectual lives (where we take personal pride in ideas that seemed to drop into us out of the blue), and, in turn, in the relation between these two lives (where the self that can be understood never quite satisfies the self that seeks to understand itself). Only because “the friend is another self” can it serve this end.