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Aristotelian *Politiké Philía* as a Subject of Moral Education

Arystotelesowska *politiké philía* jako przedmiot wychowania moralnego

Abstract: The concept of moral education in Slovakia is currently undergoing a curricular transformation which is connected with issues concerning the theoretical foundation and basic philosophical setting of ethical education. The conceptual framework of the scientific discussion on ethical education has been introduced; its culmination is the neo-Aristotelian thesis about the philiatric character, which needs to be developed and strengthened educationally. The issue of friendship (*philia*) completes the discussion on virtues in *Nicomachean Ethics* and highlights the positive quality of interpersonal relationships as *areté*, that is, a disposition that can be purposefully pursued, i.e. intentionally formed. Aristotle's well-known theory of friendship (*philia*) distinguishes between two kinds of imperfect, false friendship ('for pleasure' or 'for profit') and true friendship; moral good is its goal. Besides the vertical gradation of this quality concerning its perfection (two kinds – imperfect, false friendship and true friendship), it also offers a horizontal differentiation of forms of social realisation of friendship in the context of community (favour, *eunoia*) and wider society (concord, *politiké philía*). 'Political friendship' is thus presented as a civic virtue, worthy of effort (cf. *EN* VIII.10; *EE* 1242b; *Pol.* III.5, IV.2). Character education, with a focus on the development of this quality, is manifested not only as the subject of cultivating the individual personality for the 'happy life' of man but also as a political requirement, reflecting the interests of the state.

Keywords: *politiké philía*; moral education; virtue ethics; character; Slovakia.

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Abstrakt: Pojęcie wychowania moralnego w programach szkolnych na Słowacji przechodzi aktualnie transformację; wiąże się to z problematyką teoretycznej podstawy i podstawowej filozoficznej obudowy etycznej wychowania. Artykuł wprowadza w ramy pojęciowe dyskusji naukowej o edukacji etycznej, której konkluzją jest neoarystotelesowska teza o przyjacielskim (*philiatic*) charakterze człowieka, który należy rozwijać i wzmacniać w ramach edukacji. Problematyka przyjaźni (*philia*) dopełnia rozważania na temat cnót w *Etyce nikomachejskiej* i podkreśla pozytywną właściwość relacji międzyludzkich jako *areté*, czyli dyspozycji, do której można celowo dążyć, tzn. intencjonalnie ją formować (kształtować). Znana Arystotelesowska teoria przyjaźni (*philia*) rozróżnia dwa rodzaje niedoskonałej, fałszywej przyjaźni (dla przyjemności i dla zysku) oraz przyjaźń prawdziwą, której celem jest dobro moralne. Poza wertykalnym jej stopniowaniem ze względu na doskonałość (dwa rodzaje niedoskonałej, fałszywej przyjaźni i przyjaźń prawdziwa) oferuje ona także horyzontalne zróżnicowanie form społecznej realizacji przyjaźni w kontekście wspólnoty (*favour, eunoia*) i szeroko pojętego społeczeństwa (*concord, politiké philía*). „Przyjaźń polityczna” jest zatem przedstawiana jako cnota obywatelska, warta wysiłku (por. EN [*Etyka nikomachejska*] VIII.10; EE [*Etyka eudemejska*] 1242b; Pol. [*Polityka*] III.5, IV.2). Kształcenie charakteru z akcentem na rozwijanie jakości, jaką jest przyjaźń, przejawia się nie tylko jako przedmiot kultuwowania indywidualnej osobowości, ukierunkowanej na „szczęśliwe życie” człowieka, ale także jako wymóg polityczny, odzwierciedlający interes państwa.

Słowa kluczowe: *politiké philía*; wychowanie moralne; etyka cnót; charakter; Słowacja.

1. Introduction: Historical-semantic context of moral education in Slovakia

To begin with, I present a short historical note. Moral-pedagogical issues appear in the free academic discourses of our post-socialist region after many decades, after a violent interruption during the period of totalitarian regimes (in Slovakia 1938–1989). During the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia (1989), the pedagogical discussion regarding moral education was distorted and completely subordinated to the ideological goals of the socialist state. The label ‘good-mores education’ (in Slovak *mravná výchova*) was used, which is not exactly the same as ‘moral education’ (in Slovak *morálna výchova*). *Mravná výchova* (translated here roughly as ‘good-mores education’) meant the indoctrination of pupils and youth in the direction of the Marxist-Leninist concept of a unified (meaning totalitarian) society-wide morality. The ‘good-mores education,’ as one of the communist authors of the time opines, was ‘based on atheistic communist mo-

rality and characterised – in contrast to the individualistic and egoistic morality of the previous era – by consistent collectivism and humanism’ (Jůva, 1983).

The pedagogical community in Slovakia in the second half of the 20th century knew the concept of *mravná výchova* from the days of pre-war democratic Czechoslovakia, in whose school system the component of ‘good-mores education’ played a decisive role (cf. Wiesenganger, Katrinčová, 2017). It is important to emphasise that even in this democratic, relatively free historical period, the concept of moral education as ‘good-mores education’ was understood primarily in terms of statism, acculturation and socialisation. In the Slovak and Czech languages (also in the Russian language), two concepts are distinguished: *morálka* (morality) and *mravnost’* (like ‘good manners’ or ‘good mores’).¹ *Mravnost’* (and hence *mravná výchova*, ‘good-mores education’) is close to ‘mores,’ social and cultural patterns of behaviour, with an impact on public social relations and climate. *Morálka* (morality), however, is considered more a sum of personal beliefs and intrinsically motivated ways of action. If we use the term *morálna výchova* (‘moral education’) today, we indicate the necessary shift in pedagogical emphasis from the education of ‘mores’ to the formation of the internal dispositions of students, which of course also results in external, social and cultural manifestations. Speaking today in our environment about *morálna výchova* (‘moral education’) and not *mravná výchova* (‘good-mores education’) means establishing a new pedagogical discourse, in which we follow up on innovative classical philosophical theories and current world discussions in this area. In this shift, there is also an evident effort to get rid of the understanding of morality, which is established one-way from the position of authorities or social norms. It is important to indicate the context of the

¹ Similarly, in German language, there is a difference in meaning between *Sittlichkeit* (Slovak *mravnost’*, public or social morality, morality of good customs, on social and cultural norms-based morality) and *Moral* (Slovak *morálka*, inner personal morality, manifested in actions). *Sittlichkeit*, *gute Sitten* (good customs, manners, mores) is associated with publicly applied habits in that action and thinking that are generally considered good and proper. It is a public side of morality, subject to certain traditions and social norms. The resulting *Sittliche Erziehung* (can be translated descriptively also as ‘Good social practice education’) does not have exactly the same goal as *Moralerziehung* or *Moral-Erziehung* or *Moralische Erziehung*, which is aimed at internally distinguished, justified and adopted moral attitudes, oriented towards good moral practice. This linguistic distinction, characteristic of the Central European tradition, also indicates a normative and collectivist accent, present in our traditional moral culture, which is currently facing the challenges of an individualistically oriented mentality.

longer-term development of pedagogical thinking in our region to understand why our contribution is aimed at finding a deeper theoretical foundation for an updated and de-collectivised moral education in our environment.

2. Ineffective content-free moral-developmental model of education

In the free Western world, the Kohlbergian deontological-cognitivist movement for the moral development of pupils was established in the 1970s (cf. Power et al., 2008, p. xxxii). This paradigm was incorporated into the psychological-pedagogical documents of our post-socialist countries only in the 1990s, and its influence persisted in the first decade of the new millennium. Its main thesis is as follows: The cardinal object of moral education, which leads to higher levels of moral development of pupils, is the pupils' ability to *judge morally* concerning the *rules* (law). The cognitive moral approach to education embraces a philosophical perspective of universalisable moral claims regarding justice and reasoning. The classic moral-educational theory, based on virtue ethics, was labelled by cognitivists as a 'romantic perspective' (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972), while they labelled their own perspective as 'progressivistic.' Its basic premise is that a change in moral thinking will lead students to change their moral behaviour. Hence, it is neither necessary nor appropriate to direct moral education *directly* to a change in social and emotional behaviour. As Kohlberg argues (1981, p. 30), 'virtue is knowledge of the good. He who knows the good chooses the good.' The tendency to implement the moral-developmental model into school pedagogy in Slovakia, after decades of state indoctrination, had analogous reasons, as indicated by J. Arthur about the situation in the USA a few decades earlier (2008, pp. 86–87):

The success of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Erik Erikson was due to their themes of development which indicated progress. These themes satisfied the demands of culture at the time. Culture and society had become more pluralistic and therefore schooling became more sensitive to the increasing heterogeneity of children in many schools. These cognitive approaches to moral education ... were also more compatible with the liberal traditions of critical thinking rather than a virtues-based approach.

On the other hand, Kohlberg's model of moral education soon encountered several conceptual and practical problems (cf. Gilligan, 1982; Carr, 2002; Lapsley & Power, 2005), the most serious of which is the absence of essential moral content in education. The normative nature of morality (and moral pedagogy) of the developmental model makes it possible to clearly phase out the educational process and verify the achievement of the set educational goals. It gives the institution and the teacher an authoritative tool for measuring and controlling; on the other hand, normative ethics and normative pedagogy bypass the education itself (it focuses mainly on ethical learning and moral reasoning), renounce the ambition to form the moral identity of individuals, as well as to co-experience and influence the contents of moral practices. It claims procedural neutrality in the classroom and this claim ultimately favours moral and value relativism. Educational value neutralism turns out to be theoretically inconsistent and pedagogically ineffective; on the contrary, character education anchored especially in virtue ethics, which has its roots in classical Hellenic-Biblical anthropology, if 'implemented effectively', has positive effects on the thinking and behaviour of pupils (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

I start from the premise that it is not enough if the social dimension of behaviour is ensured by law (rule, norm) enforcement. Our concept of moral education presupposes *prosociality* (and the resulting educational relationality) as its own object.² Prosociality can be summed up, in terms of content, by concepts such as benevolence, altruism, generosity, love for others, responsibility for others, solidarity, etc. We interpret prosociality, not as subordination to society, but as an internally acquired habitus, virtue, motivated by the moral imperative of benevolence. The connecting term that includes all the mentioned terms and at the same time connects them to classical Aristotelian ethics is *philía*, friendship. The (neo)-Aristotelian conception of social friendship, which

² Within the cognitivist-developmental tradition, a separate stream of research and development of 'prosocial moral reasoning' has emerged, which considers the main criterion of morality not as the Kohlbergian concept of *justice* (which is referred to negatively as 'prohibition moral reasoning,' cf. Eisenberg, 1982), but *prosocial attitudes* (Eisenberg-Berg, 1979; Eisenberg, 1986; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Eisenberg et al., 1995; Carlo et al., 2003, and others). Educational concepts aimed at the development of prosocial moral thinking are a kind of bridge between the progressivist (cognitivist) and traditional (characterial) streams of moral pedagogy, but are still paradigmatically based on the thesis that a change in behaviour will be caused by an educationally induced change in thinking. Thus, the educational accent is still placed on the development of the moral-cognitive abilities of pupils.

transcends the requirement of legal justice, will be introduced. It does not deny justice but fulfils it and transcends it with its claim (cf. the following text). After all, civilised humanity shaped by the ideal of ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ also implies the rule ‘Give everyone his due.’

3. ‘The good of others’ as the top quality of justice

My thesis is as follows: prosociality/*philia* is a more appropriate object of moral education than justice, especially if I do not talk here about justice in terms of Roman law, as a condition of equal distribution, but as a kind of inherent virtue. The Roman and scholastic traditions interpreted justice in the sense of a formal definition as a norm, that is, as a relation to the law, before which we are all equal. It is a habit to give everyone what belongs to them, in terms of *aequitas*, equality with one another. *Habitus* is understood here as a synthetic and, above all, an architectural ratio of equality.

According to Plato, justice in the sense of giving to everyone what is owed (*Republic* 332c) is useless (it is more effective to ignore justice) and crafty (it does good only to friends, it harms the enemy).

If someone asserts that it’s just to give what is owed to each man – and he understands by this that harm is owed to enemies by the just man and help to friends – the man who said it was not wise. For he wasn’t telling the truth. For it has become apparent to us that it is never just to harm anyone (335e).

The virtue of justice goes beyond the logic of retribution, concerning building a ‘good community’: ‘So we should neither return an injustice nor do harm to any man, regardless of what we suffer at his hands’ (*Crito* 49c). In the *Laws* (VI, 757a–b) he questions the uncritical acceptance of equality as the sole criterion of justice and creates space for invoking the ontological value of man (dignity) as a source of law as follows:

There is an old and true saying that ‘equality produces amity,’ which is right well and fitly spoken; but what the equality is which is capable of doing this is a very troublesome question, since it is very far from being clear. For there are two kinds of equality ... The one of these any State or lawgiver is competent

to apply in the assignment of honors, – namely, the equality determined by measure, weight and number ...; but the truest and best form of equality is not an easy thing for everyone to discern. It is the judgment of Zeus.

Plato, like Aristotle later, points out that above justice *δίκη* (*diké*) raises *φιλία* (*philía*), friendship.

Aristotle devotes the entire 5th book to justice in *Nicomachean Ethics* and constantly returns to it in *Politics* (V, 1, 1301b, V, 2, 1302b, V, 10, 1310b, VI, 1, 1317b). He advocates a fundamental distinction between general virtue (‘virtue itself’ for the benefit of others) and part of virtue – ‘partial justice,’ which is further divided into distributive (right as the centre of merit – proportion against injustice) and commutative (concerning profit and loss: *do ut des*). The main criterion of legal justice is equality and its goal is a good citizen. Aristotle suggests that partial justice is confused in speech with general justice (‘it bears identical name’), as both have their principal jurisdiction over the other, but only one (legal one)

pertains to honour, money, or preservation – or to some one thing if we were able to encompass all these by a single name – and arises on account of the pleasure associated with gain. The other [one] pertains to all the things with which a serious person is concerned (EN 1130b).

Justice, as a holistic virtue, pursues the main criterion of one’s human value, ‘dignity’ (*ἀξία*, *axía*), and the goal of this virtue is the good of another person.

Justice then in this sense is perfect Virtue, though with a qualification, namely that it is displayed *towards others*. This is why Justice is often thought to be the chief of the virtues, ... because its possessor can practise his virtue *towards others and not merely by himself* (EN 1129b).

It is clear from Aristotle’s statements that justice, which is the ‘chief of the virtues,’ has a philiatric, prosocial dimension and is only a ‘perfect virtue’ as such. The fifth book of the EN, dealing with justice, thus appears intrinsically linked to the eighth and ninth, whose theme is *philía* (cf. Leontsini, 2013).

Experience with the current consumer world encourages us to seek that form of justice that transcends the formal condition of equality and provides an opportunity to appreciate the dignity of life. ‘*Philía* must again be acknowledged

an essential factor unifying even the just modern state ... because political friendship emerges as a necessary condition for genuine justice' (Schwarzenbach, 1996, p. 98).

From the perspective of choosing a reference theory for current moral education, this means going beyond the cognitivist scheme of *procedural* standards of correct (and fair) thinking and also focusing on the *content* of morality offered by the Aristotelian theory of virtuous friendship.

4. Friendship as the 'perfect virtue'

Not only in pedagogical practice but also theoretical works, there is a demand for the return of the issue of virtues to serious discourse (cf. Copp & Sobel, 2004; Nucci & Narvaez, 2008; Power et al., 2008; López, Fernandez & Ortis de Montellano, 2022). In the context of justice, this means re-establishing the theme of friendship – *φιλία*, *philia* as a virtue that can form a 'good relationship' between human beings. Such a 'good relationship' cannot be based solely on the 'distribution' of goods and obligations.

Aristotle gives justice as a 'perfect virtue' a dimension of friendship:

justice alone of the virtues is held to be *another's good* because it relates to another. For it does what is advantageous to another ... Best is he who makes *use of virtue not in relation to himself but in relation to another*. For this is a difficult task (EN V, 3, 1130a).

According to Aristotle, friendship seems to be the dimension of virtue that allows justice to overcome the criterion of equality. 'For friendship is a certain virtue or is accompanied by virtue; and, further, it is most necessary with a view to life' (1155a). Friendship is such a radical disposition of life that it applies to all forms of positive personal relationships (cf. Cooper, 1977, p. 620). A friend (*philos*) is someone who likes and is liked by another person (*Rhetoric*, 1380b, 1381a). The possibility of appreciating every other good depends on it. Nevertheless, friendship, as a eudaimonic moral theory, has not been given importance in modern times (Cooper, 1977, p. 619; Fowers & Anderson, 2018, pp. 184–185, 194).

Aristotle, as is well known, sees an exceptional virtue in friendship, to which he devotes the 8th and 9th books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the 7th book of the *Eudemian Ethics*. According to him, true friendship unites human with human, based on a free and dignified reason and not according to the criterion of pleasure or gain (1157a, 18–21). False friendships (or friendships ‘by accident,’ Natali, 2008, p. 15; Zucca, 2017, p. 92) ‘involve equality. For the same things come from both people involved, and they wish for the same things for each other, or they exchange one thing for another – for example, pleasure in exchange for a benefit’ (1158b). He sees equality as a natural condition for coexistence (in terms of particular justice), but he emphasises its inadequacy in striving for perfect virtue. Perfect friendship is based not on the exchange of something for something, but on the uncalculated giving of real goods.

[But] perfect [*teleia*] friendship is the friendship of those who are good and alike in point of virtue. For such people wish in similar fashion for the good things for each other insofar as they are good, and they are good in themselves (1156b).

Friendship

is not at all similar to the case of lenders: lenders feel no friendly affection toward their debtors but only wish that they be preserved so they may recover the debt. Those who have done others some good, on the other hand, love and are fond of those who are the recipients of it, even if these recipients are not useful to them and might not be such later (1167b).

It follows from these and other passages (1168–1170) that Aristotle considers legal justice to be the necessary minimum of peaceful coexistence, but not the goal of the effort with which we should be satisfied.

Lawgivers are more serious about [friendship] than about justice. For like-mindedness [gr. *homonoia* = concord] seems to resemble friendship, and lawgivers aim at this especially ... When people are friends, they have no need of justice, but when they are just, they do need friendship in addition (1155a).

Aristotle even suggests empathy as a way of realising a friendly relationship. A friend is one 'who shares our joy in good fortune and our sorrow in affliction, for our own sake and not for any other reason' (*Rhetoric* 1381a).

I dare to counter the claim that *phronesis* itself is the decisive 'meta-virtue' that permeates the entire character of a person (e.g. De Caro & Vaccarezza, 2020, p. 296; Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 4). *Phronesis* is a necessary synthetic virtue that precedes and accompanies any act of character. However, *phronesis* without content (goodness) is not a virtue, as it becomes cleverness (*deinotés*; NE 1144a24–30), a skill that can be applied to any – even immoral – action. The term *philia* describes well the content principle of virtue that leads to happiness (*eudaimonia*). J. Cooper has already claimed that 'Aristotle's theory of friendship must be considered a cardinal element in his ethical theory as a whole' (Cooper, 1977, p. 622, cf. p. 648). Schwarzenbach (1996, p. 126) interprets the human capacity for friendship reductively as the *prerequisite* for the proper functioning of *phronesis* and not as a material complement of the latter. Some contemporary authors (e.g. Kristjánsson, 2020a) interpret Aristotelian *philia* such that although friendship is an exceptional good for a person, it represents rather a methodical, contextual or even propaedeutic value in moral education and the ethical formation of life: a friend is something like my mirror (the other self, *allos autos*, EN 1166a31), through which I get to know myself better and improve myself (Carreras, 2012). I do not dispute this dimension of *philia*, but am reluctant to reduce the beneficial relationship to the other to a *function* of something higher and ultimate, which should be my own (*autarchic*) perfection. According to my interpretation, *philia* is not only a methodical aid to 'becoming better,' but also a non-instrumental goal itself (cf. Fowers & Anderson, 2018, p. 189) or the inherent content of every moral action if it is truly virtuous. The *philia* is 'the highest exemplification of ethical virtues, in which these find their fulfilment, insofar as one cannot exercise and choose a virtue as an end in himself if he does not together choose the good of the other as constitutive part of that purpose' (Testa, 2011, p. 255; cf. Nussbaum, 1986, pp. 343, 352). If a human disposition without *phronesis* is not a virtue, a human disposition that is not *philiatic*, i.e. oriented 'for the good of others,' will not be virtuous either. According to Aristotle, perfect *autarchia* (self-sufficiency) is reserved only for gods; the realisation of character for a human is unthinkable without prosocial (*philiatic*) virtuous action. My

preliminary conclusion³ is the thesis that a person's moral perspective is formed by two framework (master) virtues: *phronesis* as a formal principle of virtue and *philía* as a material principle of virtue.⁴ A virtuous, characterful person *aristos* is one who is *phronimos* (wise man) and *philos* (friend man) simultaneously. A good man *agathos* cannot be a true friend (*philos*) without being wise (claim, e.g. Faure, 2012; Kristjánsson, 2020b; 2022, pp. 66 et seq.), and conversely, he cannot be wise (*phronimos*) without being friendly. The development of both these axial virtues, in mutual complementarity, should therefore be the main object of ethical education in schools: the education of *phronetic* friendship and that of *philiatic* wisdom.⁵

5. Vertical (qualitative) section: true friendship and false friendships

It is no coincidence that the theme of friendship is the culmination of the whole work in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where the author devotes the whole fifth of the text to it and it follows only after the introduction of the previous virtues and moral dispositions (especially virtues of justice, reason and moderation) (cf. Cooper, 1977, p. 622). According to Aristotle, friendship is the dimension of virtue that transcends justice and fills it with vertical content. Friendship (*φιλία*, *philía*) is a virtue that can form a 'good relationship' between human beings (EN 1155a), which cannot be based solely on the 'distribution' of goods and duties. A well-fulfilled and good-looking relationship is a virtuous relationship that unites human with human for a free and dignified reason and not according to the criteria of pleasure or gain (cf. EN 1157a18–21). It is good that we can get advantages and pleasures from a friendly

³ The pre-sharpened thesis is presented here rather as a hypothesis that still needs to be rigorously defended. However, this task is not the subject of this article; it will be represented in my further research.

⁴ I presented this thesis and defended it in a discussion with B. Fowers and others at the *School of Character* symposium, 6–7 October 2022, Smolenice castle, Slovakia.

⁵ Darsia Narvaez developed a different model of integration of moral development, in which the insights of traditional character education and rational moral education are reconciled. She calls this model *Integrative Ethical Education* (cfr. Narvaez – in Killen & Smetana, 2006, pp. 703–732; Narvaez – in Power et al., 2008, pp. 229–231).

relationship, but if the relationship is motivated by these ‘random goodies,’ it is not real friendship but an exchange, a business or a mere transitory sentimental state (*pathos*) which is only similar to the friendship. But true friendship, like true virtue, is a permanent disposition (*héxis*) (Viano, 2015, p. 122).

Perfect friendship as a virtue (*philia kat' areten*, character friendship for the sake of *agathón*, good) lies in between imperfect forms of love and *philēsis* (superficial, fleeting love) and specifically between friendship for benefit (*chrésimon*, useful), which is the lack of love and friendship for pleasure (*hedy*, pleasant), which is its excess (cf. Adkins, 2006, p. 25).

The key to defining a good relationship is the phrase: ‘But those who wish for the good things for their friends, for their friends’ sake, are friends most of all’ (EN 1156b); a friend is someone ‘who wishes for and does things that are (or appear to be) good, for the other person’s sake or, as someone who wishes for his friend, for the friend’s own sake, to exist and to live’ (EN 1166a).⁶ Certainly, Aristotle cannot be included among personalistic philosophers, but his statements on benevolent friendship as the goal of human effort confirm our intuition about the inadequacy of mere equality to define what is of foremost importance to us in life. The *philia* is a higher and more dignified goal of action than its minimum premise, such as justice (1155a). Love or *philia* is the quality of a ‘good relationship’ that innervates any pursuit of justice. The *philia* is the nerve of a culture that transcends the levelling laws of nature and society. It is a capillary of justice, although achieving and maintaining it is not at all without problems (cf. Sherman, 1987; Valk, 2004; McCoy, 2013; Kristjánsson, 2018; 2022, pp. 39–65).

However, is the Aristotelian *philia* an asymmetrical, purely altruistic relationship between one moral subject and another? It is not. Aristotle places friendship on the level of self-love (*filauthia*). People want real good above all for themselves, and that is their own being – they prefer themselves, they are themselves a source of thought, joy and sadness, and they care most about themselves. Love for myself should not be understood as selfishness but as

⁶ The difference between the hedonic form of well-being (HWB) and the eudaimonic form of well-being (EWB) in relation to the qualities of friendship was described and measured with modern psychological tools by D. Anderson and B. Fowers (2020). Their results, obtained among young people, indicate that friendship characteristics related to utility and virtue friendships have differential implications for understanding the role of friends in happiness and flourishing.

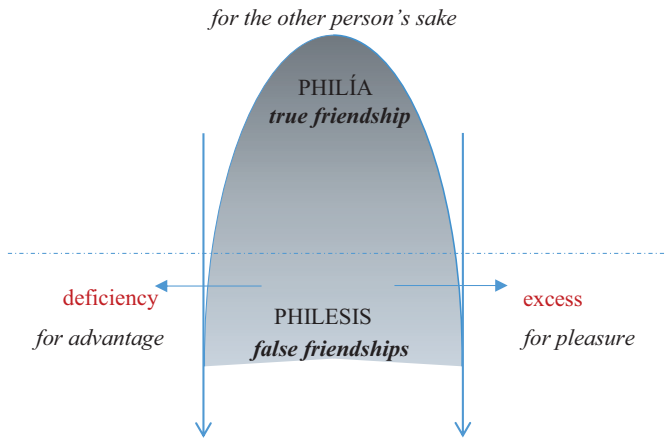


Figure 1. Vertical division of the quality of the philiatric relationship

a good relationship with my best friend, who is myself. And given this essential relation to oneself ‘the friend is another self’ (EN IX, 4, 1166a).

The emphasis in a friendly relationship is on four components: common experience (*syzén*), common perception (*synasisthésis*), common thinking (*syngnórizēin*) and especially, common action (*synergein*) (cf. *Eudemian Ethics* VII, 1, 1245b). The relationship of love for another can be compared at the highest level with the relationship of love for oneself, but will not exceed it. A virtuous person loves another as themselves (cf., e.g. Mark 12:31). In the other person and in their confirmation of what is good for life, my self finds a kind of reflection, a confirmation of the goodness of my being. The keyword of a friendly relationship is the word ‘we,’ a platform on which we help each other to perfection. Aristotle’s friendship can be at most symmetrical. It does not imply the primacy of another, which we meet, for example, in the Christian concept of *kenosis* (self-sacrifice) or *charitas* (charitable love) or the ethical conception of E. Lévinas. However, the experience of a friendly relationship between equals (e.g. pupils in a class) is itself a unique moral-educational experience that develops character even without the other (‘the other self’) being a higher role model, an unequal role model (e.g. a teacher); the very experience of the Other, a deep interpersonal dialogue, ethically educates (Hoyos-Valdés, 2017; Kristjánsson, 2020a; 2020c; 2022, pp. 110 et seq.).

As highlighted above, if there are friendships between people, they do not need justice (EN VIII, 1, 1155a26). According to Aristotle, perfect friendship is between good people and requires mutual affection (*antiphilía*) and mutual choice (*antiprohairesis*). Reciprocity, the return of benevolence, is a necessary condition of friendship. As our ancient author emphasises, it is not possible ‘to have many friends;’ so, the *teleia philía* is not the positive relationship to another that could be extrapolated likewise to the whole community or every existing human individual. There is exclusivity, uniqueness and unrepeatability in a friendly relationship, even in the age of social networks and digital ‘friendships’ (Kristjánsson, 2021a; 2021b).

6. Horizontal (quantitative) section: from personal friendship to political friendship

Aristotle says that the state ‘is a plurality, which should be united and made into a community by education’ (*Politics*, 1263b37). A state provides necessary preconditions for living together in ‘a common locality’ (preventing mutual injury and exchanging goods), yet nevertheless

even if all these conditions are present, that does not, therefore, make a state, but a state is a partnership of families and of clans in living well, and its object is a full and independent life ..., *the good life*; these things are means to that end, but at the same time the good coexistence ‘is produced by the feeling of friendship, for *friendship is the motive of social life*’ (1280b).

Even at the end of the last century, scientific discussions held that ‘friendship, civic or otherwise, is rarely (if ever) explicitly cited among the main factors which hold the modern state together’ (Schwarzenbach, 1996, p. 97). Nowadays, however, the topic of friendship is once again at the centre of not only philosophical but also psychological and pedagogical discussions.

Given the uniqueness and exclusivity of a true dyadic friendship (I–you), as I stated above, does it seem that *philía* is not intended as a feasible model of practical good social relations, to which we could set moral education? Does the requirement of justice at its normative level, or in direct education according to the ethics of rules, mark a return to the game again?

Similar to the later issue of the ‘third’ (system of norms, law and justice) in the ethics of Lévinas, I find a certain solution in Aristotle too. Aristotle does not state explicitly how civic friendship (*politiké philía*) is related to the three forms of personal friendship, even though it is outlined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The solution to the problem of ‘love for many’ or ‘love for everyone’ lies in the model of concentric circles, at the core of which stands the relationship of perfect friendship (*etiké philía*) and its quality diffuses progressively like a wave in symmetrical circles heading ‘beyond the horizon.’⁷ The individual circles of benevolence are simultaneously affected by the strengthening elements of justice, order and security, i.e. those elements of social relations and structures that protect coexistence from the abuse and arbitrariness of the ruthless. However, the ethical basis of friendliness and orientation towards common goals prevails in them. In Aristotle, these circles have the names personal friendship (*etiké philía*), favour (*eunoia*) and civic friendship (*politiké philía*).

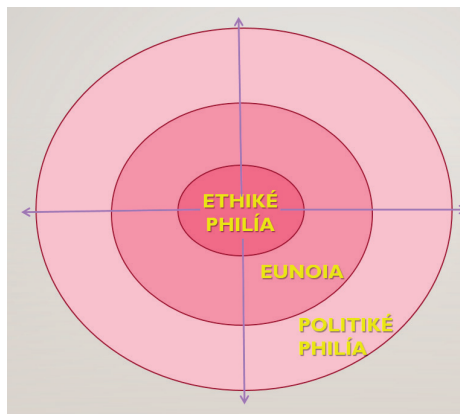


Figure 2. Horizontal division of the quality of the philiatric relationship

Eunoia, *εὐνοία* means exactly ‘good mind.’ *Eunoia*, favour, benevolence, or goodwill comprise a good relationship with strangers or with those who do not know about our goodness or, for various reasons, do not return it. It is

⁷ A similar idea of the ‘unification of expanding circles of loyalty’ is presented by A. W. Preece (1989, p. 200, in Curren, 2000, p. 135).

a virtuous attitude of a moral subject who maintains the respect, esteem and disposition to help, to contribute to the good of others without being in a close and near relationship of friendship. *Eunous* is a 'well-disposed' or 'well-wishing' person without being necessarily reciprocated. Favour is also referred to as the 'idle friendship' or a precursor of friendship, a kind of germ or preparation for the *philia*. It lacks a common choice and a mutually confirmed agreement on what is a good goal in life, as in the case of friendship. Reciprocation for such benevolence and charity by gratitude cannot yet be considered an expression of friendship – it is only the fulfilment of the requirement of justice. However, friendship can grow up from favour, and there is no friendship that does not come from favour. Immediate friendly relations, characterised by benevolence, are realised between the closest 'domestic' community (*oikos*) and the wider community, in which, however, it is still possible to apply interpersonal reciprocity (*koinoneo* = to share). Such an 'extended' home community also includes a school class or a school in which we teach students to mutually share good, in a philiatic sense.

Civic friendship (*politiké philía*, EE 1242b) is governed by that quality of friendship-like relations which is referred to as concord (*homonoia*). It represents a broad circle of friendship-like relationships that unite individuals in a broad political community (*polis*) as per common goals and common values, that is, concerning what society is to strive for. The minimum basis for such an agreement is the common belief that a virtuous life leads to bliss (*eudaimonia*). In civic friendship, the traits of mutual awareness, wishing the other good for their own sake and doing prosocial acts are still retained, although among citizens, intimate knowledge and close emotional bonds are absent – the friendship is rather a general attitude. Concord ensures a sense of belonging and encourages mutual solidarity, which goes beyond the demands of justice, especially in situations of danger. If a broad community is united by the concord of its members, it does not need to make too much effort to enforce the common good, because civic virtue naturally does it. Evil people, as Aristotle writes, cannot be united by concord because they cannot be friends, and their quest for immediate individual gain will cause the death of the common good and the deployment of coercive procedures.⁸ Such a society does not allow

⁸ J. Cooper (1977, p. 646) attributes it to the civic friendship status of special case of advantage-friendship (friendship for benefit). 'Each citizen wishes well (and is known to wish

a 'good life' for its members and degrades itself to a collective similar to a flock or a clamp from the subhuman world. Civic friendship should therefore be a valuable asset that every community should cultivate if it wants to maintain its vitality and dignity. Martha Nussbaum (1986, p. 650) therefore points out that friendship is not given to people in advance; it is a virtue everyone must strive for, practise and improve, as in other virtues. An individual is too fragile to build a 'good life' on his/her own, he/she needs a community, a community framework within to share goods (*koinonia*). One can become a friend in the community and the polis environment, which will favour one's good upbringing and character formation. Even in this context, cultivating prosociality shows us a suitable and necessary way to develop morality.

I have indicated above the hypothesis of 'focused circles' as a model offering a solution to the problem of 'love for many' or 'love for everyone.' In Aristotle's *Ethics*, we find the centre and at the same time the culmination of a benevolent relationship in the 'perfect friendship' (*ethiké philía*) to which it approaches and at the same time spreads as a diffusing quality in circular waves of favour (*eunoia*) and concord (*politiké philía*).⁹ The farther the wave is from the centre, the more it integrates with the institutions of justice, order and protection against the abuse of power, but it continues to refer to the source of its movement. The trajectory of this 'wave' can be defined as inside-out, respectively, from the centre to the sides, potentially 'beyond the horizon' of the visible. In all these cases, however, the inner motive, the inner 'nerve' of good social relations is

well) to the others, and is willing to undertake to confer benefits on them, for their own sake, in consequence of recognizing that he himself is regularly benefited by the actions of the others.' A similar opinion is expressed by E. Irrera (2005), according to which the search for utility, within the framework of civic friendship relations, 'does not prevent people from displaying other-regarding qualities like cooperation, trust and loyalty, that are typical of friendship according to ethical excellence.' This definition of mutual benevolence and cooperation represents a modern win-win model or a synergistic effect, which is the result of selfless and virtuous social efforts. On the other hand, R. Curren, for example, argues, that first and foremost, a state has to 'promote the possession and exercise of the moral and intellectual virtues and use common schooling and other measures to bring citizens together in settings which nurture friendly contact, common desires and character traits, and the formation of networks of substantial friendships spanning the city's disparate and economic sectors' (2000, p. 131); he refuses utility-friendship as the basis of civic friendship, arguing for civic friendship as a kind of character friendship (*ibid.*, pp. 133 et seq.).

⁹ Schwarzenbach refers to this spreading movement of *philía* as 'ethical reproduction' which he puts in analogy with biological reproduction in society (Schwarzenbach, 1996, p. 102).

philia, which represents the ‘denominator,’ with its basic properties of 1) mutual awareness and liking (thought sharing and feeling), 2) reciprocal wishing the other well for the other’s sake (benevolence), 3) reciprocal practical prosocial doing (cf. Schwarzenbach, 1996, p. 100).

7. The oiko-logical mesosphere of moral education

How to morally educate and accompany so that the personal morality of responsibility for another (which is another term for expressing the ethics of favour, friendship or personal care) is not an obstacle to life in the real world and is, on the contrary, a moral benefit to it? We have outlined a plan that we call ‘from home out into society,’ which is the educational movement from the ethics of responsibility for the other’s face to the ethics of a sense of justice (cf. Rajský, Podmanický et al., 2016, pp. 32–33). It is a process that begins in cultivating the closest interpersonal relationships I–You in the ‘home’ community, transcends the boundaries of family, kinship and the immediate community, i.e. the intimacy of home, into the wider community (school class, school, extracurricular educational and leisure groups, social environment of the municipality and the city) and finally enters the sphere of a broad political society up to the planetary level of humanity. The term ‘prosociality’ acquires a strong meaning in this respect – it contains the dynamics of innervation of social morality by the ethical imperative of the personal dignity of the other person. The concept of ethical education as “education for prosociality” precisely includes this process, in which the formation of the *philiatic* relationship with a ‘You’ is present. The *philiatic* dimension of the relationships is viewed as a capillary in the body of education of the ‘good life’ in society (ibid., p. 33).

The question of the continuity of the ‘ethics of encounter’ (especially in Levinas’ sense) between the intimate microsphere of the exclusive personal relationship I–You and the impersonal political macrosphere is primarily a question of the function and role of the mesosphere that connects and integrates the moral demands of love (being-for-another) and justice (social normativity). This mesosphere is characterised by the phenomena of home, dwelling, family, fatherhood, sonship, femininity, hospitality, brotherhood, etc. The mesosphere of home, community and hospitality is proving to be a key space for education in the ethics of good relations. It creates a typical anthropological situation in

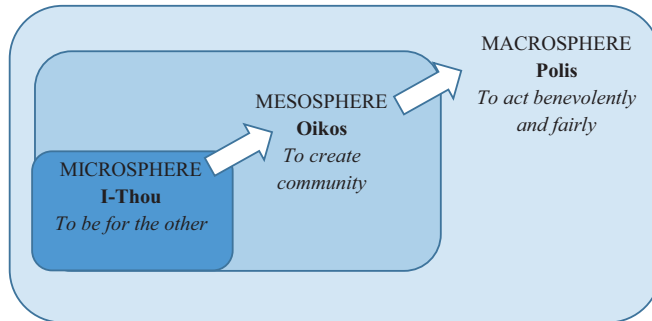


Figure 3. Horizontal division of education of philiatric moral character

which respect for You becomes a paradigm of every interpersonality, even, at the level of regulation, of every social structure. At the same time, the requirement arrangement, order and security of the home is seen as a commitment to respect for what is common and what allows individuals to face each other. The structure of *oikos* enables combining the love of the neighbour with respect for the rules. The political community, which forms the macrosphere of our coexistence, has in the structure of *oikos* the pattern of its inner human order. *Polis*, in which the *politiké philía* is to dwell, must support an oiko-logical moral education, i.e. an education of personal and social benevolence.

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